Teton County 4-H

The Teton County 4-H Program is a vibrant educational program with multiple opportunities. The program boasts:
- 165 youth members
- 80 leaders
- 201 additional youth contacts
- 12 participants in an interstate exchange
- 4 participants in the Western National Round-Up
- 6 Ambassadors for Teton County
- 40 participants in demonstrations and speeches
- 111 participants in 4-H Fair
- 10 participants in Youth Leadership Retreat
- 10 participants in Montana 4-H Congress
- 68 participants in 4-H overnight camping
- 3 participants in National Shooting Sports competitions
- 3 participants in National 4-H Congress
- 12 participants in 4-H Council
- Approximately $154,600 earned in scholarships by Teton County 4-H members
- 2,100 pounds of food collected for the Teton County Food Pantry

- $123,329 investment in youth agricultural pursuits
- More than 1,098 hours of service to our communities
- More than 3,665 hours of volunteer leadership in the 4-H program

Our most popular 4-H project areas include shooting sports, beef, swine, foods and nutrition, photography, sewing and textiles, all of which build a variety of specific skills as well as life skills.

Through 4-H, youth are provided with the opportunity to practice leadership, citizenship, responsibility, teamwork, community service, and other life skills under the guidance of trained adult volunteers.

The 4-H program builds science into many projects and youth enrichment events, looking to help provide early exposure to science. The program provides contacts in projects such as robotics, wood science, conservation, livestock, veterinary science, and computer technology, through which youth learn wise use of resources; decision-making, goal-setting and marketable skills; and self-motivation.

Studies show that youth in programs like 4-H are 70 percent more likely to attend college and increase their earning potential by $2.01 million during their lifetime. Communities reap long-term benefits by supporting programs such as 4-H. Youth engaged in the program are 60 percent more likely to vote than their non-engaged peers.

In addition, 4-H youth are more likely to volunteer and contribute to their communities than youth participating in other youth programs.

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www.msuextension.org
Transitions ...

Travis Standley was born and raised in Montana. He grew up on an ag operation near Cascade. He attended Northwest College in Powell, Wyo., competing on the livestock evaluation team.

He transferred to Montana State University-Bozeman where he earned a bachelor’s degree in animal science with an emphasis on livestock management and industry. His master’s degree, also from MSU-Bozeman, is in Ruminant Nutrition.

Travis has served MSU Extension for many years, first at an interim position in Stillwater County and then at a permanent position in Carbon County.

Travis joined the Teton County Extension team in January 2013 and is applying his agricultural knowledge and teaching skills to serve the residents here.

Because of his ample Extension experience and educational background, Travis was able to hit the ground running here.

His coming program offerings include:
- Drought management for beef producers
- Cattle selection
- ATV safety courses
- Pesticide applicator trainings
- Cropping seminars

These educational programs are provided in addition to the many ag-based services offered through Teton County Extension.

Hay Quality Testing

For nearly four decades, scientists have been refining their ability to test forage quality. This has been done to improve animal nutrition and, consequently, animal production. Analytical procedures that previously required a week or more can now be done in less than 10 minutes and with more accuracy.

Forage testing measures the nutrient content of hay or pasture that animals consume. Comparing forage’s nutrient content with an animal’s nutrient needs enables producers to determine whether supplements are needed for performance or health. A forage analysis report contains information on attributes of moisture, fiber, digestibility, protein, and mineral content.

Teton County Extension aids in sample collection by providing hay probes that can be checked out, delivery of samples to an objective third-party laboratory, interpretation of results, and even ration balance and formulation after the analysis is received.

About half the hay samples brought to the Teton County Extension Office had inadequate energy to maintain a cow in late gestation, and about half of those were low in protein. A mature 1,350-pound beef cow eating 30-plus pounds of hay per day could actually be losing 1.5 pounds per day, or half of a body condition score per month during late gestation.

Cows that are too thin at calving typically have a higher incidence of difficulty and weaker calves at birth. Also, their calves tend to have lower weaning weights. Thin cows also produce lower volumes of colostrum with lower levels of immunoglobulins than cows in a body condition score of five or six, which usually equates to calves with a lower resistance to disease.

MSU Teton County Extension can provide research-based information and recommendations to balance a custom-feeding program for each livestock producer, because greater net profit is the bottom line. Not knowing the exact quality of forage can be a double-edged sword that can cut into profit either way it swings.

For more information, please call Teton County Extension and remember that testing for composition of forage is vital in making decisions to meet the nutritional needs of your herd, and in turn, having a positive effect on your operation.
Preserving Food Safely

Interest in food preservation has increased dramatically over the last several years as consumers want to be in control of their food sources and what is added to food during processing and preserving.

