



Welcome to Teton County

The communities of Teton County – Choteau, Dutton, Fairfield, Power, Pendroy and Bynum – are bordered by the Rocky Mountains to the west and plains to the east. County population hovers around 6,000. Crops include wheat, barley, chickpeas, dry peas, lentils, canola, dill, mint and hemp. Alfalfa is a major forage crop. Livestock production leads with cattle, followed by sheep, goats and horses. Hutterite colonies add to the diversity of agriculture with dairy cattle, swine and poultry production. The MSU Extension team includes Brent Roeder, Jane Wolery, Jamie Smith and Sharla Hinman, who are honored to serve in Teton County.

Agriculture by the Numbers

We know of two confirmed yearling steers and two horses that died from consuming high nitrate forages in Teton County in 2018, so the issue is real. If the forage from the 135 nitrate tests completed was fed to 250 head of livestock each, more than 30,000 head could have been affected. MSU Extension agent Brent Roeder certified 457 acres of Noxious Weed Seed Free Hay for 15 producers. These acres produced an estimated 769 tons of premium hay, which returned an additional estimated \$38,450 to producers in the area. The office facilitated delivery of just over 5,000 trees and shrubs for conservation purposes in Teton County in cooperation with the Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery. A conservative estimate of savings for Teton County participants would be \$11,700. This does not include the increase in value to the property due to these long-term enhancements. Roeder also coordinated the delivery of 37,626 pounds of wool for the Front Range Wool Pool. This marketing cooperative is comprised of 36 sheep producers from across the Golden Triangle area. This year, growers received historic high prices and added 16.5% to the value

Landscapes in Teton County.
Photos by Jane Wolery.



of the clip by working together. This amounted to \$11,160 in either cost savings or added value to the clip. Because of programs managed through the MSU Extension office in Teton County, we generated a documented \$64,145 in positive cash flow for area producers in either cost savings or added value.

Diagnostic services from MSU Extension in Teton County have a direct impact on herd health.
Photos by Jane Wolery



4-H Grows in Teton County

160	Enrolled Youth Members
18	Cloverbuds
87	Certified 4-H Volunteers
350	Youth reached with enrichment programs
6	Community Clubs
2	Project Clubs - Shooting Sports
864	Teton County Fair project exhibits
3550+	Hours donated by volunteers
24	Youth in executive officer positions
12	Participants in Leadership Retreat
55	Youth and adults serving on county committees
46	Youth learners at 4-H Camp
2231	Pounds of food collected for Teton County Food Pantry
\$636	Donations generated for Food Pantry
2	Livestock evaluation participants
3	Teton County 4-H Ambassadors
89	Members in livestock projects
\$159,188	Invested in youth agricultural pursuits
17	Clover Communications youth presenters
35	GROW Regional Leadership Conference participants
5	District Make It with Wool contestants
9	Montana 4-H Congress participants
1	First place Career Communications winner at Montana 4-H Congress
1	Second place Quilt winner at Montana 4-H Congress
2	Montana 4-H State award winners
3	National 4-H Congress delegates
2	National 4-H Shooting Sports Championship Competitors
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2	National 4-H Shooting Sports Championship Competitors
2	National 4-H Western Heritage Shooting Sport Competitors
Numerous	Club Service Projects at the Community, County, State, National and International Levels



Communication skills provide cornerstones for 4-H youth to build upon throughout their lives. Photo by Daniel Asselstine, Teton County 4-H Ambassador.



Teton County 4-H members lead and mentor others.

Photos by Jane Wolery.

4-H

4-H provides youth with essential life elements, such as engagement in learning, service to others, creating a sense of belonging and positive relationships with caring adults. These have a direct impact on youth mental health, overall wellness and positive life choices. 4-H youth learn skills, develop confidence, build relationships, learn communication tools, participate in service learning and become trained in civic engagement. 4-H is a vital part of Teton County as current members and 4-H alum are highly engaged community members, business leaders and volunteers.



The Teton County delegation to 4-H Congress included two state award winners, one scholarship recipient and a second-place quiltier, while three advanced to National 4-H Congress.

Mental Health

Mental health was one of the top three concerns identified in Teton County's 2017 Community Health Needs Assessment and Improvement Plan. Depression, anxiety and stress were rated top mental health issues in Teton County. MSU Extension is meeting these and other needs in Teton County through a variety of efforts.

The Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) program reached 125 high school students in Teton County in 2018, with every high school agreeing to participate. By request, MSU Extension agent Jane Wolery facilitated three sessions with 42 students in a community hard hit by suicides. Three months after participating in YAM, students reported an increase in general mental health knowledge, significant decrease in depressive symptoms and a trending decrease in anxiety symptoms. Almost half of students reported they would seek help from school staff for assistance with feelings of suicide and 79% said they would seek help for depression.



MSU Extension delivers a successful program in suicide reduction to teens in Teton County. Photo courtesy of Choteau Acantha.

Thrive online cognitive behavior therapy was offered. The learning modules include assertive communication, constructive thinking and rewarding activities. Teton County had the highest per capita participation. Informational meetings on Thrive were held in Teton County in 2018 with 57 in attendance. Each participant was challenged with sharing the Thrive information with at least five other people.

In response to mental health issues in the agriculture sector, Wolery was invited to work with the Farm Service Agency at a state conference. Forty farm loan officers attended, learning about mental health resources, resilience and how to assist agriculture producers facing stress, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. Wolery presented "Ag Under Pressure" at MSU Extension Annual Conference to increase awareness of mental health resources for those who serve the agriculture community.

Wellness

A variety of wellness classes are offered by MSU Extension, including a Diabetes Empowerment Education Program, Strong People, Healthy Tracks, Living Life Well with Chronic Conditions, Pressure Cooking, Knife Skills and individualized Powerful Tools for Caregivers. These classes teach skills needed to improve individual health profiles. As Benjamin Franklin stated, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." According to the American Public Health Association, food and nutrition interventions alone have 1000% return on investment in health care costs, in addition to life-years saved, increased well-being and empowerment.



Through a variety of wellness classes offered by MSU Extension, adults and youth learn how to apply healthy behaviors, such as reading nutrition labels, reducing sodium and increasing food safety knowledge and food prep skills. Photo by Jane Wolery.

"I was able to do my own home maintenance, tree trimming, pruning and cleaning rain gutters because of the MSU Extension class."

"I took Strong People knowing I had an upcoming surgery. Because of my condition going into surgery, I was released from the hospital much earlier than usual. The shortened stay saved us \$25,000 in out-of-pocket medical expenses. I encourage everyone I know to take Strong People classes."

Participants in these classes have said,

"Because of Powerful Tools for Caregivers, I have done a much better job taking care of my husband who has Parkinson's. Because of the class, I also sought medical treatment for myself and I'm pretty sure I avoided a heart attack as a result."

"I am more aware of portion size, reading labels and keeping up my exercise routine."

"I was able to hike and hunt with my son and grandson. Without the Strong People class, I wouldn't have been able to keep up."

Diagnostic Services

The MSU Extension office in Teton County recorded 1,057 contacts on ag/natural resources issues in the 2018 production year. We strive to offer the best diagnostic capabilities for commodity grain and pulse producers, forage growers, commercial horticulturists, and homeowners. Services include insect and weed identification, disease analysis through the Schutter Diagnostic Lab at MSU, pest insect monitoring, water testing through Energy Laboratories, forage analysis through Midwest Labs and in-house testing for nitrates in forages pre- and post-harvest. We provided diagnostic and educational services to 320 residents. We provided traps and monitored five fields weekly across the county for pest insect Orange Wheat Blossom Midge, submitted 28 samples for disease diagnosis or identification to the Schutter Diagnostic Lab, sent 131 forage samples and soil samples for analysis, and conducted 135 nitrate tests for producers. Forage producers saved \$2,835 on nitrate tests for their hay. We sent three cropland weed samples to be tested for herbicide resistance. Producers need to be aware of the growing issue of local problems with important agronomic weeds. The office identified the first field in the county with soil acidity problems due to the long-term, misapplication of nitrogen fertilizer in a no-till, dryland crop rotation. Orange Blossom Wheat Midge numbers were low this year but will continue to be monitored.

contact us:



EXTENSION Teton County

1 Main Avenue South
P.O. Box 130
Choteau MT, 59422-0130
(406) 466-2491
teton@montana.edu
<http://teton.msueextension.org>



Brent Roeder
Extension Agent



Jane Wolery
Extension Agent



Jamie Smith
Administrative Support



Sharla Hinman
Administrative Support