



Orange Blossom Wheat Midge Monitoring Efforts Continue In 2015

Timing is Key with Pesticide Applications

Ongoing efforts continue in Pondera County to manage the relatively recent appearance of the Orange Blossom Wheat Midge pest. The OWBM first appeared in Montana in 2006 and made its way to Pondera County fields causing noticeable economic damage to spring wheat in 2012 with monitoring efforts beginning in 2013.

Participation in 2014 included approximately 20 producers monitoring 55 fields for midge activity. The wheat midge monitoring effort continued in 2015 through distribution of monitoring supplies and educational materials.

Twenty producers across the county received midge

traps, scouting instruction, technical support with the PestWeb reporting website and assistance in making management decisions. Through those 20 producers, over 40 fields were monitored for midge activity throughout Pondera County. A map of Pondera County and midge trap counts can be seen at pestweb.montana.edu.

This year 12,000 acres were sprayed, down from 14,500 acres in 2014. This could be due to fewer fields being monitored, but more likely is due to spring wheat reaching the flowering stage before the midge were flying this year, in which case spraying is not effective. Through monitoring, some producers were able to recognize that their spring wheat was not at a susceptible stage when they began seeing the midge in their traps and therefore pesticide inputs would not be a wise investment.

The value in the wheat midge monitoring project lies not only in acres spared from midge damage through effective, well-timed spraying efforts, but also through money saved on pesticide expenses that would not have been effective in cases where wheat stage and midge activity were not aligned and wheat had matured beyond the stage where midge damage could occur. Monitoring for timely application of pesticides helps to protect beneficial insects as well as a producer's bottom line. Parasitoids have been released at several different locations throughout Pondera County and the monitoring effort and parasitoid releases will continue in 2016.



Monitoring involves counting the cumulative number of insects on the trap. Growers are advised to start scouting in the evening when the midge count for the entire card is 8-10 insects over a 24-48 hour period.

New Agriculture Agent joins MSU Extension in Pondera County

Joining the Pondera County MSU Extension team is Shaelyn Meyer, a recent graduate from Montana State University. Shaelyn holds a degree in Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems - Livestock Production. It was a natural course of study having grown up on a cow/calf ranching operation in Eastern Montana. In recent years the family ranch has transitioned into a managed intensive grazing system which sparked Shaelyn's interest in using livestock to build soil health in both pasture and farming systems. She has a deep love for horses as well as livestock, a passion that prompted a move to Australia to work



with trainers there who specialize in starting colts and working with problem horses. Shaelyn also took the opportunity to work on a large cattle station in the Northern Territory of Australia where she saw a much different livestock industry than in the U.S.; where cattle are raised primarily for live export to Indonesia. She is very excited to spend as much time as possible out in the field with producers in 2016 learning from everyone's unique operation and helping to bring science-based information to the decision making process.

4-H Benefits Many

Life Skills and Life Lessons

Most people know that the 4-H program teaches a variety of life skills to youth. This is often seen in action through workshops, training and project work each 4-H member does throughout the year. Sometimes the life lessons are front and center and other times they are behind the scenes. This page looks at a summary of some of the activities where 4-H members put the four H's into practice during the last year:

Head

Sewing Workshops - 6-8 youth met once a month from November to April. They learned about contrasting and complementary colors in quilting, how to gather a ruffle while up-cycling a pair of jeans into an apron, how to cut fabric using a pattern, the importance of following directions, proper pressing techniques and making a small, zippered bag.



4-H member Brae Eneboe concentrates on sewing straight seams for her quilting project.

Heart

4-H volunteers are the life-blood of the Pondera County 4-H program. Over 30 4-H leaders and an additional 70 volunteers and donors contribute to the program for county and Marias Fair events. They enthusiastically give their time, expertise and financial support to be judges, to teach workshops and give lessons in various projects, provide the resources needed to buy materials and awards. Pondera County 4-H is supported through the Community Combined Fund Drive, Spice Sale Fundraiser, working concessions at the Lion's Club Whoop-Up Rodeo, selling fireworks and generous donors who sponsor awards for the Marias Fair.

Hands

This summer approximately 18 volunteers brought together by the 4-Leaf Clover 4-H club worked to complete a two-year project facilitated by MSU Extension to update the horse barns at the Marias fairgrounds. The stalls were made larger to better accommodate 4-H horses as well as the horses routinely stalled overnight at the fairgrounds as people pass through Shelby.

Volunteer efforts such as these are invaluable to the four Marias Fair counties who use the fairground facilities throughout the year. Had the project been hired out to an independent contractor, labor alone would have cost over \$4000. Materials for the project were paid for through grants which one 4-Her volunteered to write with the help of MSU Extension Pondera County. A \$500 Fix'em Up grant and a \$300 Department of Agriculture grant were received in addition to \$1,150 in donations from the 4-Leaf Clovers, the 4-H Council, the Marias Fair Horse Committee and a private donor. A local business, Conrad Building Center, also gave discounts to purchase materials for the project.



