



2018 - 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
PISCATAQUIS COUNTY



extension.umaine.edu

165 East Main Street | Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426

800.287.1491 (in Maine) | or 207. 564.3301

E-mail: extension.piscataquis@maine.edu

OFFICE OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR



Welcome to the University of Maine Cooperative Extension! We are located across the state in 16 county offices, research farms, 4-H camps, and online. We are the largest outreach component of the University of Maine and reach more Maine people than any other entity within the seven campus University of Maine System. Our work is focused on two areas of excellence. UMaine Cooperative Extension conducts the state's most successful out-of-school youth education program through 4-H, empowering young people to reach their full potential. Extension also helps support, sustain, and grow the food-based economy across the entire state of Maine. We are the only entity in our state that touches every aspect of the Maine Food System, where policy, research, production, processing, commerce, nutrition, and food security and safety are integral and interrelated.

UMaine Cooperative Extension is determined to make a positive difference in our areas of excellence for the citizens of Maine. Explore our website, visit a county office, and contact our enthusiastic workforce.
— Lisa Phelps, Interim Director



Caribou native named dean of University of Maine Cooperative Extension

Caribou, Maine native Hannah Carter has been named dean of University of Maine Cooperative Extension, effective May 1. Carter was an associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida (UF), which is part of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). She directed UF's Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources, and was interim director of the UF/IFAS Center for Leadership.

Carter received her Ph.D. and master's degree in agricultural education and communication, specializing in agricultural leadership and Extension education, from the University of Florida, and has been a member of the UF community since 1997. She is a graduate of the University of Maine at Presque Isle.

"For more than a decade, Dr. Carter has been involved in leadership development programming on state and national levels, particularly as it pertains to agriculture and Cooperative Extension," says Jeffrey Hecker, UMaine executive vice president for academic affairs and provost. "She also knows UMaine Extension and the difference it can make — from 4-H, the most successful out-of-school youth education program in Maine, to the integrated pest management program that supports the state's agriculture industries. The fact that, following an extensive national search, the candidate who rose to the top of the applicant pool has deep roots in Maine is the icing on the cake. We are thrilled that Hannah will return to her home state to lead the university's most extensive community outreach enterprise."

"I have a passion for people, for agriculture and for 4-H, and I am so excited for the opportunity to return home and apply all my experiences for the benefit of the state of Maine. This position is one that I aspired to, and I look forward to beginning my new position in May," Carter says.

***Putting university research to work in homes, businesses, farms,
and communities for over 100 years.***

*Our annual report features highlights of recent accomplishments
and the difference we make in the lives of Maine citizens and their communities*

PISCATAQUIS COUNTY OFFICE

Piscataquis County Extension Association

Executive Committee:

Dr. Beth McEvoy, President
David Bridges, Vice President
Carole Boothroyd, Secretary
Dr. Karen Murphy, Treasurer
George McKay
Gretchen Huettner
Ben Cookson
Dotty Hadler – Retired
Richard Neal - Retired

Piscataquis County Staff

Barbara Baker, Extension Educator – Retired
Donna Coffin, Extension Professor
Sheila Norman, 4-H Professional
Trisha Smith, Home Horticulture Community Education Assistant
Laurie Bowen, Food System Community Education Assistant
Anette, Moulton, Administrative Specialist

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS —MAINE FOOD SYSTEM

Preserving the Harvest

Ever wonder how to preserve all those great garden vegetables? Laurie Bowen, UMaine Extension Community Education Assistant offers hands-on food preservation workshops to teach the basics of canning and freezing, including how to use water bath canners to preserve pickles, jam, and vegetables. There has been a strong interest in this topic with almost 50 people learning more about food preservation and food safety.

- Hands-on workshops – We provide fresh produce and canning jars. Each participant takes home a jar of what is prepared and a packet of information on canning.
- Fair and Farmers' Market displays to help attendees with food preservation questions and distributed bulletins on food safety and food preservations. Demonstrated how to dry herbs and make herbal vinegars with food safety in mind.





Sustainable Agriculture - 2nd Annual Keeping Small Ruminants Healthy Clinic a Success!!

