



# MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

## In Custer County

**Weed Prevention Area** - The Custer County Weed Prevention Area covers a large swath of noxious weed free land north of the Yellowstone River where landowners are working intensively to prevent new weed invasions. A \$17,000 grant has allowed the Extension Agent, County Weed Supervisor, County Weed District and landowners to develop a comprehensive plan to insure that Custer County stays weed free north of the Yellowstone River.

**Powder River Leafy Spurge Project** - Through collaboration with a variety of county, state, and federal agencies and private landowners, the extension offices in Custer and Prairie County Extension Offices have helped to initiate a program that has lead to sheep grazing of leafy spurge along the Powder and Yellowstone Rivers all the way from the Powder River County Line to the Dawson County Line.

**Non-Fat Dry Milk Program** - 101 producers representing over 82,000 head of livestock were educated about the most efficient use of non-fat dry milk offered through a government program. As a result, producers can make the best possible use of their dry milk allotment. The economic impact of this program to Custer County is over \$96,000.

**Cow-Capital Beef Day** - Extension agents from five county offices collaborated to host this event. Timely programs were presented in a number of areas including herd health, range management, and beef quality assurance. There was also much interaction about the discovery of a recent discovery of BSE in a Washington cow.

**Risk Management for Ag Families** – A team approach by Ag agents, FCS agents, and extension specialists lead to a comprehensive risk management program for ag families. The 2 day session exposed local ag producers to a variety of topics related to risk management including use of financial calculators, a ranch risk management simulation, and understanding the use of financial statements.

**Serv-Safe Food Safety Training** In Custer County 22 people have been certified this year in the Serv-Safe program and another 24 have completed the non-certification course. Serv-Safe is directed toward people working in the food service industry. Food Safety education is recognized as a contributing factoring the decline of food borne illness on a national scale.

**ROCKS After-School Program** Through a grant, Custer County Extension has helped to develop the ROCKS program, an after-school and summer recreation program. Thirty-six youth participate in the after-school program and 44 youth in the summer recreation program. Findings from an on-going evaluation of the ROCKS program found that youth involved in the ROCKS program:

- \* exhibited significantly fewer behavior problems
- \* displayed more positive, pro-social styles of interaction with both peers and adults
- \* have better study skills and complete their homework in a timely manner
- \* Children are in a safe environment with caring caregivers rather than home alone.

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Custer County Extension Office is located in the Courthouse in Miles City

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An educational resource dedicated to improving the quality of people's lives by providing research-based knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of families, communities and agricultural enterprises.

**Non-Traditional 4-H/School Enrichment** - Over 40 programs have been presented in area schools during this year. All grade levels have been included and topics range from edible Insects to financial calculators.

**Pedometer Program** - This program is designed to encourage participants to increase their physical activity by monitoring the number of steps taken each day. To date over 1600 pedometers have been distributed in Custer County.

**Cross-County Programming** - As one of only two Family and Consumer Science Agents in Southeastern Montana, Tara Andrews, Custer County FCS Agent, has served as a resource to neighboring counties and has presented programs in Garfield, Wibaux and Fallon counties during the last year.