

UT-TSU Extension Warren County

Warren County Commissioners' Report March 2025

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Heath Nokes
Agriculture
County Director, Extension Agent



UT TSU Extension Warren County. We appreciate your continued support and interest in our educational efforts and programs.

Middle TN Grain Conference

- We recently completed the Middle TN Grain Conference, a combined effort of the 12 counties in our immediate area. The conference featured the largest trade show of its kind east of the Mississippi River with 250 attendees. The conference was held with the support of the University of Tennessee Space Institute in Tullahoma and UT Extension in surrounding counties. Featured educational sessions focused on commodity trade, weed control, and weather. The keynote speaker was Mr. Alex Harrell the current world record holder for soybean yield at 218 bushels an acre.

Master Gardeners

- Once again, we have a capacity crowd at the Master Gardener Intern Training class. The class is composed of 34 interns taking the class. The

class is composed of eight educational sessions covering everything from fruit and vegetable production to lawn care and disease control. We are extremely proud of this as we are one of the larger intern classes--one of only two still meeting in-person Tuesday evenings. Warren County has the only master gardener program of note in the area. Clients wanting to participate in the program would have to travel to Rutherford or Putnam Counties for the closest organization.

Master Farm Manager

- Our Master Farm Manager class recently concluded. There were 47 producers from Warren and DeKalb counties participating in the class implemented by the UT Center for Farm Management and UT TSU Extension of Warren and DeKalb Counties. This course focused on estate planning, taxes, financial documents, etc. Graduates of the program are eligible for cost share savings with the Tennessee Ag Enhancement Programs.

Other Tidbits

- Other than the traditional meetings, we have been busy assisting producers get their reimbursements from the TN Ag Enhancement Program, preparing

educational materials for the upcoming restricted use pesticide recertification period beginning this fall.

Staff Updates

- I am proud to report the FCS position has been announced and interviews will commence soon. We are still waiting on the TSU funded 4-H position announcement. I understand it has been approved and is currently in the process of being posted.

Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program (TNCEP)



**Margie Foster TNCEP
Program Assistant**



Quarterly TNCEP Coalition

- Meeting was held in February with updates given by program assistant on programming efforts. Upcoming plans were announced and members gave agency updates.

Eat Smart, Move More

- **The Haven** - (part of H.O.M.E) Nine enrolled and tasted *Easy Fruit Salad* and *Beefy Skillet* meals from the *Eat Smart, Move More* curriculum. Recipes were well received. Classes continue through early March.
- **Day Reporting Center** – Classes started in late October and continued through December 2024. Nine participants completed the ten-lesson class.

Commodities

- In December 358 food boxes were distributed. TNCEP handed out *Celebrations and Gatherings/Grocery Shopping* flyers
- February numbers were down with 289 food boxes distributed and flyers on *Smart Shopping for Veggies and Fruits /Live up Your Meals with Fruits and Vegetables*

Making Tracks with Rudy Raccoon

- Curriculum was taught during December, January and February at seven school locations. Children learned about dairy, fruits and vegetables as well as being exposed to tastings of fresh blueberries. Most classrooms liked the blueberries. It was a new taste for some and for others they had previously tasted the fruit.

Learn, Grow, Eat and Go

- The after-school group at Dibrell Elementary learned about warm and cool season gardens, layout of a garden, and planting of seeds verses transplants. They observed preparing of *Garden Skillet*

Sizzle that

included zucchini, yellow squash, red, green and

yellow bell peppers, grape tomatoes, all mixed with reduced fat Italian dressing and parmesan cheese. Each



student tasted the recipe with half liking and asking for more and those who did not care for the taste. Everyone at least gave it a try!

4-H Youth Development

Alison Hopper, Extension Agent



4-H School Clubs

- December hosts our county-wide public speaking contest which included the top speakers from 4-12th grade. Over 650 students presented a speech in the classroom and the first-place speakers advanced to the county contest. First and second place speakers move to the sub regional contest.
- This school year, Leah and I brought back the 4-H Clover Bowl. This is a regional and state contest we scaled down to host in the 4-6th grade classrooms. The contest highlighted Tennessee history, agriculture, science and additional life skills. Over 1,000 4-Hers participated. Throughout February we will judge classroom demonstrations and interactive exhibits with those winners to be invited to the sub regional event in May.