Building awareness of disease and learning screening techniques for sheep, goats, alpacas and other small ruminants was the focus of the 2nd Annual Keeping Small Ruminants Healthy Clinic in April at the Foxcroft Large Animal Veterinary Associates (FLAVA) Clinic, in Dover-Foxcroft.

Sponsored by University of Maine Cooperative Extension and FLAVA, topics included what diseases are common in small ruminants and what screening techniques farmers can do to assess the health of their animals. Catarina Ruksznis DVM, FLAVA large-animal veterinarian lead the discussion on disease awareness in small ruminants

and gave an overview of screening tests available. Colt Knight PhD, UMaine Extension Livestock Specialist, demonstrated and certified attendees in FAMACHA technique as a diagnostic tool that measures the parasite load in small ruminants.

Participants were encouraged to bring fecal samples from their animals so they could learn how to prepare the samples and use a microscope to assess parasite load in their animals. Beth McEvoy, Brian Blanchard, and Karen Murphy assisted with the hands-on activities. A special thanks to Wendy Russell and Dieter Bayerdorffer from Widdershins for providing the animals for the demonstrations. Also, a special thanks to the chair and table rustlers George McEvoy, Bruce Tibbetts, Anette Moulton and Trisha Smith.



Home Gardening – One Tomato

With the goal of increasing the number of households that grow food gardens, consume food produced in their garden and recognize the UMaine Extension as a source of garden information, Piscataquis county adopted the One Tomato™ project. After five years 1,794 tomato seedlings have been distributed in Piscataquis County and it is estimated that over \$14,700 worth of cherry tomatoes were grown and consumed by participants. 400 more plants were distributed in 2019.

19% of those receiving the tomato seedling had never gardened before and for 25% of the participants, this was their first contact with UMaine Extension. In addition to meeting the initial goals by having people start a garden and consume home grown produce, this project has encouraged volunteers to become more involved in funding of the county office, distribution of the seedlings and review of the project impacts through the years.

What started out to be a project to encourage county residents to grow their own food, by starting a garden with one tomato seedling, has also turned into a method of also introducing people to UMaine Extension's garden resources including our publications, website, Facebook page and e-newsletters.



This project has also been a way to encourage county executive committee members get involved in funding, distribution of plants and review of the impacts of the project through the years. The county executive committee members have a real ownership of the program and have come to expect the project to be done every year. Master Gardener Volunteers were able to contribute time to a program that enabled them to go into the food cupboards to work with people of different financial means.

One Tomato™ project is more than a give-away program, since seedling recipients are asked to give feedback on how their tomatoes grew during the season. It is getting citizens more involved in giving feed-back on vegetable varieties and a start in being involved in a citizen science project. Seedling recipients will stop Extension staff in the store or other places to comment on how well their plants are doing and how pleased they are to be able to have fresh tomatoes just outside their door. In 2018, the project team members got a little too ambitious with five varieties. The harvest survey ended being too long for many participants. In 2017, three varieties were used and fewer varieties resulted in a 30% response rate for the harvest survey compared to a 22% return rate in 2018.

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS — 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



[‘Passport to Summer Fun’ Program: a ticket to learning, community engagement and healthy habits](#)

The ‘Piscataquis Passport to Summer Fun’ project began in 2017 to incentivize participation in the free summer meal program held at the SeDoMoCha school in Dover-Foxcroft. The collaborative effort led by Healthy Piscataquis (now Piscataquis Regional Food Center) and UMaine Cooperative Extension has since evolved into an even larger program focused on motivating kids and their families to engage with various community agencies, events and learning opportunities

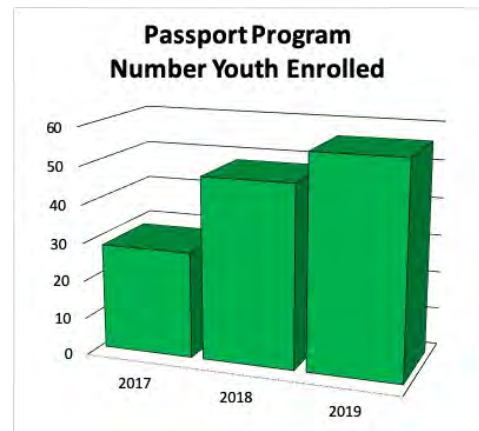
that support positive youth development and aim to reduce potential food insecurity and summer learning loss.

