



MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

In Fergus County

FSNE

The Montana Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) Program provides educational programs for food stamp households and those eligible in Fergus and Petroleum counties. Our nutrition assistant, Sandy Baden, provides a series of lessons or single demonstrations with practical information and skill-building tips for choosing better foods, food handling, food storage and food safety practices. FSNE partners with numerous community agencies and organizations to optimize effective programming and to make participants job ready and healthy. Adult and youth groups have been reached, as well as developmentally disabled adults.

Foods, Nutrition and Health

As a follow up to a research, development and education project, Win the Rockies, FCS Extension Agent, Denise Seilstad, continues to teach the curriculum, "A New You, Health For Every Body". Forty-five participants in Fergus County have completed the eight class series of lessons, and 110 participants have attended the short version. This curriculum is built around the principals of pleasurable and healthful eating, enjoyment of physically active living and body-size acceptance of self and others. The primary goals are to help participants gain new attitudes and learn new information and skills to live a life focused on health; one of those being the Pedometer Program. Twenty-one participants purchased pedometers in 2004, and were given an educational packet about the use of the pedometer, walking safety, stretches, physical and emotional health benefits, and recommended number of steps for optimal benefits.

Balancing Work and Family

A series of workshops was taught in Fergus County by FCS Extension Agent, Denise Seilstad, to help families strike a more ideal balance between work, family, and personal life. Concepts covered were managing work-family stress, managing finances, finding ways to prepare family meals on a limited time budget, communicating at home and at work, and organizing personal, family, and work time.

Serve Safe Training

A continuous effort is being made to educate Fergus and Petroleum County residents and food service workers about food safety. Denise Seilstad, Fergus County FCS Agent, reached 210 participants in 2004. These food workers, both volunteers and employees, learn about personal hygiene, food handling and storing, safe temperatures and other food safety basics. The County Health Inspector has reported improvements in safe food handling in the various food concessions and eating establishments in the counties.

Fergus/Petroleum County 4-H

Two hundred ninety-six members and one hundred thirty-three leaders participated in 4-H activities in the 2003-04 4-H year. The most popular animal projects are horse and swine, and there is a growing number of members in the dog project. Popular indoor projects include: foods, sewing & textiles, shooting sports, woodwork, and leather.

Fergus County Extension Office is located at 712 West Main St in Lewistown Phone: 406-538-3919



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.

Sixty-four members participated in the County Public Speaking Day by doing demonstration/illustrated talks, prepared speech or gavel games events. Fifteen of the senior members went on to compete at Montana 4-H Congress at MSU in Bozeman. Ten other members also attended Congress in judging, quilting, fashion revue or stirrups (food & nutrition program).

The greatest highlight of the year for twenty-five of Fergus County 4-H members and five leaders, was the exchange with St. Augustine, Florida. The Fergus County 4-Hers spent a week in early June with 4-H families in St. Johns County, Florida and then hosted the Floridians for a week in Montana. Two years of hard work raising the funds for this trip really paid off.

Enrollment is rolling in for the new 4-H year. It is great to see members signing up for two of the newest projects, Cowboy Poetry and Sports Fishing. We are looking forward to another year, packed full of activities that help members learn and practice important life skills.

AFO/CAFO - Environmental Management Systems

By enclosing the brochure, "AFO/CAFO: Is your livestock operation regulated by new water quality laws?", in the quarterly agricultural newsletter, information about assessing potential environmental risks on livestock operations was distributed to over 1,000 agricultural operations in Fergus and Petroleum counties. In addition to that effort, individual onsite visits about AFO/CAFO (Animal Feeding Operation/Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation) issues were conducted on seven operations. The purpose of these visits was to assist producers in designing and implementing management practices that will enable the operation to remain as an Animal Feeding Operation as opposed to being classified as a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation, which requires permitting through the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. In addition to the on-site visits, detailed information was provided through office conferences and a seminar to fifteen additional producers. To date, improved management practices have been implemented on four of the seven operations visited. Follow-up visits and first time initial visits on six additional ranches are already planned for the coming winter months.

Visioning and Downtown Re-Vitalization

Following an extensive and in-depth visioning process in 2003, the MSU Fergus County Extension Office continued to facilitate and coordinate follow-up meetings of a core steering committee to monitor the progress of work being done by various visioning committees. One of the "out growths" of the visioning process was the formation of a downtown revitalization task force. The Extension Office was represented on the task force steering committee, which was appointed by the City Commission, and was instrumental in a process of conducting a survey of key community leaders and then setting priorities for the revitalization task force.

The steering committee finished its work in August and has formally dissolved after handing the downtown revitalization effort back to a re-structured "Downtown Revitalization Task Force" which was appointed by the steering committee and the City Commission. The re-structured task force is now working with a team of hired consultants to complete a downtown revitalization plan.

Rangeland Monitoring

With the assistance of Jeff Mosley, MSU Extension Range Management Specialist, the MSU Fergus County Extension Office sponsored two "Monitoring for Success" workshops for private landowners. During the workshops, fourteen participants, representing eleven livestock operations, learned and practiced three monitoring methods: stubble height, percent utilization, and photo plots. Nine workshops have been held in Fergus County over the last six years reaching a total of ninety-five agricultural producers. As a follow-up to this year's workshops, photo monitoring plots were established on two additional ranches in the county.