

## Low-stress Livestock Handling with Dr. Temple Grandin and Curt Pate

### Two Big Names Come to Our Small Town

It was an incredible experience, said an attendee of the Low-Stress Livestock Handling workshop in Baker, Montana. The outreach of the program stretched across southeast Montana and the western Dakotas. The event was coordinated between the Fallon/Carter and Custer County Extension Offices with support from MSU Extension and the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.



**Pate and Grandin agreeing that low stress livestock handling is the best and most profitable way to handle livestock.**

The workshop featured author, animal scientist, and one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people, Dr. Temple Grandin. She currently is a professor at Colorado State University and she is known for her extraordinary understanding of the animal mind. Her specialty is cattle; her talent allows her to look at things from another perspective to understand how cows and other animals think. During the workshop, Dr.

Grandin shared her knowledge with livestock producers and taught them how to be a good observer in the livestock industry. She stated "sometimes the most obvious things are the least obvious" when it comes to working with livestock. She emphasized that we need to remove distractions in cattle-working facilities and be calm when working with cattle and it will make the experience less stressful for cattle as well as handlers. She also assisted in a live cattle demonstration, showing producers how cattle can be handled in a low-stress manner.

In addition to Dr. Grandin, Curt Pate shared his knowledge and expertise. Curt Pate is a well-known horse trainer, a former auctioneer and lifelong rancher. Pate works with both cattle and horses every day. "We were very impressed with Curt's 'down to earth' way of figuring the cattle out. I felt he really tried to put his practice on the ground for the rest of us to understand" commented a participant of the workshop. Pate demonstrated how to work cattle both on horse and on foot. He showed the audience the key steps in cattle training and how to get cattle to do the tasks they are asked to do.

A post survey was completed by almost half of the attendees. Of those, 96 percent felt that the program would have long-term economic impact on their operations. All agreed that the presentation improved their understanding of the impact of stress on animal performance and/or facilities that are used to handle livestock.

Earlier in the week, Grandin and Pate conducted the same workshop in Miles City. Dr. Grandin also spoke on autism and gave a presentation to youth livestock producers on how to keep calm. All in all, the total attendance for all the workshops was roughly 1,000.



**Pate and Grandin demonstrating techniques for working cattle that use their natural behavior.**

### **Fallon County**

#### **Commissioners:**

Bill Randash, Deb Ranum, & Steve Baldwin

**County Seat:** Baker

**County Population:** 3,079 (2013)

**Land Area:** 1,623 square miles

The economy of the county is driven by farming, ranching and oil production.

### **Carter County**

#### **Commissioners:**

James Courtney, Steve Rosencranz, & Rod Tauck

**County Seat:** Ekalaka

**County Population:** 1,174 (2013)

**Land Area:** 3,348 square miles

Farming and ranching are the principle industries, with beef production number one on the list.

# 4-H Grows in Fallon and Carter Counties

## 4-H Camp is enjoyed by all!

4-H Youth from seven Southeast Montana counties attend 4-H Camp each summer at Camp Needmore in Ekalaka. The three-day camp for third through sixth



Fallon and Carter County 4-H Youth and Teen Counselors attending the 2015 4-H Camp at Camp

graders is filled with educational activities, outdoor adventures and FUN! This year the 145 youth that attended learned about electricity and circuits from Southeast Electric Cooperative and bats from the Fish Wildlife and Parks. There were also eight workshops offered including fishing, rappelling, dance, crafts, woodworking, and nature hikes.

## 4-H Weed Pull

Fallon County 4-H Youth partnered with the Fallon County Weed Department in the first county weed pull. Youth gathered for an educational program on weed identification. The target weed for the weed pull was spotted knapweed, a noxious weed in Montana. 4-H Youth and volunteer leaders covered 50 acres and pulled 20 large garbage bags of spotted knapweed. By pulling the weed as a 4-H



12 Fallon County 4-H Youth and five adult leaders gather for the first County Weed Pull.

Community Service project, it saved roughly \$200 in herbicide application cost.

## Volunteers are the HEART of 4-H



4-H Leader teaches 4-H members how to handle money.