How it works:

Youth ages 5-18 are enrolled in 4-H and issued a personalized, laminated ‘Passport to Summer Fun’, which they take with them on their explorations of the community, to be stamped or signed at selected events and locations. Younger siblings may participate, but won’t be considered 4-H’ers. Youth who sign up receive a passport that they have stamped at the:

- SeDoMoCha school garden,
- Thompson Free Library,
- Dover Cove Farmers Market (DCFM),
- SeDoMoCha Middle School free summer meal site,
- Mayo Regional Hospital free summer meal site,
- Piscataquis Soil and Water Conservation District ‘Adventures in Nature Series’ at the district’s Law Farm, and
- Other events.

One of the most popular features of the passport project is Veggie Vouchers. Each time the participants have their passports stamped at DCFM, they receive \$5 in Veggie



Vouchers (up to \$30) to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at DCFM. Veggie Vouchers are supported by the Piscataquis Regional Food Center, the Piscataquis Extension Association Executive Committee and Farm in the Woods. Youth will also find a new series of enrichment activities at the market this year coordinated by a Master Gardener Volunteer.

Since its 2017 inception, 132 youth have enrolled in the passport program and approximately \$500 in veggie vouchers were redeemed at the market. The project is a collaboration between the University of Maine Cooperative Extension 4-H and Master Gardener Volunteers and a collection of ten community partners. Thanks to their efforts, we're seeing more engaged kids at the market, out in nature, and in the garden!

4-H Youth Groups & Activities

The towns listed below are where 4-H clubs, teams or groups meet, but youth from anywhere are welcome to participate if they are willing to travel. Spln Clubs are short term special interest groups that meet.

Super Science – Monson/Guilford
Wild Blueberry Cloverbuds Club – Greenville
Mighty Monarchs – Dover-Foxcroft
4-H After School – Brownville
Sew Much Fun Spln – Dover-Foxcroft
Dover Cove Farmers' Market Spln – Dover-Foxcroft
Explore the World Around You Spln – Dover-Foxcroft



The Super Science 4-H Club competed in the statewide Envirothon and presented a poster.

Public Speaking and Demonstration Tournament held at the Congregational Church in Dover Foxcroft – Members of the Wild Blueberries Cloverbuds gave a demonstration. 13 youth participated and gave presentations, illustrated talks and demonstrations on a variety of topics. Judges for the event included George McKay,

Rebecca Huettner and Barbara Lockwood. Timer/ tabulators included Beth McEvoy and Shea-lyn Moulton. Seven presenters qualified to go to the state tournament at the University of Maine in Orono.



Brownville After School 4-H activities included duct tape creations, kitchen science, gardening and two STEM Ambassadors led the group in learning about forest and paper products. The group took their annual trip to the University of Maine in Orono as part of this program.



The Sew Much Fun participants made totes during their Special Interest (SPIN) program during school vacation.



The 4-H year culminates in members having an opportunity to exhibit their projects at the Piscataquis Valley Fair. This year the 4-H Leaders Association expanded their space for educational activities in a tent outside the 4-H Exhibit Hall – Bell Building. The 4-H Clubs use the fair as a venue to conduct their silent auction fundraising event that helps fund their activities and trips throughout the year.

The annual awards program is where certificates, ribbons and other awards are given out for the hard work completed. Our thanks to the Valley Grange in Guilford for allowing us to use their facility for the annual awards program. During the year several Piscataquis County 4-H members were able to participate in special trips within the state of Maine including the 4-H @ UMaine: Connecting Kids to Campus, and 4-H at the Maine State Senate for Page Day. National trips included two youth attending the Citizenship Washington Focus in Washington DC and the Communication Science Team represented Maine at Eastern States Exposition in Massachusetts.