Health

4-H members, leaders and volunteers all benefit socially through the 4-H program. All learn how to network and communicate with each other while using important social skills such as self-responsibility, self-discipline, working for group goals, and learning leadership skills that will help all involved throughout a lifetime. Through the experiential learning process, youth, supported by caring adults and volunteers, internalize the knowledge and gain the ability to apply skills appropriately.

Family and Consumer Science

Food Safety for All



Issues related to food safety made the national news several times this year, and not for good reasons. Botulism sickened 24 people and caused one death from improperly home-canned food in Ohio. This year, a Salmonella outbreak from cucumbers that began in Montana caused three deaths and sickened 767 people in 36 states.

Safe food handling, from producer to consumer, has the potential to impact thousands of people each day. By the end of 2015, all Montana food service providers need to have at least one trained food safety manager per shift. In 2015, 41 people from Pondera, Teton, Toole, and Cascade counties took the ServSafe food handling certification program. Thirty-eight people completed the certification.

In addition to educating retail food vendors, safe food handling is also taught in the schools. In 2015 there were 43 high school and 37 middle school students in Conrad and 96 third graders and adults from three counties who learned about packing safe lunches and when to wash their hands at the Conrad Future Farmers of America (FFA) Farm Safety Day event.

All of the youth and adults who attended farm safety day washed their hands a minimum of 20 seconds before eating their lunch. All participants learned how their actions can affect others as it relates to food handling either in a retail business or at home. All participants also learned the difference between cleaning and sanitizing and what is the most appropriate method.

Lessons in

Etiquette

The word “etiquette” is an old French word which means “ticket.” People who use good etiquette may find they can write their ticket to almost anything and any place they want.

The finesse of table manners seems to be a dying art, especially in rural areas or for people who have not had an opportunity to experience a meal with not only multiple food courses, but also multiple sets of silverware and place settings.

Pondera Family and Consumer Science Agent Wendy Wedum was approached by Conrad High School Principal Ken Larson to teach etiquette to the freshman class. Larson

had read an article about a pro football player who said of all the college classes he took, the etiquette class his coach required him to take had the greatest impact on his career because anywhere he went, he was able to make a good first impression and be comfortable in any social setting.

Good professional etiquette indicates to potential employers that a mature, responsible adult can represent their company well. Not knowing proper etiquette could damage your image, prevent you from getting a job and jeopardize personal and business relationships. It also helps people avoid embarrassing themselves or sabotaging an interview.

Freshman and sophomores in the health class attended two lessons on etiquette. The first lesson focused on different types of table settings they might encounter, from casual to formal. They learned how to read a table setting, which would give them an idea of how many courses would be served and what might be on the menu. They learned the correct placement of silverware, glasses, and the order of using silverware. One student’s mother shared that her son came home and said, “Mom did you know there are seven different types of forks?”

The second lesson gave students information on personal table manners and conversation starters. They learned when to use their napkin, how to pass items, make introductions, and what to do when they are not sure what to do.

The Capstone project featured a sponsored, formal dinner for the freshman class with community members hosting tables. Students practiced their dining and conversational skills during a multi-course meal. The teens successfully navigated the formal meal, gained confidence, and several parents provided positive feedback about what their children learned during this experience.



Formal place settings can look intimidating.

Waste Pesticide Disposal Program

Keeping Pondera County Clean

A total of 300 pounds of waste pesticides were removed from Pondera County and safely delivered to the Department of Agriculture collection site in Great Falls. These unusable pesticides pose risks to human health and the environment if disposed of or stored improperly. Old containers may corrode and leak pesticides. Fire or flooding can cause pesticides to contaminate water, soil or become airborne. Cleanup can be expensive and dangerous to producers and their families.

Unused products may lose their label, or the label may be too soiled to read proper handling procedures. The longer unused pesticides are stored, the greater the risk of improper containment. The pesticide disposal program is a non-regulatory service that allows Pondera County residents to dispose of products in an inexpensive, safe and environmentally friendly way without risk of penalty.



The longer waste pesticides are stored, the greater the risk that the containers will corrode and leak pesticides into the environment.

Private Applicator Pesticide Training

Learning Integrated Pest Management

Within Pondera County, over 200 residents receive training facilitated by MSU Extension allowing them to gain Private Applicator Licenses necessary for purchasing restricted use pesticides. Pesticide training offered throughout the year at multiple programs within Pondera County makes staying certified possible for busy producers. MSU Extension is an ever available educational resource for county residents, whether it be through making recommendations, teaching calibration methods, supervising the use of pesticides, identifying weeds and/or conducting pesticide training.

One valuable aspect of pesticide training lies in the education of alternative pest management strategies to reduce expenses to landowners, reduce the risk of herbicide resistance and assure correct timing and effectiveness when pesticides are warranted and economic thresholds have been reached. Often the value of education is in the reduction of the use of pesticides when management decisions are made with attention to biology and economics alike.

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