

University of Maine Cooperative Extension Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties

2008/2009 Annual Program Report



Photo by Edwin Remsberg, USDA

University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Androscoggin-Sagadahoc Counties serves the residents of our counties with educational information and programs. Our programs are designed to meet specific local needs. Our office is part of a statewide organization and the national Extension system. This brings expertise, educational resources and programs to the residents, businesses and communities in Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties.



Photo by Edwin Remsberg, USDA

For more than 90 years, University of Maine Cooperative Extension has supported UMaine's land-grant public role by conducting community-driven, research-based programs in every Maine county. The Maine citizens we serve have changed a great deal since our inception in 1914. Yet there are constants, and the heart of our work has remained focused on strong families and capable, empowered youth; stewardship of agricultural and natural resources; and healthy communities. More than 10,000 people were involved in UMaine Extension education programs offered by or through UMaine Extension Androscoggin-Sagadahoc Counties, from October 2008 to October 2009.



Our local partner, the Androscoggin-Sagadahoc Counties' Extension Association, was created by the Maine Legislature in *The County Extension Act*. The Association is the official body in the counties for carrying on Extension work, with funds from the two counties to support the local office, and to provide educational information and programs.

The Association's Executive Committee, whose members volunteer their time and effort, is the vital link among the two counties, our communities and the University of Maine.

Major roles of the Executive Committee:

- Advise staff on the education programs needed in our counties.
- Secure funding from Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties to support the local office.
- Manage the office budget and facilities.

The County Extension Act explains the role of county government in funding local UMaine Extension offices.

The County Extension Act

Cooperative extension work shall consist of the giving of practical demonstrations in agriculture and natural resources, youth development, and home economics and community life and imparting information on those subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise. For the purpose of carrying out this chapter, there may be created in each county or combination of two counties within the State an organization known as a “county extension association,” and its services available to all residents of a county. The county extension is viewed as a unique and important educational program of county government. The executive committee of each county extension association shall prepare an annual budget as requested, showing in detail its estimate of the amount of money to be expended under this chapter within the county of counties for the fiscal year. The executive committee shall submit to the board of county commissioners on a date requested by the county commissioners, and the county commissioners may, if they deem it justifiable, adopt an appropriate budget for the county extension program and levy a tax therefore. The amount thus raised by direct taxation within any county or combination of counties for the purposes of this chapter shall be used for the salaries of clerks, provision of office space, supplies, equipment, postage, telephone, a contribution toward the salaries of county educators and such other expenses as necessary to maintain an effective county extension program.¹

¹Excerpted from Title 7, Chapter 7 of the Maine Revised Statutes, §191-§195



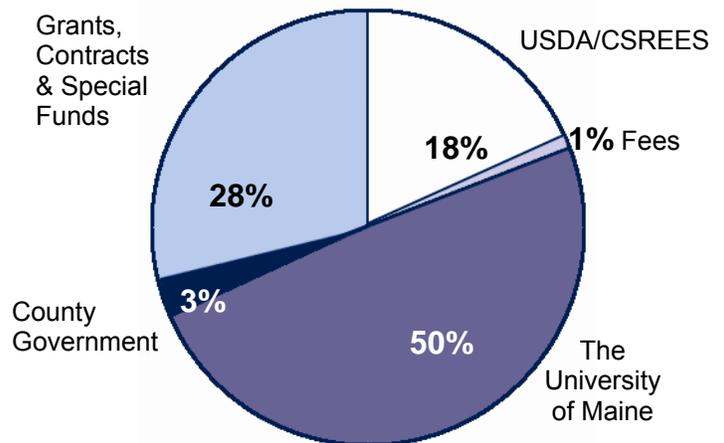
Photo by Edwin Remsberg, USDA

2008-2009 Contributions from UMaine Extension to Androscoggin-Sagadahoc Counties’ Extension

Androscoggin/Sagadahoc	2008/09
Local Salaries and Benefits	\$378,502
Prorated Support from UMaine*	\$464,536
Computer Equipment and Networking	\$7,960
Publications	\$1,229
Postage	\$4,064
Telephone	\$1,212
Travel	\$4,735
Total	\$862,238

Prorated Support from UMaine* reflects travel, postage, telephone, computer equipment & networking, salaries & benefits for administrative and state-wide staff.

