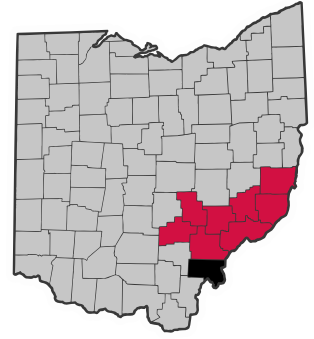


## 2017 County Highlights

# Meigs County

**BUCKEYE HILLS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA**

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**Health and Wellness**

- According to the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, Meigs County ranks 80th of 88 Ohio counties in healthy behaviors, with increased risk of obesity and lack of physical activity. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) is a USDA grant-funded nutrition education and obesity prevention program serving low-income adults and youth in Ohio. Its goal is to increase the likelihood that families and individuals who receive food assistance benefits will make healthy food choices and choose more active lifestyles. The Meigs County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) had a total of 1260 direct contacts in 149 programs conducted with youth and adults in the county. Surveys indicated that 78% of adult program participants, and 100% of youth participants, planned to be physically active for 30 minutes most days of the week.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that, “1 in 4 children aged 2 to 5 years are overweight or have obesity” and “community efforts should focus on supporting healthy eating and active living”. SNAP-Ed has increased the number of preschools visited in 2017. Preschool students learn about the value of fruit and vegetables. Students are also given the opportunity to sample various healthy foods in hopes of developing a new eating pattern. Among the benefits of SNAP-Ed Programming are Eating more fruits and vegetables of different colors (increased variety) and making one positive change in the home (food choice/more cooking from scratch, etc.) Youth showed significant change in the following: Using MyPlate to make healthier choices, using labels to make food choices, eating more fruits and vegetables of different colors, increase of planning meals in advance, more confidence that they can stretch the food dollar, and to eat breakfast daily.

**Job Skills and Careers**

- Building skills that are needed in today’s workforce is vital for the southern Ohio region. In Meigs County, the 4-H Educator focuses on workforce skill development and building STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) capacity in youth to ensure they are ready for future employment. Our future workforce will need skills in more than just technical areas, including creativity, critical thinking, communication, flexibility, initiative, and responsibility. More than 500 youth in the county were reached with innovative programming stressing the importance of or practicing the use of these skills that our youth will need to get and hold quality careers in 2017. According to US 2020, a White House backed organization created to help further STEM education, “By 2018, there will be 1.2 million US job openings in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, with a significant shortage of qualified applicants to fill them.” In 2017, the 4-H Educator



reached over 700 youth in Meigs County and the surrounding areas with STEM concepts from engineering new tractor seats and hay kicker designs to learning about the science behind everyday items. As one member stated, “Not only did I find my future career, veterinary technician, through 4-H, but also many of the skills needed to obtain it.” Speaking about the communication skills she found in 4-H, another member had this to say, “When I took projects I was really scared about talking to the judges but then I learned tips on how to speak to them and what to say. I learned to make eye contact with them and keep talking about my project in detail.”

