



MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

In Gallatin County

United Way and 4-H: Working Together for After School Programs in Gallatin County

Due to the substantial number of risk factors associated with children coming home after school to empty houses, after school programs have become a top 4-H priority across the country. Thanks to a collaborative agreement between Gallatin County 4-H and the United Way of Greater Gallatin, the nationally recognized 4-H curriculum is now available to ten after school programs from Three Forks to West Yellowstone. The operation of each after school site is funded by United Way and, through a \$20,000 grant from the Gilhousen Family Foundation, Gallatin County 4-H is providing hands-on curriculum, instructor training, and support materials that will reach an enrollment of nearly 600 children. 4-H is the youth development branch of the Land Grant University system and this relationship makes possible the recruitment of MSU intern students to serve as support staff for many of the after school programs. Through this arrangement, university interns will gain real world experience to complement their classroom learning while safe, affordable, and quality after school programs are available to working parents. The establishment of traditional 4-H clubs that will teach leadership, communication, and other life skills within the after school setting is also being explored, as is the use of achievement and risk factor evaluation measurement tools developed by the National 4-H Council.

Gallatin County 4-H at a Glance

Traditional Membership Enrollment	469
School Enrichment Enrollment	532
Volunteer Enrollment	155
4-H Clubs in Gallatin County	30
4-H Projects in Gallatin County	39
After School Programs	598
Adults – Train the Trainer	15

Top 10 4-H Projects

1. Horse	272
2. Shooting Sports	166
3. Swine	95
4. Sheep	93
5. Dog	86
6. Personal Development and Leadership	52
7. Arts and Crafts	46
8. Introduction to 4-H	42
9. Clothing	41
10. Photography	40

Gallatin County Extension Office is located at the Fairgrounds in Bozeman Phone: 406-582-3280



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.

The mission of the Gallatin County Extension Agricultural program is: *to improve the quality of life by protecting our natural resources, helping agricultural producers enrich their own lives and the lives of others.* Here are a few ways the Gallatin County Extension Service is achieving their mission.

Noxious weeds play a major role in natural resource management for Gallatin County. Noxious weeds decrease rangeland productivity for wildlife and livestock. Invasive plants can create a monoculture of non-desirable plants and increase soil erosion. It is important for individual land managers to develop management plans. Weed management areas and any accompanying grants can serve as the catalysis for encouraging new and continued participation in the fight against these invasive plants.

Making producers aware of the issue is just the start of noxious weed education. Having the producers take this knowledge and create management plans and initiate these plans is the real success of noxious weed management. From 2001 to September of 2004 producers and local government have created the Sixteenmile Cooperative Weed Control project. This group of producers, county extension and weed district personnel used \$169,608 in matching funds to leverage \$99,280 in federal and state funds to control noxious weeds in the area. Producers moved from awareness and individual efforts to a concerted effort controlling 5,853 acres of noxious weeds. The real success is the group protected an area covering 183,000 acres. With the help of Gallatin County Extension, the Weed District, and the Montana Department of Agriculture, producers have moved from awareness to tangible results. This process doesn't stop here. Producers are continuing to work on noxious weeds and poisonous plants in the Sixteenmile area. The energy has moved to other areas in the County. Extension and others are working with citizens in new weed management areas and beginning the process again.

The Gallatin County Extension service is administratively responsible for the County's **Montana Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program (NWSFF)**. The program originated in the 1970's. This program is designed to make people aware of the threat of noxious weeds and how weed seed is transported through hay to non-weed infested areas. The program allows producers to take action and grow NWSFF hay for sale. Extension helps growers develop weed management plans and inspects hayfields for certification. Since 2002, Gallatin Extension has inspected 6714 acres and certified 6006 acres for the program. The average production off those acres is 2 tons per cutting per acre for 12012 tons of hay and straw certified. Producers report an average of \$15 per ton increase in value for certified feeds. Twenty Gallatin County producers have moved from awareness of the program, to producing a product that will help curb the spread of noxious weeds and adding value to their product with increased farm income of \$180,180 over the three-year period.

Annual Forages make up a large component of Montana's hay base. Finding a forage winter wheat that will yield either as hay or for small grain harvest will: help sustain the economic viability of farm/ranch operations, while allowing producers to enhance production by using the biological cycle of winter wheat to their full advantage. Producers will be able to efficiently utilize non-renewable resources such as labor and machinery more effectively. Since 1995, Gallatin County Extension, MSU Extension Specialists and MSU Plant Breeders have worked on forage winter wheat. County Extension farm variety trials identified two experimental varieties that showed promise early on. These varieties were grown on large farmer managed plots, both irrigated and dryland in Gallatin County in 2003 and 2004. Producers and Extension identified one experimental variety as having adequate agronomic characteristics to meet the needs of agricultural producers. From small beginnings, 4 by 8 foot plots the project has moved to five acre field plots grown by farmers under farm conditions. Gallatin County Extension pursued a Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant to help fund a portion of the initial farmer field plots. As of October 2004, plots are now spread across eight Montana counties and involve agricultural producers, county agents, and researchers from Montana Ag. Experiment Stations. This is a prime example of local extension and MSU working with agriculture producers to; identify needs, provide answers, and move forward to viable solutions.