UMaine Extension 2008-2009 Funding Sources



UMaine Extension’s successful educational programs result from a federal, state and county partnership. UMaine Extension uses funding from Maine counties and the University to match and leverage support from the United States Department of Agriculture, other federal grantors, state agencies, and private agencies.

Our current educational programs focus on:

- **GARDENING AND HORTICULTURE**
- **NUTRITION AND HEALTH**
- **FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**
- **4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
- **WILDLIFE HABITAT STEWARDSHIP**
- **AGRICULTURE**

GARDENING AND HORTICULTURE

The **Master Gardener Volunteers Program** provides in-depth training in the art and science of horticulture. In return, participants volunteer their time and expertise. This past year, our Master Gardener Volunteers donated over 400 hours to their communities. Their work included:

- teaching children about gardening
- planning and conducting educational workshops
- designing displays for special events
- working on community garden projects

This spring we trained a new class who are currently volunteering throughout our counties.



Photo by Edwin Remsburg, USDA

Homeowners from Androscoggin and Sagadahoc counties count on their local UMaine Extension office to provide timely and accurate answers to questions about their home gardens and landscapes. In 2009, nearly 350 inquiries ranging from “How do I manage tomato late blight?” to “Can you identify this insect?” were responded to. A workshop series for beginning vegetable gardeners, *From The Soil Up*, was also held in the Lisbon Falls office during the summer.



Photo by Edwin Remsburg, USDA

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The Educator for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Tori Jackson, works with farmers throughout Androscoggin and Sagadahoc counties. With a focus on maintaining viability and developing new markets, individual consultations are available for farmers or those thinking about becoming farmers.

Agricultural Activities this year included:

- *Farm Scoop*, a newsletter published in both print and electronic form for the farming community, reached about 1,200 farms in Androscoggin, Sagadahoc and Cumberland Counties.
- More than 5,000 growers and producers statewide received crop insurance education.
- New and beginning farmers took advantage of one-on-one farm business consultations.

Other Programs available:

- Soil Testing Materials/Plant Tissue Analysis
- Commercial Agriculture Consultations
- Small Scale Farming
- Marketing Informational Assistance
- [Farm Tractor Safety Course](#)
- Agricultural Plans
- Farm Based Enterprise Information
- Full and Part-time Farmers/Growers
- Farmers' Market Support

Natural Resource-Based Business

The main goal of this program is to enhance the economic and environmental sustainability of natural resource-based start-up businesses in Maine. Examples include:

- sustainable landscaping
- those utilizing Maine wood products
- those producing value-added specialty food products

Individual consultations with entrepreneurs occur throughout the year. In April 2009, *From Recipe to Market*, a workshop series for new specialty food businesses was held at the Lisbon Falls office. This series, developed by Extension colleagues Jim McConnon and Beth Calder, was attended by local southern Maine entrepreneurs.



Photo by Edwin Remsberg, USDA

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

The **Eat Well Nutrition Education Program** is free to eligible individuals, families, groups and schools. The program has been a part of University of Maine Cooperative Extension for 40 years, and is supported by federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food Stamp Nutrition Services. Methods for teaching good nutrition include home visits and workshops. Eat Well Associates reach many adults and children through their connections with community organizations such as Healthy Androscoggin, Common Ties, St. Andre's Home, Seeds of Life Program and Livermore Falls/Jay "Friends Together Social Club", a Peer Support & Recovery Center

In 2009, the Eat Well program served 216 adults and 300 children in Lewiston, Auburn, Lisbon, Mechanic Falls, Poland, Turner, Leeds, Livermore Falls and surrounding areas.