National 4-H FCS Championship & Conference

- Warren County 4-H brought home first place in the Tennessee FCS Skillathon contest and earned a trip to a national

level contest held in San Antonio, TX in January. This team memorized nearly 300 different household items such as tools, appliances, cooking ingredients, and housing finishes. Their hard work paid off with the team winning first place in the nation in the life skills division and fifth place overall team. This was Warren County's first national contest invitation in nearly 12 years.



Judging Teams

- **Livestock Judging** -25 4-Hers are preparing to compete in the Central Region Livestock Judging Contest this April. During weekly practices, team members are learning how to judge commercial and market beef cattle, sheep, goats, and swine. Sr high members are also learning how to write and present oral reasons. Practices began mid-January and will run through the beginning of April.
- **FCS Skillathon** - 4-Her's from 6-12th grades will compete at the Central Region FCS Skillathon Contest in April.

This event teaches youth how to use, identify, and define various items found within the home. 4-Hers are also tasked with learning how to complete different life skills such as; event planning, resume building, interview etiquette, and financial literacy.

Warren County 4-H Hot Shots

- This team is in its eighth year. The team is made up of 13 6-12th graders. Team members learn firearm safety and improve their marksmanship skills through shooting trap and skeet. The team practices every Saturday at the Highland Rim Shooters Club in Tullahoma, TN in preparation for the state Shotgun Jamboree on May 3rd. The team is coached by James Jones, Chris Helton, Dustin Stoetzel, and Justin Rich.

2025 Central Region & State Swine Expo

- The 2025 Central Region and State Swine Expo was held January 11-14th at the Hyder-Burke Pavilion in Cookeville, TN. Karsyn Bain (5th grade) and Ayrin Drake (6th grade) represented our county at this event.

County Public Speaking Contest

- The Junior High/Senior High County Public Speaking Contest was held Monday, December 16, and the 4-6th Grade Public Speaking Contest was held Tuesday, December 10. Between the 2 contests, there were 55 participants representing youth in grades 4-12.

Sub-Regional Public Speaking Contest

- All county public speaking first and second place winners advanced to the sub-regional public speaking contest which was held January 23rd at the Motlow State Community College Moore County Campus. Warren County 4-H'ers competed against 4-H members from nine other surrounding counties. Sawyer Moore (5th grade) won his division. Senior high 4-Hers; Tage Moore, Takota Moore, EmiLee Lassiter, and Kaytlen Nunley advanced to the central region public speaking contest February 1.

Leah Prater, Program Assistant



FCE Clubs

- 2025 FCE Yearbook – *Warren County Fashion Then and Now* – 100 books were completed

4-H Clubs

- In-school clubs–assisted with meetings
 - 25 monthly clubs
 - March contest – 4-H poster
 - Jr 4-H Camp promotion
- Home School Meeting–Students examined fly's anatomy using microscope
- 2024-25 enrollment completed in SUPER with 1,216 current members in 59 clubs
- Entered 4-H participation data in SUPER database

- Livestock Judging – prepared swine lesson to be presented to 4-9th grade participants

2025 Chick Chain

- Prepared 49 informational packets
- Created registration forms
- Updated Chick Chain PowerPoint presentation
- Prepare for pullets' delivery

TELA Project

- Assisted Heath Nokes with video project for his TELA presentation



Tina Smock,
Administrative Assistant



TELA - Tennessee Extension Leadership Academy

- Attended TELA conference in Knoxville in January
- Working on TELA individual journey plan

Financial Q&A for County Admins

- Participate in weekly DASH meetings on Zoom to bring updates to staff

Financial Transactions

- Create expense reports using DASH
- Reconciled university budgets via monthly ledgers in IRIS and DASH

- Verified staff payroll/time entry through DASH
- Create travel reports for staff in DASH

Performance Review

- Submitted self-evaluation, created goals, and submitted documentation for rating

Master Gardeners

- Registered 34 interns for class and entered volunteers into SUPER database
- Emailed class with updates and Zoom links
- Assisted treasurer with checkbook entries and financial records

Learn, Grow, Eat and Go

- Co-taught 4-H LGEG curriculum with TNCEP Program Assistant to Dibrell afterschool program monthly

FCE Clubs

- Assist FCE members with annual records, information sheets and upcoming events.

Media

- Update Extension social media posts
- Update website for UT TSU Extension



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