The trend toward becoming more self-reliant has increased interest in gardening and preserving the harvest from the garden in ways that are safe to extend the use of produce throughout the year.

As consumers learn to preserve food for the first time, or as seasoned canners look for advice on the latest research, they rely on Extension for answers. Both gardening and food preservation can provide substantial economic savings.

This year, from mid-August through October, Teton County Extension Agent Jane Wolery answered an average of three food preservation safety calls per day.

Questions ranged from low-sugar, sugar-substitute or low-sodium canning to those about the safety of products that have been canned.

In several instances, Wolery explained to consumers that the recipe they used for canning was not approved as safe, and because it was a low-acid food, it had the potential for botulism growth.

Botulism is a toxin that can lead to severe illness, so providing education on proper canning techniques saves lives.

Teton County Extension offers pressure canner testing to verify that dial gauges on consumer equipment are in proper working order. Wolery estimates that she tested 20 dial-gauge canners this year.

She has offered food preservation classes, explaining the science behind food preservation and proper techniques, as well as lab time for those who want supervision while attempting canning for the first time.

Seven students and their teacher from the Bynum Elementary School had a science and food preservation day with Teton County Extension. Students preserved 13 pints of food, learned the difference between high-acid and low-acid foods and the methods for canning.

Students learned about freezing and dehydrating as other food preservation methods. They explored research-based recipes, equipment, and a taste-testing event of more than a dozen home-canned items.

On the Cutting Edge

Research has shown that consuming ample amounts of fruits and vegetables can be a key to developing a healthy lifestyle and can be integral in preventing disease.

Through Teton County Extension, residents learned quick and easy ways to prepare fruits and vegetables through efficient knife skills.

Agents Travis Standlee and Jane Wolery taught proper selection and care of knives and other cutting equipment, as well as cutting techniques to make food preparation fast and easy.

One person in the class felt that the quantity of fruits and vegetables she prepared for her family had doubled by learning how to cut foods efficiently.

Others said they used chopping techniques, specific cuts to save time in the kitchen and knife sharpening skills.

Participants also reported they would save money when purchasing knives because of information gained in the class.
Teton County Extension Agent Jane Wolery worked with area concession stands to increase the nutritional value of food offerings. During the basketball season at Choteau High School, several changes were made using the Munch Code book, produced in part by Teton County Extension. Among the popular healthy additions were a fruit slushie, served in a six-ounce cup, and baggies of frozen grapes. Whole-wheat products also replaced refined-wheat products when possible.

Wolery worked with several partners in the community to make the default choice the healthy choice. Through this process, several confectioners have made simple menu changes. Changes include substituting whole-wheat breads in place of white, substituting crisp vegetables instead of fried chips and switching to a fruit for dessert when offering meals.

In tabulating the sales at the Choteau High School basketball concessions, almost 100 percent more fruits, vegetables and whole-wheat products were sold compared to the previous year, as very few of those items were previously offered. Receipts showed that 239 pounds of fruit, 23 pounds of vegetables, 354 whole wheat buns, 15 pounds of almonds, and 144 packages of string cheese were sold.

The Munch Code booklet, available on the Teton County Extension website, suggests simple adaptations for healthier concessions. As an example, the chips that were offered this year were baked, rather than fried. As compared to the previous year, the concessions made $920 more over the course of ten home ball games than the previous year.

Several people voiced their appreciation for the healthier offerings. A grandmother stopped Wolery at a ball game to thank her for the fact that there was something healthy to feed her grandson while they were at the games. She was holding a bag of frozen grapes for the youngster.

In order to advertise the new menu and educate students on their choices, Wolery taught Choteau Elementary students in grades K-6 about the importance of lifelong habits related to nutrition and exercise. Wolery also presented to upper elementary students on sugar found in drinks. In the lower grades, Wolery shared the MyPlate guidelines and encouraged students to fill half their plate with fruits and vegetables.

Teton County Extension purchased 25 plates designed with the MyPlate logo and divided into sections. Last spring, student groups took turns using the plates at lunch time. Teachers, observing the students' choices, felt that the students were learning the different food groups, as well as making healthier choices daily.

In the summer of 2013, Wolery teamed up with Valley County Ex-
Munch Code: Operation Concession Intervention

Tufts University health and fitness researcher Dr. Miriam Nelson talks to workout instructor Audrey Rixford in Choteau, during Nelson’s “Change Yourself, Change the World” tour in 2011.

Teton County Extension is excited to be part of a cultural shift...

Receipts showed that 239 pounds of fruit, 23 pounds of vegetables, 354 whole wheat buns, 15 pounds of almonds, and 144 packages of string cheese were sold.

