

Shelby Elementary Students Experience Wheat Farming and Production First Hand

For the past five years Toole County Extension has provided the wheat program to the third graders of Shelby Elementary School.

Every spring the third grade class learn about wheat, one of the major commodities of the county. Students learn about the types of wheat planted in the county, they learn about the parts of the wheat seed and how the seed grows from a seed to a plant. In late spring the third graders visit Joe Frethiem family farm and learn about how the family plants wheat in the spring. The class plants their own plot of wheat in the spring at the community garden.



Shelby fourth graders grind wheat up into whole wheat flour to make a loaf of bread.

In the fall when the students return to school as fourth graders the wheat plot is hand harvested, students grind the wheat into flour and then bake bread. Students learn about the nutrition of whole wheat products. At the conclusion of the program the students have experienced first hand all the stages from a wheat seed to a loaf of bread. They have an understanding of major industry in their community. Eighty percent of the students who attend Shelby Elementary school live within the city limits and have had limited exposure to wheat production and farming in their county.



Anna Fretheim explains how important weed management is to a wheat farmer.

Welcome to Toole County

The Toole Extension Staff is dedicated to providing the county with educational material in the areas of agriculture, food and consumer science, youth development, and economic development. We are a part of the Montana State University Extension network.

The Extension Office is funded jointly by Toole County and the Montana State University Extension Service. Toole County Extension is an educational agency with programs open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, disability, age or national origin.

MSU Extension Mission

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



Shelby is the county seat for Toole County which is part of the Golden Triangle Area, one of the largest grain producing areas in Montana.
Picture credit: Dean Hellinger

Agriculture

Pesticide Applicator Training

Joe Parks, MSU-Toole County Extension Agent

The 2015 MSU Pest Management Tour was designed as a last chance opportunity for private applicators to obtain recertification credits before the January 1 deadline in PAT region 3 (North-Central MT).

Topics included sprayer calibration, controlling insect pests, herbicide resistance, cropland weeds and plant disease management. Speakers included MSU Extension Specialists from around the state. Each program offered recertification credits for attending either the morning or afternoon sessions.

Toole County Extension held a pesticide applicator training in Shelby at the Comfort Inn in December. Over 20 attendees from multiple counties were present for the day-long training. Those who attended received recertification credits for their private and commercial pesticide applicator licenses. Also in attendance were individuals who did not possess a pesticide applicator license, but could obtain one by attending the training and taking an open book quiz.

Individuals who possess a pesticide applicator license are able to purchase restricted use pesticides for private or commercial use. Once that individual obtains a license, they must maintain a specific number of recertification credits over a five year cycle to keep their license current. Recertification credits can be earned by attending approved programs similar to the training held in Shelby.

Attendees getting hands on experience with sprayer calibration during the pesticide training held in Shelby on Dec. 10



For more information on private and commercial pesticide applicator licenses, contact your local MSU Extension office or visit www.pesticides.montana.edu.

Multicounty 4-H Project Day

The agents of the Maris Fair Area worked together to provide a project day for 4-H members. Members could select from several project areas to participate in their project and receive hands on instruction. Some of the projects included small engines, public presentations, beef showmanship, Quality Assurance, and photography.

The 4-H Youth Development program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world.



Ag Agent Joe Parks provided a workshop on small engines for Projects day

Family & Consumer Science



Strong Hearts for Montana is an exciting collaborative research study developed by Cornell University that is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. Cornell

has partnered with Montana State University and county Extension educators to deliver the Strong Hearts, Healthy Women study. Montana and your community are helping lead the way in what could prove to be a very exciting breakthrough in cardiovascular disease prevention in rural areas throughout the country.

Toole County has been selected as one of 12 rural locations in Montana to participate in Strong Hearts for Montana. In this study, we will be examining the effects of the program in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. The leading cause of death among adults in Montana, including women, is heart disease. Therefore we are pleased to be a part of this important prevention research.

