

The McCone County Extension office provides non-biased, research-based education to constituents in the county and neighboring areas. In 2015, McCone County Extension offered programming in Agriculture, Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Science, and Youth Development.

Agriculture

McCone County Extension offers programming that addresses production issues, nutrition, and

marketing for livestock producers. Programming is also offered for crop producers dealing with specialty crops, weed control, insurance options, and general crop production topics. Face-to-face programming is done through producer meetings and workshops, as well as one-on-one consultations in the office and/or at the farm or ranch.



A very effective means of communicating with the producers about a wide variety of issues is the weekly newspaper article, "Notes from Nelson." The focus of this weekly news column is current agricultural issues. The issues addressed via this weekly column often result in calls or visits to the Extension office to further discuss topics addressed.

The McCone County Extension agent also teams up with several other Extension agents who present current issues and information via a weekly radio spot on a Miles City radio station. Each participating Extension agent takes several turns per year, presenting the weekly program as the responsibility rotates among the participating counties.

Late winter and early spring brought a number of questions about current land rental rates. Efforts were made to assemble available resources to be used in determining fair rental rates for the area. Newspaper columns and radio programs were used to address area land rental rates.

Midsummer brought about concerns on why field peas were not filling. Several samples were taken and submitted for lab analy-

sis. It turned out that this was a wide-spread issue and was associated with a chemical application.

A very popular use of the Extension office continues to be in the area of weed, plant and insect identification. Samples are brought in on a regular basis. Samples that cannot be identified immediately are submitted to the Schutter Diagnostic Lab. Although not as many as in previous years, a number of forage samples were also brought in for nitrate content analysis.

Late summer saw some minor livestock death loss and sickness due to poor water quality in some local reservoirs. Educational efforts were put forth to help make livestock producers aware of water quality concerns. The extension office personnel was also active assisting MSU researchers by involving local cooperators in the wheat sawfly parasitoid distribution and the Orange Wheat Blossom Midge monitoring project.

A major programming focus for the past year has again been in the area of All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) safety. ATV's are widely used on most Montana farms and ranches. Farmers and ranchers, as well as their employees and family members, are involved in all too many accidents involving ATV's resulting in serious injury and deaths. Grant funds from the High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (HICAHS) have been an important resource for developing tools to help educate farmers and ranchers who use ATV's in their daily chores.

In addition, ATV training opportunities were made available to area weed sprayers, ag producers and youth.

Other specific programming efforts included addressing Stocking Rates, Rangeland Noxious Weeds, Sage Grouse, Alfalfa management and cover crops.



4-H Youth Development

McCone County has five 4-H clubs with 66 members and 26 leaders. 4-H continues to offer opportunities through a number of events and activities throughout the year.



Enhanced life skills are gained through club meetings, project work, judging events, summer camp, mini-congress, market quality assurance, Rec Lab, club trips and outings, special interest group meetings, shooting sports events, trainings and educational workshops, County Fair, fund raising events, and the achievement program and banquet.



4-H is a tremendous educational tool. Involvement in 4-H allows for hands-on experience through project work. That hands-on experience forms the basis for post-secondary institution

selection and, ultimately, career choice and development.

The 4-H program also allows many opportunities for adults to be involved in life skills development of youth through project leadership as well as assisting with the various projects and activities offered.

The 4-H Cloverbud enrollments continue to rise with increased interest and participation. Administrative Assistant, Tandi Kassner, promotes 4-H and gives hands-on efforts working with each member to introduce them to what 4-H is all about.



McCone County's Extension Office Staff, along with the Garfield County Staff, again hosted the South East Montana Oreo Trip for 40 Jr. High age 4-H members. This was an overnight outdoor activities camp held in June near Fort Peck and focused on fishing, shooting and archery activities.

Family and Consumer Science

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Day-to-day office contacts in the area of Family and Consumer Sciences most often involve basic food safety, home canning, estate planning, home gardening, plant care and home weatherization. Many of the daily contacts address economic concerns. With today's my, making the dollar go further will be as important as ever in most households.



McCone County has four Family and Consumer Science Clubs with a total 47 members. Those members are active in a number of community functions activities such as: fundraisers, community service, nursing home resident functions, college scholarship, and providing Bingo, prizes and premium money at the County Fair.

NATURAL RESOURCES

McCone County is home to a vast coal deposit as well as having high potential for oil exploration and wind energy development. The proposed Keystone Pipeline would pass diagonally through the county and would include two pumping stations within the county boundaries.

Although process in the development and/or recovery of any of these natural resources has been slow to date, it seems inevitable that demand will eventually require their utilization. Extension will anticipate the programming needed to help prepare the community for the changes that will come as the required industries expand into the area.