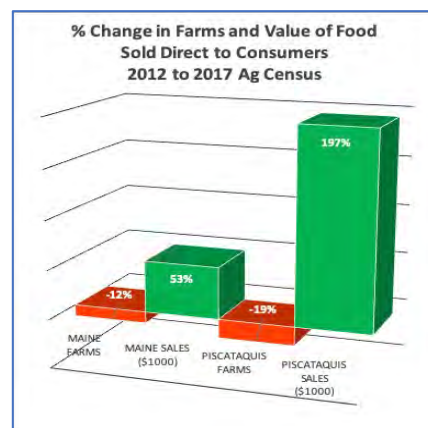
There have been a number of transitions within the 4-H staff. In the fall of 2018 Barb Baker retired from her position as 4-H Youth Piscataquis and Penobscot Educator. Sheila Norman was selected to fill the new position of 4-H Youth Professional for Piscataquis and Penobscot Counties. Later this summer a new person will be hired to fill the 4-H Community Education Associate.

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS — COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2017 Census of Agriculture

The Census of Agriculture is done every five years to measure the changes that have occurred in the farm community. Locally, some of the changes include an increase in the value of sales in Piscataquis County to \$9.1 million in 2017 from \$8.6 million in 2012 with a decrease in the number of farms to 188 farms from 203 in 2012. Maine experienced a 7% drop in farm numbers and a 13% drop in value of sales.

There has been a huge increase in the value of direct sales in Piscataquis County with almost 200% increase in the value of food sold directly to consumers from 2012 to 2017. In 2012 there



were \$264,000 in direct sales to consumers from 58 farms in Piscataquis County and in 2017 that increased to \$785,000 in sales, but the number of farms selling direct decreased to 47 farms.



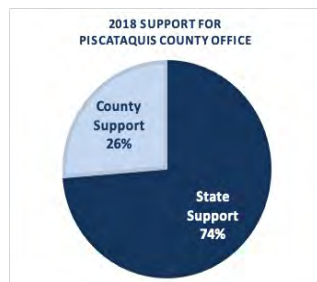
Maple Syrup production in Piscataquis County increased with 3,414 gallons produced in 2017 compared to 1,667 gallons in 2012 at 205% increase with only one more farm added to the list with a total of 21 farms producing syrup in 2017.

There was an increase in farms with organic product sales in 2017 to 15 farms from 11 farms in 2012. Those 15 farms sold \$485,000 in organic products in 2017 compared to \$140,000 in 2012.

Almost 350% increase in sales. And the number of on-farm packing facilities increased 175% to 21 farms doing on-farm packing of their products. Also, there were 24 farms (13%) with young producers (35 years old or younger) and 78 farms (41%) with new and beginning producers (10 years or less) in Piscataquis County in 2017. In Maine 13% were young producers and 36% were new and beginning producers.

FINANCIAL

University of Maine Cooperative Extension Support for Piscataquis County

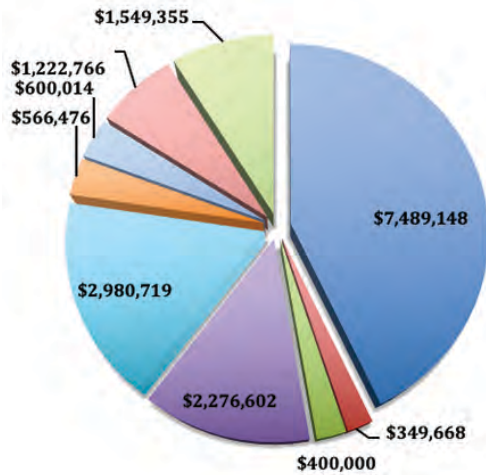


Dollars from other sources support salaries and benefits for Extension specialists, county educators, Extension administration, computer equipment and networking, publications, postage, telephone, and travel.

Without statewide support, UMaine Extension would not be present in your county. Funds for projects are provided through the University of Maine, Federal Formula Funds, grants, contracts, and fees.