Photo by Edwin Remsberg, USDA

In addition to individual home visits, Eat Well provided educational programming to:

- **Public Housing Authority**, with approximately 20-30 children every month.
- **Head Start** programs, youth as well as parent groups
- **Food Pantries**, providing recipes and educational information.
- **Public schools in collaboration with 4-H and Mainely Nutrition/Take Time**
- **Community Centers**

Stories from our Eat Well Associates:

"I work with a Somali woman who's married with 7 children. We do a lot of cooking, all from scratch. One day when I was on my home visit with her, she mentioned her husband's cholesterol was 275 and his doctor wanted him to bring it down and lose 30lbs. So I sat down with him and we went over fats, cholesterol and sugar. I explained the right foods to eat to bring his cholesterol down and ways she could change her cooking to help. I suggested he keep a journal to stay on track and start walking. He used a treadmill and walked everyday. It took the winter and he lost over 30lbs. and brought his cholesterol down to 180. He and his wife are both happy and so is his doctor."

“I’ve been working with an elderly woman who has a difficult time getting out to shop, so she would have a friend purchase what she needed at the corner store, you can imagine it was not the best food and not economical. She is a diabetic and was having a hard time planning her meals. Right off we started working on that and I explained the benefits of having more fruits and vegetables and how it would help her diabetes. Of course getting her to a grocery store to purchase them was an issue. I set her up with an agency where she has an aide worker who comes in twice a week to help her and take her to the grocery store. The next thing I helped her with was signing up for Meals on Wheels. This has helped her so much. During the summer, there were a lot of times she didn’t eat because she didn’t feel like cooking so Meals on Wheels has been great for her. She is so grateful for all I’ve done. I met her at the grocery store last week. She purchased grapes, apples, plums, bananas, baby carrots and broccoli. She’s come a long way.”

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT



Photo by Edwin Remsburg, USDA

Senior Companion Program

Senior Companions meeting eligibility requirements spend 15-20 hours per week visiting homebound adults in an effort to combat loneliness and isolation. Senior Companions also provide respite for caregivers. This service provides the caregiver a much needed break from their care giving responsibilities. Those visited by the Senior Companions receive practical information and assistance for daily living, as well as companionship.

Senior Companions also benefit, by meeting new friends and knowing they are making a difference in the lives of others. The monthly trainings and support, stipend for their volunteer activities, mileage reimbursement, and paid holiday and leave time are some of the other benefits that companions receive from this program.

We are fortunate to have Clover Health Care, as a program partner, joining Androscoggin Home Care and Hospice and SeniorsPlus. This new partnership enables the program to reach more lonely and isolated elderly.

In the past year Senior Companions received training on such topics as “Chair Dancing” for exercise, scams, emergency preparedness, improving listening skills, safe driving practices, home energy solutions, diabetes and nutritional updates.

An important highlight was a Senior Companion reunion, bringing together present and retired Senior Companions. Their devotion to the program and the friendships that have formed is truly one of the greatest benefits of this program.

In the past year 10 Senior Companions have served 6,155 volunteer hours. They have traveled 11,394 miles, making over 2,719 visits with their clients.



Photo by Edwin Remsburg, USDA

Extension Homemakers

Historically, Extension Homemaker groups served as an avenue for Extension Agents to teach rural women the latest methods of gardening, cooking, food preservation, sewing, house-cleaning and raising children. Today, membership is open to anyone who is interested, male or female. Group members meet in informal settings where they learn about topics of interest, develop leadership skills, promote Extension's educational programs to community and family, volunteer in their communities and create positive relationships with others. There is a strong commitment to lifelong learning.

Extension Homemakers in Androscoggin and Sagadahoc County are typically female age 60 or older and retired from the workforce. Currently there is one group of homemakers who meet monthly in Poland. This group has monthly educational sessions which bring in guest speakers and other educators.

Parenting Education

Parents at Two Bridges Regional Jail are invited to participate in parenting education. These educational experiences are offered in the jail for parents of young children, school aged children and teenagers.

Five different three week sessions of parenting education have been offered to parents; over 30 parents have successfully completed the sessions.

