

Ag Days Open to the Public This Year

By Larry Caplan, Extension Horticulture Educator, Vanderburgh County, IN

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Too many of our youth, even those living out in the “country,” have little to no idea where their food comes from. They don’t realize how many of the products they eat, handle, or wear each day get their origins from American farmers. These children grow up to be adults, who remain unaware of how important farming is to our nation.

Every year for the last 30 years, the Vanderburgh County Extension Service, with the help of local farmers, FFA and 4-H students, and Master Gardeners, has held an Ag Days program for fourth-grade students. School groups are brought out to the Vanderburgh 4-H Center, where they can meet local farmers, get up close to living farm animals, and see samples of the many by-products derived from crops and livestock. We even show them the importance of math to farmers!

This year, for the first time, we are opening Ag Days to the general public, so you can see what your children have been learning (or remember what you learned when you went through the program years ago!).

Local farmers will display their livestock, and explain how they care for their poultry, hogs, sheep and cattle. Grain farmers will demonstrate how corn, beans and wheat are grown locally, and then show some of the multiple ways these grains are used for food, cosmetics, and other commodities. And if you think hamburgers and pork chops are the only things we get from farm animals, prepared to be amazed at the wide range of by-products we can get.

The “math on the farm” exhibit does more than show the students how basic multiplication and subtraction are used by farmers. We demonstrate the concept of units of measurement, and display some of the units that farmers use, such as bushels and acres. The students learn how to calculate income, look at some of the expenses farmers have to produce a crop, and then calculate profit...or loss. This then leads into a discussion on some of the challenges farmers face in maintaining the family farm.

The public Ag Days display will be held Wednesday, April 12, starting at 6 pm sharp! We will meet at the Vanderburgh 4-H Center, 201 East Boonville-New Harmony Road, Evansville. The program takes place in the Horse Pavilion, located way towards the back (south side) of the property. This program is free, and open to everyone, whether you have a student in the school system or not!

If you have any questions about Ag Days, please contact the Purdue Extension Service at 812-435-5287.