Piscataquis County	State Support CY2018	County Support 2018	County Support 2019
Local Salaries and Benefits	\$201,941	\$18,602	\$20,725
Marketing, Publications, Video, Computer Equipment, and Networking	\$2,472		
Statewide Animal Diagnostic Lab	\$12,137		
Office Supplies & Equipment		\$1,900	\$1,900
Local Programming Supplies & Expenses	\$1,059	\$1,200	\$1,200
Telephone & Postage	\$1,746	\$625	\$625
Travel	\$6,202		
Office Space		\$60,015	\$60,015
TOTAL	\$225,557	\$80,415	\$84,465

Statewide Extension Funding



As a unique partnership among federal, state and county governments, 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 foundations. Each county UMaine Extension office is also part of a statewide organization and the national Extension system.

This pie graph illustrates the financial resources for programs offered, supported and managed out of the Piscataquis county office. Each year, Piscataquis county tax dollars support the UMaine extension with physical office space, support staff salaries, office supplies, equipment and some programming expenses.

Univ. E & G
MEIF
State of Maine - Diagnostic Lab
Grants & Contracts
Federal Capacity Funds
Gifts and Fundraising
County Funds
Income from Operations
4-H Camp Operations

STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS —MAINE FOOD SYSTEM



So You Want To Farm In Maine

Relevance – Interest in agriculture and starting new farms in Maine has increased dramatically over the past fifteen years. One third of Maine’s farmers are beginning farmers with fewer than 10 years of experience. Forty-seven percent of new farm businesses fail within the first five years. Current farmers thinking about changing farm enterprises and new farmers interested in starting a farm often lack skill, knowledge and confidence in areas such as business planning, access to capital, rules and regulations affecting agriculture operations, and marketing.

Response – Since 2011, UMaine Extension has provided educational outreach through its “So You Want to Farm in Maine” series to enhance the skills, business management knowledge, confidence of new and established farmers. The programs are live, live-streamed, and archived. One-on-one consultations help potential farmers to best utilize natural resources, web-based resources, and seek appropriate guidance from other agricultural service providers.

Results – Since 2011 the SYWTFIM series has reached over 800 participants from all Maine counties and out-of-state. Since 2014, an online new farmer self-assessment has been used 190 times, and Extension staff have consulted with 505 new farmers statewide. A survey sample of these farmers revealed:

- Fifty-one new farm businesses have been started where the farm operator has a good understanding of the importance of business planning and how to connect to the educational, financial, and service resources available to them in Maine.
- Eighty-eight new jobs, with estimated wages of \$612,000 annually.
- An estimated total market value of agricultural products sold by these farms of over \$2.2 million annually.
- FSA loaned \$2.4 Million in farm loans the farmers who attended the SYWTFIM training sessions.

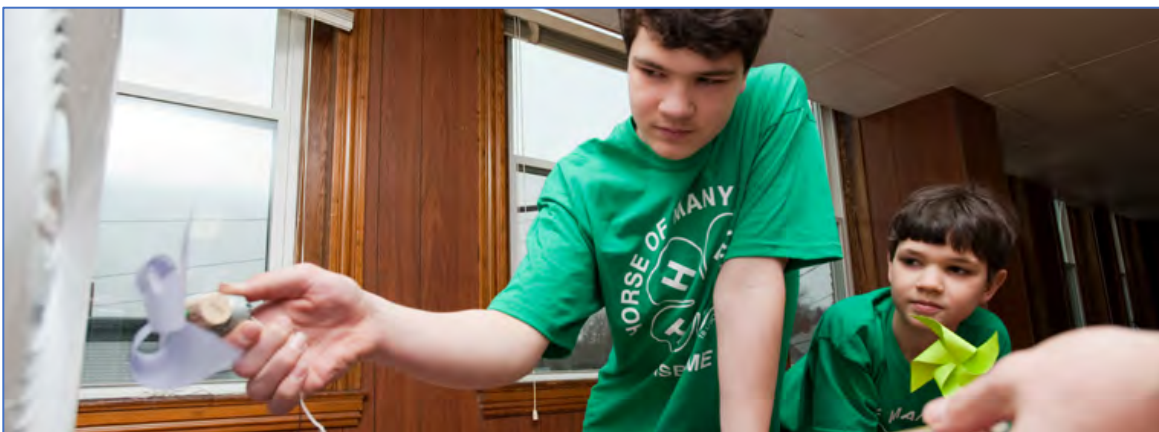
STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS — 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H Ambassadors Sparking Student Interest In Stem Careers