Parents learn ways to stay connected with their children while they are incarcerated. Parents report feeling better connected to their children as well as having a better understanding of child development.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H (Head, Heart, Hands and Health) is the largest out-of-school youth program in the U.S. In our counties, there are 65 youth members, 22 adult 4-H Leaders and 144 other adult volunteers. Meetings were held year-round, focusing on life skills such as leadership, respect, responsibility and citizenship.



4-H Volunteer Training- "Learning By Doing"

2009 4-H Highlights

Over 40 requests for information regarding 4-H clubs in the area were fielded by the office in 2008.

Twenty new volunteers were trained to lead 4-H groups in the counties.

Chelbie Aube, Maisy Cyr, Jordan Davis and Mallori Manson were members of the Maine Eastern States Horse Team. These youth represented the state of Maine at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts.

In 2009 the 4-H program expanded with three new clubs. Sew Fabulous is a multicultural sewing club which meets at Hillview Apartment Complex, a program of Lewiston Housing Authority. Thirteen teen aged girls ages 13-19 participate in a bi-weekly afterschool sewing club.



Members of Sew Fabulous 4-H club

The young women in this group are not only learning about clothing design and construction, they are learning critical life skills such as future planning, goal setting, organization skills and community service.

Wicked Wild Ones is a 4-H afterschool program which meets at Broadview Acres- a program of Auburn Housing Authority. Youth ages 8-12 meet monthly and explore different types of art, photography, cooking as well as community service and citizenship education.

Finally Nature Kids on Outdoor Adventures is a traditional 4-H club which meets bi weekly. This group is made up of over 20 youth who are home schooled. The focus of this club is to bring nature into every day play experiences.

Other Programs available:

- Ongoing Volunteer Development Training
- 4-H curriculum/ Club Support
- The Power of the Wind- Volunteer Training
- Maine Family Times
- School based training
- Teacher Training
- Child Care provider training

WILDLIFE HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

The Habitat Stewards™ Program educates volunteers to improve wildlife habitat in their communities. In return for training and continuing education workshops by conservation experts, Habitat Stewards volunteer to educate others or help with habitat projects. Five Habitat Stewards volunteered 107 hours to many projects and activities, and worked with more than 558 people in their communities.

Habitat Stewards™ is a program of the National Wildlife Federation® and, in Maine, is a joint effort with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. The formal agreement, now in its fifth year, between NWF and a state's Extension remains unique in the nation.

Visit our website for program and informational links:
<http://www.extension.umaine.edu/habitatstewards/>

Habitat Stewards' volunteer work this year includes:

- Consultation with several homeowners regarding the process of getting their yards certified as Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation.
- Various workshops, "Improving Wildlife Habitat in the Home Landscape," were conducted for garden clubs, town libraries, adult education programs, the Brunswick Park & Gardens, and other community organizations.
- A workshop on ways to restore the endangered New England cottontail habitat.
- Consultation with homeowners in Brunswick in order to get their yard ready to be certified as at Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation.
- Various workshops, "Improving Wildlife Habitat in the Home Landscape," were conducted for garden clubs, town libraries, public schools, adult education programs and other community organizations.
- Consultation with the Bath Garden Club on habitat improvement on for various landscapes.



Photo by Amy Witt

Androscoggin-Sagadahoc Counties Office



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Current Staff in our Office

Al Beseler, VISTA Volunteer
Ruth Cyr, Nutrition Program Associate
Matthew Fornoff, VISTA Volunteer
Tori Lee Jackson, Extension Educator
Jennifer O'Leary, Marketing Manager
Kristy L. Ouellette, Extension Educator
Lisa Phelps, Program Administrator
Dana Rickman, Administrative Assistant
Sarah Sparks, 4-H Professional
Eric Thoreson, Nutrition Program Associate

Seeking Volunteers- we need you!

Become a member of the Executive Committee for the Extension Association in Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties! Please call today to find out more.

353-5550 or 1-800-287-1458

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