Eleven participants have volunteered to be part of the Strong Hearts Study. In September the women participated in a baseline data collection. The collection recorded information related to blood pressure, cholesterol, bone density, weight and body composition. After the women participate in the six month Strong Hearts, Healthy Women program, there will be a followup collection event to see if the program made improvements in the women's overall health.

Food Safety Training for Food Managers

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services revised the Montana Food Code in 2014. One of the changes to the code was a requirement that all food establishments have a manager certified in an eight-hour food safety course on staff.

Toole County Extension provided food safety training to 82 food managers in Toole, Glacier and Hill County in 2014, allowing the managers of the establishments to comply with the new Montana Food Code.

The eight-hour training covered the areas of serving safe food, understanding of the forms of contamination, purchasing, receiving and storing food safely, cleaning and sanitation, pest management and safe facilities.

Walking with Ease

The "Walk with Ease" program helps participants to understand the basics of arthritis and the relationship between arthritis, exercise and pain; learn how to exercise safely and comfortably; use methods to make walking fun; develop a personal walking plan with realistic goals for improved fitness; gather strategies and resources to help "stick with it"; and learn about other programs and resources that can help encourage walking.

MSU Extension in Toole County and the Toole County Health Department teamed up to offer the six week "Walk with Ease" program in Shelby for the last two springs.

Participants met three days a week at the Civic Center for six weeks during the program. Each meeting consisted of a short lecture on how to include walking in your daily routine while managing the symptoms of arthritis. Participants walked each meeting with the goal of increasing their minutes of walking each day. At the end of the program each participant developed a sustainable walking plan to incorporate into their exercise routine.

SNAP Education

Toole County SNAP Educator Jodi Duncan provides nutritional education to SNAP families in the Glacier and Toole County areas. She visits first, third and fifth grade classrooms to build excitement around the practice of eating healthy. Jodi also provides a six week class for adult participants focused on cooking healthy meals for their families.

SNAP-Ed offers nutrition education to SNAP participants and persons eligible to receive benefits. SNAP-Ed participants are Montana families with children, youth, seniors, singles, and individuals with developmental disabilities throughout the state. Series lessons or single demonstrations are presented with practical information and skill-building tips for choosing healthier foods, preparing meals, learning appropriate food safety practices, modeling good food choices for family members, and incorporating ways to be more physically active. The goal is to provide people with the opportunity to acquire skills that assist in choosing healthy lifestyles.

Food Insecurity In Toole County

Shelby Elementary Backpack Program and Sagebrush Food Pantry

One in five children in Toole County are currently at risk of food insecurity. Food insecurity is defined as the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Programs such as Free and Reduced Price School Meals help ensure that at-risk children receive food during the school day, but what about on weekends and holidays when school is out?



Last spring Toole County Extension teamed up with the local food bank and the elementary school to create a school backpack program. The program provides bags filled with food that is child-friendly, non-perishable, and easily prepared.

Each week eligible students are provided with a bag that contains two breakfast, two lunches and two snacks for the weekend. The prepacked bags are placed into the student's backpack.

BackPack bags are discreetly distributed to children on the last day before the weekend or holiday vacation. The Backpack Program's purpose is to improve students' school performance by providing them with the nutritious food necessary for them to concentrate on their studies, rather than the effects of chronic hunger. The program is currently distributing backpacks to 90 students on a weekly basis. Mrs. O'Brien and a group of students have volunteered to organize the program and distribute the backpacks to classrooms. Mrs. O'Brien stated "We tried to get a program going for several years and it finally came together with the support from Sagebrush Food Pantry. Several of the elementary teachers have told me that this program really makes a difference to students with economic challenges at home. Each week we spend about an hour packing and delivering the food packs." The Sagebrush Food Pantry is funding the program at a cost of \$4 a backpack.

Extension is also working with the local food bank to update their operations, which includes partnering with the Montana Food Bank. Belonging to the state food bank required training, updating policies and procedures, and updating record keeping. Extension has been working with the food bank to help the organization meet the requirements.

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