



MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

In Granite County

Range Management and Natural Resources

Resource monitoring is a continuing program for Granite County Extension, and the program expanded dramatically in 2004. Granite County Extension joined forces with Powell County Extension to attract \$15,000 in U.S. Forest Service grant funds to provide resource monitoring education in both Granite and Powell counties. Participants in the program have included private ranches, resource management agencies and resource groups such as The Blackfoot Challenge. Monitoring skills have been acquired by participants providing improved grazing management, noxious weed management, and assessing progress toward resource management goals. Currently, participating ranches are located in Granite, Powell, and Beaverhead counties, and additional ranches have committed to participation in 2005.

Specific topics included in the curricula include aerial photo interpretation, use of GPS and GIS technology, plant identification, utilization of Soil Survey resources, application of scientific resource monitoring methodologies, and utilization of monitoring data to refine resource management goals and activities.

Grazing system development programming becomes increasingly important during times of extended drought. Granite County Extension delivered extensive educational programming to four participating ranches during 2004 to address challenges associated with meeting range resource goals concurrently with livestock production targets. In-depth education was provided in determining range site potential, assessing current resource status, and formulating strategies to achieve desired resource condition goals. All four participating ranches have developed ranch resource management plans acceptable to the Undaunted Stewardship Program, and plan to enroll in the program in the coming year.

4-H and Youth Development

Granite County Extension introduced a new educational program for 4-H Market Livestock members in 2004 centered on economically important traits of market animals. Knowledge of carcass traits and their impact on profitability is important to future livestock producers. Often at a fair, emphasis is placed on show ring performance to the detriment of carcass traits. Granite County Extension conducted educational programming for Market Livestock members from Granite, Powell, and Deer Lodge counties detailing specific carcass traits and the relative influence on those traits of heritability, nutrition, and management. The activity associated with the program required members to accurately predict a number of carcass values for each project months prior to the fair, then manage their project to meet their projected targets.

The impact of this program has been exceptional. Several members demonstrated application of their new skills by accurately predicting their project carcass values with extreme precision. Comments made by participants and leaders indicated that newly acquired skills were actively applied to projects and greatly increased the educational value of their market animal project. This program will be continued for 2005, and will be expanded to include Sanders County as well.

Granite County Extension Office is located at the Courthouse in Phillipsburg Phone: 406-859-3304



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.

Agriculture and Pesticide Safety

The Granite County Herdsmanship School presented the 10th annual curriculum in 2004. This school is designed to provide livestock producers with timely pertinent educational materials that have immediate application to their operations. The 2004 curriculum included utilization of EPDs and genetic information to make informed herd breeding decisions, rangeland seeding as a noxious weed management tool, the Undaunted Stewardship Program and its benefits for ranchers in Montana, Mineral Nutrition for Beef Cattle, Irrigation Efficiency, and Multi-species grazing.

The annual six-week school is attended by approximately 35 local ranchers, and impacts include a new program of utilizing sheep and goats to meet resource condition goals, new herd sire selection strategies, irrigation system audits to increase efficiency, and increased attention to mineral nutrition.

Granite County Extension faculty also has conducted four educational opportunities for private applicators to get initial licenses and receive required re-certification credits. Two of the programs were conducted in conjunction with MSU campus-based faculty to provide detailed educational programming related to a wide variety of topics including noxious weed identification, grazing systems to address noxious weeds, rangeland seeding programs, integrated pest management, and water quality concerns associated with pesticides. Over 180 participants attended the programs, and follow-up calls to apply new principles have already been received.

Community Development

Granite County Extension conducts a continuing program for community development through the Granite County Economic Development Association and the Granite County Natural Resources Council. Educational programs are conducted on a monthly basis with each group, with detailed curricula including economic development planning, implementation of plans including monitoring of program progress, and interaction with governmental agencies and personnel. Results of this program have been strongly positive, with several grants secured by the Economic Development Association resulting in increased retention of critical jobs and improved interaction with governmental agencies.