4-H Alumni help youth with their showmanship and fitting skills to help them prepare for the County Fair



## 2014-2015 Fallon & Carter County 4-H

- ◆ 147 4-H Youth with 54 Adult Volunteers
- ◆ 57 Volunteer Leaders
- ◆ 45 project areas
- ◆ 11 4-H clubs
- ◆ 81 4-H members live on farms
- ◆ 66 4-H members live in town
- ◆ The top project areas for 2015: Shooting Sports, Food & Nutrition, Goat, Cloverbuds, Horse, and Beef

## 4-H Shooting Stars Invitational

The Carter County Shooting Stars hosted a second annual Invitational Shoot in February in Ekalaka. There were 55 4-H youth from Carter, Fallon, McCone, Powder River, Wibaux, Rosebud/Treasurer and Custer Counties that participated. Numerous individuals and businesses in Carter County and Ekalaka offered their support and facilities to the youth involved in the shooting sports program and the Fallon County 4-H Shooting Sports offered their time, knowledge and equipment to help with the event. The event would not have been possible without all the volunteers and the community support.

The Carter County 4-H Shooting Sports leaders wanted to host an invitational because all the 4-H Shooting Sports competitions currently are on the western side of the state and they thought there would be interest and the opportunity to host one on the eastern side of the state. It turned out there was tremendous support from other 4-H Shooting Sports programs and from the 4-H Center in Bozeman. The Invitational is a great opportunity for 4-H members to practice in a competitive setting before the State Shoot in Bozeman in March. All youth that competed are a part of their local 4-H Shooting Sports program and have been practicing and learning proper safety procedures throughout the fall and winter. Youth competed in air pistol, air rifle and archery. The majority of the youth were between 9 and 12 years old, but there were also some very competitive shooters in the older age divisions.

Tanya Engle, Nationally Certified 4-H Archery Leader, came from Ennis to help with the archery event. She shared her experience and knowledge to help get the event started the last two years. Jim Kaiser, Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Miles City also attended the event and talked with the kids about firearm safety in addition to his presentation on "Life as a Game Warden."

The Carter County Shooting Sports program looks forward to making this an annual event and helping grow and improve the 4-H Shooting Sports program in Southeastern Montana.

## Other Extension Program Areas

### Positive Choices Youth Conference

The 2015 Positive Choices Youth Conference speaker was school counselor and violence prevention specialist Rusty May. May is also the founder of the Bullying & School Safety Foundation and School ToolsTv.com (STTV), a well-known resource in the classroom. STTV is a daily, one minute social skills webcast that's being watched by over 20,000 students in over 800 classrooms in the U.S. and Canada.



Kindergarten through third grade students gather at the Baker Grade School to attend a program by Rusty May.

May presented programs for youth kindergarten through twelfth grade. His message stressed the importance of believing in themselves to reach great potential. "If students don't believe it's more about them than about their test score, they won't reach their full academic potential and can become a major distraction." May further stated that bad habits and poor social skills are learned behaviors that can be changed and influenced by teachers and coaches.

The annual Positive Choice Youth Conference is offered to the students of Baker, Ekalaka, Plevna and Wibaux in Montana and Marmarth in North Dakota. There is also a session offered for adults. This year's program impacted 550 youth as well as teachers and parents. After 20 years of the conference, it is still supported by local community businesses and residents. This year, \$4,250 in donations were accepted to hire speakers and provide youth with a t-shirt to remind them of the message.

### Do-It-Herself Workshop Series

A series of six workshops were offered (January through June) to women in Fallon and Carter Counties. The workshops were geared to an underserved population and were a means to increase participation in Homemakers Clubs.

January: *Living on a Budget (3 week program)*

February: *Baking Basics*

March: *Itchin' to Start Stitchin' (beginners knitting class)*

April: *Best "Bag" for your Buck (economical nutrition)*

May: *Mother-Daughter Chocolate Making*

June: *Grilling and Kitchen Knife Skills*

### Orange Wheat Blossom Midge

MSU Extension is taking an active role in monitoring the presence and movement of the wheat pest, Orange Wheat Blossom Midge (OWBM). In the 1980s the OWBM began being a problem for spring wheat producers in Canada, Asia and Europe. It has only recently developed into a serious insect pest of spring wheat in Montana.