Relevance – Relevant, meaningful, and authentic experiences in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are important to developing positive attitudes, increasing knowledge, and preparing Maine youth for the estimated 9 million STEM-related occupations projected between 2012 and 2022. Developing Maine youth's STEM literacy is vital to ensuring that our state continues to thrive economically and socially. Given the remote and diverse communities to which Maine youth belong, informal education can help minimize inequities in rural youth STEM education and career pipelines.

Response – In coordination with the University of Maine System, the 4-H STEM Ambassador program trained 120 college students in the development and delivery of informal STEM-based educational experiences. Combined, these volunteers worked with over 1,000 youth, and committed 2,400 hours of time including training, preparation and program delivery. Through this program, youth ages 8-14 come to view these Ambassadors as mentors and leaders in their community while also developing skills in STEM through hands-on activities.

Results – In 2018 the 4-H STEM Ambassador program provided experiential programming to over 1,000 youth. Sixty-six community sites, including schools and afterschool partners, participated with teachers and administrators reporting high levels of satisfaction. Student participants reported that without this program their instructional time with STEM would be reduced. As a result of this program participating youth have demonstrated positive attitudes, increased knowledge, and expanded interest in STEM and STEM careers. This year, all seven UMaine System campuses participated in the 4-H STEM program.



STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS — COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Helping Rural Entrepreneurs Increase Profitability

Relevance – Small businesses are very important to the economic vitality of Maine’s rural economy. One in five jobs in rural Maine are created by small-scale entrepreneurs employing five or fewer workers. However, many of these entrepreneurs lack the business skills needed to successfully start-up and grow their businesses. Research shows that helping rural entrepreneurs improve their business skills will improve their chances for success.

One of the most important business management skills is pricing, yet many small business owners lack the knowledge and skills necessary to develop a profitable pricing strategy.

Response – During the past year, the UMaine Extension conducted pricing workshops across the state, presented a pricing webinar in collaboration with the Maine Food Strategy, and taught a pricing seminar at a statewide conference for Maine entrepreneurs. The goal of the program was to help existing and aspiring entrepreneurs improve their pricing knowledge and skills so they could develop profitable pricing strategies for their businesses. Extension faculty conducted classes on topics including key elements of pricing, pricing models, pricing strategies, price elasticity of demand, markup vs. margin and cost analysis.

Results – More than 80 rural entrepreneurs from across Maine participated in this highly successful training. They included specialty food producers, farmers, craft artists, food retailers, environmental consultants, bookkeepers and other small rural businesses. Eighty-seven percent of the participants indicated that they plan to set a new price for their product or service, and all participants plan to adopt the pricing techniques they had learned. Several entrepreneurs who had attended the workshops indicated that they subsequently created pricing strategies that led to increased profitability for their businesses.

PISCATAQUIS COUNTY EXTENSION MEDIA SURVEY

UMaine Cooperative Extension is your doorway to University of Maine expertise. For over 100 years, we’ve been putting university research to work in homes, businesses, farms, and communities — in every corner of Maine and in every part of the Maine Food System. Our Positive Youth Development through 4-H hands-on learning programs focus on STEM disciplines as well as traditional “home economics” skills.

In addition to our state offices in Orono, we have a network of county-based offices staffed by experts who provide practical, locally-based solutions for farmers and other small business owners; kids and families; and individuals.

We are asking for your help to make us more effective with our program content and efficient in our communication methods by completing this survey. FMI 207-564-3301 or extension.piscataquis@maine.edu. Complete this survey online at <http://bit.ly/UMaineSurvey> or by scanning this QR code.



The County Extension Act

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

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.

Photos by: Donna Coffin, Anette Moulton, Sheila Norman, Trisha Smith, Edwin Remsberg

For more information contact:

University of Maine Cooperative Extension Piscataquis County
165 East Main Street
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426
Phone: 207.564.3301 or 800.287.1491 (in Maine)



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