



MSU Extension serving Glacier County producers and residents

The 2015 production year brought drought, extreme heat, crop diseases, and lower commodity prices to Glacier County. It is in these challenges though, that MSU Extension provides the locally needed resources to address the production challenges.

It was MSU Extension that locally provided crop disease diagnosis through utilization of the Schutter Diagnostic Lab to help farmers make timely crop disease decisions, saving them thousands of dollars.

It was MSU Extension that monitored five Orange Wheat Blossom midge traps and coordinated real-time data production to the Montana Pestweb site so that local producers would know the potential concern for their wheat fields. When a producer was concerned he needed to spray, it was MSU Extension who was there to provide in-field scouting to help determine the field was not to a threshold level that would warrant a pesticide application, thus saving the producer many dollars.

Next Generation Conference draws 225 producers for succession planning and production education

The challenges for young producers to return to agriculture are paramount, and yet the lack of young producers returning to rural Montana and production agriculture continue to be a growing concern, along with providing education to these beginning producers. The Next Generation Conference focused on both of these concerns, with one day of succession planning for the farm or ranch, and one day of production workshops. Nearly 225 producers from across Montana attended the two-day event that was co-hosted with Farm Service Agency, Marias River Livestock Association, and Farm Bureau. There were 36 workshops provided on the second day that covered crops and livestock production, financial management, estate planning, leasing options, and more. There were workshops designed for both beginning and experienced producers. Following the workshops, the day concluded with a crops and livestock producer panel where local producers shared their production insight.

The average attendee traveled nearly 60 miles to the event, an indication of the quality of the conference. \$12,500 was secured in conference sponsorships to keep the cost low, and on-site child care allowed young families to participate in the conference as well.

When a producer was concerned he had glyphosate resistant kochia, it was MSU Extension that tested the sample, confirmed the resistance, and then connected with producers and local consultants regarding the issue to encourage methods to prevent resistance.

When producers needed a nitrate test completed before they could swath their field that afternoon, when they needed a least-cost feed ration built, or when they needed interpretation on a water analysis to determine that the water wasn't safe for livestock, it was MSU Extension in Glacier County that producers turned to.

Daily, MSU Extension in Glacier County is carrying out the MSU Extension mission that, "MSU Extension improves the lives of Montana citizens by providing unbiased research-based education and information that integrates learning, discovery and engagement to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of individuals, families, and communities."



Jeff and Brittani Thompson were two young producers learning the basics of succession planning at the Next Generation Conference held in Shelby in January, 2015.

Next Generation Conference Attendees Comment

- *"What was really nice is realizing that we aren't that much different from other producers. We have the same dreams and goals."*
- *"Thanks for putting so much effort into this event. It truly was an honor to be educated and updated in the business that is your way of life."*
- *"I think this is great, I want to come next year to some of the more advanced workshops."*
- *"Great conference. As a first time farm lifestyle, I learned a lot and have a direction for things to look up and learn more about when I get home."*

4-H - Making the Best Better in Glacier County

Glacier county 4-H included over 50 members and 30 leaders who were busy with project learning, community service, and leadership projects. This year brought the addition of a 4-H ambassador, Sarah Thies, the first in many years.

Curry Comb 4-H Club gives Marias Fair Sheep & Goat Barn a Facelift

The Curry Comb 4-H club took the lead in fixing up the Marias Fair Sheep & Goat barn this year, a process that included both writing grants for materials and the physical labor of the project. The club received a \$500 grant both from the Montana 4-H Foundation and Marias Fair 4-H Livestock Committee, and \$250 from CHS. Three new doors were built to go on the barn, and at work days members installed panels to ensure the animals' safety, rehung gates, painted the barn, installed locks, and gave the barn a wonderful facelift for the fair season.



The Curry Comb 4-H Club received \$1,250 in donations to fix up the Marias Fair Sheep and Goat barn.

Shooting sports

The Shooting Sports program had an active year with weekly practices throughout the fall and winter season. Glacier County had 20 plus members compete throughout the season. The shooting sports program received a \$250 donation from Northwestern Energy, as part of the Community Works Fund, in recognition of the service of Don Popelka, Northwestern Energy employee and archery volunteer. The shooting sports program welcomed new rifle leader, Dennis Garcia, to the program this fall.

4-H members travel

Summer brought travel opportunities for many 4-H members. There were 10 Glacier county 4-Hers who attended the wildlife themed Multi-County 4-H Camp near Havre, along with a teen leader who served as a camp counselor. Three livestock members participated in the Advanced Youth Beef Tour in the Deer Lodge area where they toured numerous beef cattle operations,

the Montana State Prison Ranch and Dairy, and learned about beef cattle marketing, genetics, breeding, and management.



Ten Glacier county 4-Hers enjoyed spending three days in the Bear Paw Mountains at the Multi-County 4-H Camp that was wildlife themed.

Project Days provide learning opportunities for 4-Hers

Throughout the year, there were three project days held that allowed members to choose a specific project area to work on. Throughout the project days, livestock members received quality assurance training, learned about selecting a project animal, livestock judging, proper nutrition, and marketing of their project. Cooking members learned to make crepes, which was a first for many members. Cody Popelka, a 4-H alumni, led a beginning robotics workshop, and additional workshops included upcycling t-shirts, making biodiesel, learning about small engines, practicing scrapbooking, making balloon rocket cars, learning the keys to preparing a demonstration, and practicing photography, rocketry, zentangles, and Fashion Revue. These project days not only providing members with learning opportunities, but also allowed experienced members to provide leadership to younger members.