Flathead Valley experienced an unprecedented outbreak in 2006. This was the first report of any economic significance in the state. Spring wheat fields that normally would have yielded 80-90 bushels per acre instead produced less than two bushels. A conservative estimate put the economic loss at over 1.5 million dollars in Flathead County.



OWBM trap in Carter County.

The midge has since been a reoccurring problem in northwestern Montana. Unfortunately, the distribution of the midge appears to be expanding and unpredictable. Currently there has been no reported damage of the OWBM in southeast Montana. With the pest appearing in Montana and North Dakota, Fallon/Carter County Extension set up traps in June to help monitor for the presence and movement of the pest.

After the monitoring period, Fallon/Carter County confirmed that the pest is present in the area. Although the pests were far from the economic threshold, it was found in both spring and winter wheat fields in Fallon and Carter Counties. We can now start taking steps to educate producers about the pest and how to monitor for it and prepare for a possible future outbreak.

### Local Board Trainings

Fallon/Carter Extension Office offered a Board Leadership training featuring Dan Clark, Director of the MSU Local Government Center. Clark gave an energetic presentation and addressed the questions and concerns of our local boards.

The program reached numerous boards and organizations including: Ambulance, Fire, Weed, Town Councils, Fair, 4-H, County Commission, Planning, Hospital, Southeastern Montana Area Revitalization Team, Eastern Montana Economic Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and Water and Sewer. Dan was able to share his wealth of knowledge and expertise to help our local boards

be more successful and effective and better manage responsibilities and risk.



Dan Clark, Director, MSU Local Government Center, gave a presentation and addressed questions from local boards.

## Tracking Livestock Water Quality

Water is the most important nutrient for livestock. A quality and safe water supply is essential to the production of healthy livestock. If water is not suitable for consumption, it can adversely affect the growth, reproduction and productivity of livestock. Often it is excessive salinity-too high concentration of dissolved solids of various kinds that affect water quality in our area.

Salinity or total dissolved solids (TDS) is a good general indicator of water quality. Total dissolved solids are the sum of all minerals, metals, and salts dissolved in the water. In our area, high TDS are typically a result of high sulfate and sodium ions. Sulfur can accumulate to toxic levels quickly in livestock and cause a brain disorder referred to as polioencephalomalacia (PEM). Symptoms include blindness, lethargy, staggers and disorientation, head pressing, loss of appetite, decreased performance, legs may be rigidly extended, convulsions, and death.



Southeast Montana has had a history of having poor livestock water due to high levels of TDS and specifically sulfates in the water. This becomes a concern in late summer and during drought years when the salts become more concentrated in water supplies. To help get a better baseline for livestock water quality in our area and help livestock producers ensure the health and productivity of their cattle, Fallon/Carter County Extension monitors seven livestock water sources twice a month throughout the grazing season. Generally speaking, this year livestock water sources increased in TDS as we moved

through summer and into the fall. This is typically what we see from year to year. However, reservoirs dried up more this year than they did in 2014, as a result of a dry winter and below average precipitation. Livestock water quality may be a concern again next year depending on winter and spring precipitation. Water quality appears to be heavily influenced by precipitation, temperature and soil quality.

Producers are encouraged to test their water if they are questioning its quality. Water quality has a major influence on reproduction and general health of livestock. The Fallon-Carter County Extension Office has water testing meters and will test for Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) free of charge. By being able to test water in our office, this saves producers \$25 to \$45 by not having to send samples off to the lab for analysis. We are able to provide quick results and recommendations that help producers make management decisions and reduce health problems in livestock herds when the water is unsuitable for livestock consumption.

## Water Quality Outdoor Classroom

Fallon/Carter Extension worked with the Local Conservation District and presented a hands-on workshop on water quality to sixth grade students. We assisted students in building their own water filters and discussed the different material they used and why.



Students gained a better understanding on what water quality means and how we can create safe, clean water to drink.

**Testing a homemade water filter made by students. Students eagerly look on as they watch and discuss the results.**

## Contact Us



### EXTENSION

### Fallon/Carter Counties

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Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

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