Through Teton County Extension and Tufts University researcher Miriam Nelson, Ph.D., Choteau residents took part in a health and fitness seminar that led to the development of the Munch Code, used in the “Operation Concession Intervention” project.
Assistive Devices

Jane Wolery, Teton County Extension agent, taught several classes on assistive devices this year.

Classes at the Liberty County Senior Center, the Chateau Senior Center, the Dutton Senior Center and the Power Senior Center reached more than 80 citizens. The classes demonstrated a variety of devices that make independent living easier.

Devices range from those as simple as a weighted spoon for those with hand tremors to a programmable “pen” that will read prescription directions for those with low vision.

Many of the devices are available for loan from MonTech. The program is made possible through a cooperative effort between MSU Extension, the University of Montana Rural Institute Center for Excellence in Disability Education, Research and Service, and MonTech.

Devices allow participants more connection with their community by being able to see and read at various functions.

Several participants who attended followed up with Wolery or community health workers to purchase a device that made life easier. Some participants improved their quality of life by using devices designed for low-vision.

Devices allow participants more connection with their community by being able to see and read at various functions.

One participant received a handheld device to illuminate written items to assist with the progression of macular degeneration, and a watch that speaks the time, which is of great value for daily living.

Participants in Teton County Extension’s assistive living classes gained practical information to improve their quality of life.

Stepping On Fall Prevention

In conjunction with Teton Medical Center, Teton County Extension Agent Jane Wolery taught a class during two sessions of the Stepping On Fall Prevention series.

The series, which has so far been held in Chateau and Augusta, empowers older adults to carry out health behaviors that reduce the risk of falls, improve self-management, and increase quality of life.

This community-based workshop is offered once a week for seven weeks using adult education and self-efficacy principals. Through community leaders and speakers, older adults develop specific knowledge and skills to prevent falls.

Educational topics include exercises and moving about safely, vision and falls, community safety, footwear safety, medication management, bone health, getting out and about, and sleeping better.

Between the two classes, 23 participants learned skills to prevent falls as well as improve their quality of life.

In a three-month follow-up, there have been no falls reported and participants said they are exercising more, have a greater awareness of home safety hazards and are taking precautionary measures to reduce risk.

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Teton County Extension’s partnership with Teton Medical Center has assisted people with their daily routines.
Diabetes and Cardiac Disease Prevention

For the third year in a row, Teton County Extension has partnered with Teton Medical Center to offer a valuable Diabetes and Cardiac Disease Prevention class.

This year, Extension Agent Jane Wolery taught six classes in Chateau and Fairfield with a total of 41 participants. Wolery covered a variety of topics including taking charge of your food and exercise, combating negativity and adapting to social environments that hamper progress.

Through the 2013 series, participants lost a combined total of 317 pounds. Participants were able to reach weight-loss goals, which ultimately reduce the likelihood of obesity-related diseases through label-reading, nutritional education and increase in exercise.

One participant said, “I liked the way the program educated you, little steps at a time, to learn what to eat and what to look at in the foods as to fat, calories and fiber so it was understandable ... I feel the more important feature of the program was to learn to eat healthy and to know what to look for in food.”

While not tracked through program evaluation, three participants self-reported that they have either been able to decrease or discontinue some of their medications.

Another participant said, “I have been cleaning up my house and going through my clothes to get ready for a trip. I have two 30-gallon sized trash bags with clothes I’m donating to a thrift store, because they are TOO BIG! How wonderful that feels. I have finally got the diet and exercise, and wellness thing happening and it feels great!”

Horticulture

Horticulture is the science and art of growing and maintaining plants for food, enjoyment, and improvement of the human environment. Its application through research has led to improved varieties of plants to benefit our daily lives.

Extension in Teton County provides service to clients seeking information on home insect and rodent control; orchard, fruit and vegetable garden care; urban windbreak, landscape and lawn maintenance; horticulture-related animal damage; soil improvement; and insect, disease and plant identification.

In 2012-2013, Teton County Extension identified more than 30 different species of plants, approximately 15 species of insects, and more than 15 different plant diseases.

The Extension Office gave management and research-related information to the clients who brought samples. Along with education and information, Teton County Extension also provides opportunities for those individuals looking to advance their knowledge and enhance their community through the Master Gardener Program.

The Master Gardener Program is a series of classes for volunteers to learn unbiased, research-based home horticulture practices.

There are three levels to the Montana Master Gardener Program.

The 16-hour Level 1 course teaches basic yard and garden installation, vegetable and flower gardening, and yard and lawn maintenance.

Level 2, also a 16-hour course, is for more advanced Master Gardeners with prior gardening knowledge and/or experience, concentrating on Integrated Pest Management.

The Level 3 Master Gardener course is an intensive, three-day, hands-on training on the Montana State University campus in Bozeman.
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