Marias Fair highlights

From Glacier County there were 18 market steers, nine market hogs, and three market lambs exhibited the Marias Fair or Charging Home Stampede Fair. Average sale prices at the 2015 Marias Fair livestock auction included 72 steers selling at \$4.23/lb., 55 hogs at \$6.85/lb., and 18 lambs at \$6.19/lb. The 4-H generosity was evident with JR, Brant, and Bauer Seewald each donating \$500 from their steer checks to the Food Booth committee to help pay for a new walk-in freezer, which was a donation in honor of their mom Hapi's birthday on sale day. Glacier county 4-Hers Greta and Owen Gustafson also donated \$250 to the Bathroom Fund.



MSU Extension Serving Agriculture

MSU Extension in Glacier County - By the Numbers

750

Pounds of Montana certified seed potatoes sold, of 11 different varieties

40

Number of farms who received in-office individual assistance with the Farm Bill decision tool

240

Producers received instruction from Glacier County Extension on navigating Farm Bill Decision tool

6,000

Number of knapweed biocontrols released in Glacier County and surrounding area through Extension

50

Producers learned about forage sampling and ration balancing for livestock with over 10 rations formulated to meet livestock nutrient requirements

\$1,500

Dollars saved by producers through participating in Glacier County Extension's bulk biocontrols order

25+

Forage nitrate tests completed to aid decision making to reduce nitrate poisoning risk to livestock

55

Local homeowners who learned composting, tree management, potato and herb growing, and tomato planting techniques

50

8th grade students who learned about soil ecology and identifying soil types through Ag Days

645

Agricultural producers attended Glacier County Extension sponsored and co-sponsored programs on cropping, forage, and cattle production and range and weed management



The Seville Cowpokes 4-H Club released 200 spotted knapweed biocontrol agents, and will monitor the project's success in years to come.

Spotted Knapweed Control and Education a county priority

Given the multitude of calls in 2014 regarding spotted knapweed control and treatment options, a 2015 Glacier County Extension priority was spotted knapweed education.

In cooperation with the BIA, a Weed Control and Management workshop focused on noxious weed identification, biocontrol agents, chemical controls, and herbicide application safety related to spotted knapweed and other local weeds, which reached 30 local producers. With the NRCS and local Conservation Districts, an in-field workshop was held with 30 producers furthering their knowledge of range and weeds. A cross-border partnership with the Alberta Invasive Species Council allowed for a Knapweed Invasions in Montana presentation to 95 attendees, and has prompted discussions on a 2016 float trip with Montana and Alberta government officials and weed district coordinators.

In addition to the educational efforts, Glacier County Extension was able to coordinate a bulk order of the knapweed root weevil biocontrols, a long-term control strategy. Nearly 15 producers ordered 60 cartons of the weevils, leading to 6,000 weevils being released in the county and surrounding areas. Due to the bulk order, producers received additional free cartons and a reduced rate, a \$1,500 savings. Two free cartons were released by the Seville Cowpokes 4-H club which provided local youth with education related to Spotted Knapweed.



Slow Cookers utilized to teach food safety and time savings in the kitchen

In an era where many families are challenged to balance the demands of work, school activities, and family life, finding the time to cook a nutritious meal as well can be a challenge. Rather than substituting home-cooked meals for a more expensive and less nutritious fast food or pre-prepared meal, Glacier County Extension demonstrated the ease of using a slow cooker instead. Over 20 participants spent an evening learning about the basics of slow cooking including proper food safety, handling of leftovers, and adapting recipes to the slow cooker. Quizzes were given throughout the presentation to reinforce the material learned, and small groups worked on food-safety related slow cooker case studies. The highlight of the class was participants were able to sample an entire meal that had been cooked in a slow cooker, including breakfast, dinner, and dessert recipes. The menu included breakfast casserole, apple oatmeal, pulled pork, bread, hot applesauce, butternut squash, and peach cobbler.

Each participant received a cookbook with over 75 slow cooker recipes and also food safety materials and meal planning resources. Materials from the BEEF Checkoff, Pork Producers, and Lamb Board provided slow cooker recipes and information on lower priced meat cuts that benefit most from slow cooking.

The impact of this class extended beyond the original 20 participants as many participants asked to share extra resource materials with family and friends, and the presentation also led to an invitation to present to 20 Head Start parents as well. In addition to the knowledge that participants learned, many commented they planned to use their slow cooker more, and emphasize food safety. "I learned frozen foods shouldn't be cooked in a slower cook," one participant commented, knowledge that could save their family from a potential food-borne illness.



In addition to the education on safe slow cooker and meal planning, Dennis Garcia particularly enjoyed the slow cooked meal that featured breakfast dishes, pulled pork, bread, hot applesauce, butternut squash, and peach cobbler.

Contact Us



EXTENSION

Glacier County

Kari Lewis

Agriculture Extension Agent; 4-H Development

E-mail: kari.lewis@montana.edu

Holley DeWitt

Administrative Assistant

E-mail: glacier@montana.edu

Jodi Duncan

SNAP-Ed Nutrition Assistant

Glacier County Extension

1210 East Main, Cut Bank, MT 59427

Phone (406) - 873-2239

www.msueextension.org

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