### Thriving Across the Life Span

- In 2017, Meigs County 4-H reached more than 1000 youth in Meigs County through traditional Clubs, Camps, and School Enrichment Programs. Speaking about her time spent serving as a Camp Counselor, one member stated, “I would not trade that experience for the world. Getting to watch kids grow and learn about themselves is truly one of the best experiences anyone could ask for.” Research from Tufts University indicates that this young lady will continue her life of service, reporting that 4-H members are four times more likely to make contributions to their communities and two times more likely to be civically active than their counterparts. An important part of 4-H Club work is a relationship with a screened, trained and caring adult. The same Tufts University report stated that, “in Grade 11, 4-H youth reported that they had more mentors than did comparison youth.” In Meigs County, more than 110 volunteers work with the program as mentors to help youth develop into caring, competent, contributing members of society.
- Camp offers youth a safe place to make new friends, try new things and have lots of fun. Campers from Meigs County attended Canter’s Cave 4-H Camp, enjoying nature hikes, canoeing, swimming, crafts, line dancing, campfire ceremonies and candle-lighting ceremonies at the conclusion of camp. As part of her position, Michelle Stumbo, the Meigs County 4-H Educator, serves as Program Director for the State 4-H Special Needs Camp. This program was recognized by the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents for a Regional Teamwork in Camping Award. As one Camp parent stated, “The youth have the time of their lives and have a social activity that their parents want for their children. There is so much hope, faith and knowledge provided at this Camp that, ‘I think I can,’ is the best way to explain the experience.” Training Camp Staff in how to work with these youth is an integral part of making this event work, and is evidenced by the relationships built at Camp. At one point during staff training, a new staff member stated, “Michelle, I will do anything you ask me to, but I am really not comfortable with the idea of this camp.” However, at the end of the second day, he was found sitting with one of our deaf campers, trading corny jokes on her iPad. His statement at the end of the 3 days was, “I never knew thought that I could have a friend who had a major disability, mostly because I did not know that they are even more capable than I am! Thanks for helping me learn more about myself and those with different abilities!”

### Sustainable Food Systems

- In Ohio, youth who plan to exhibit livestock at local fairs are required to attend yearly Quality Assurance Training in order to ensure youth know how to properly care for their livestock and that safe, wholesome products are entering the food system. In 2017, the local program was evaluated and reformatted to better meet the county needs. During the 2017 fair season, no reports of animal abuse were received. One long-time volunteer stated that the 2017 Fair saw some of the best showmanship (how the youth works with the animal in the show ring to distinguish the best qualities) and fewest animal issues they had seen in more

than 10 years. One 4-H member stated, “Working with my chickens makes me feel good about myself and my abilities to take care of another living thing. I did not have any responsibility like this before I joined 4-H.” 100% of youth attending QA in 2017 indicated that they were aware of allowed grooming practices for their livestock. 94% indicated that they would be willing to share information about properly caring for their animals with others. 46% stated that they could more easily name at least two things that cause Quality Assurance issues. QA training helps our members continue to provide quality animals to local consumers, while building skills for the future and understanding of the industry. In 2017, the Junior Fair Livestock Sale featured 177 animals sold by 4-H and FFA members, with the total amount received from the sale being approximately \$230,000.

### Engaged Ohioans, Vibrant Communities

- Benjamin Franklin, speaking of fire preparedness, said, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” The phrase holds true when dealing with the drug abuse challenges that are sweeping through the country like wildfire. In Meigs County, OSU Extension has taken on the issue by offering youth prevention education through school enrichment programs, community outreach, and 4-H Club training. The Generation Rx toolkit, developed by OSU’s College of Pharmacy, has been utilized in all of these settings and funding has been obtained to support these efforts on a small scale. According to a report from the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network, which conducted interviews with recovering addicts and law enforcement in Meigs and other rural counties, drugs including cocaine, marijuana, opioids and other pharmaceuticals are readily available in the county. During the writing process for the 2017 County Health Improvement Plan (CHIP,) community members indicated that poor health decisions, including drug use, are the largest health concern to county residents. According to the final CHIP document, “Nearly two-thirds indicated that drug and alcohol abuse is a primary problem in the community and only a third knew where to get assistance for addiction-related issues.” One of the major goals of the CHIP is to reduce risk factors for drug and alcohol use in the county. The county is positioning itself to deal with this issue in a proactive way, and this project would fit into the plans by providing an additional leader in developing and conducting prevention programs on the county level.

### Environmental Quality

- Ten residents participated in Pesticide Recertification Training and successfully renewed their pesticide licenses. The training allows local farmers, producers and business people to increase knowledge of safe, efficient and effective use of pesticides.
- Meigs County Extension provided local residents with 35 different fertilizer recommendations based on soil test analyses’ results in 2017. The proper interpretation of soil test results and recommended fertilizer applications will increase the overall fertility, health, and productivity of our native soils, while minimizing the extent or likelihood of environmentally damaging nutrient runoff in our waterways.