



# MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

## In Hill County

### Agriculture Management

Decisions that agriculture producers make have an impact throughout the production cycle. Accurate and timely information assists producers in making wise decisions.

MSU Hill County Extension offered:

**2004 Drill Box Survey** – A long term program designed to show producers the importance of seed quality and planting time decisions. Final analysis will be shared with participants and Hill County crop producers through a newsletter.

14 producers participated directly by contributing seed samples.

Extension collaborated with Northern Agriculture Research Center and the Montana State Seed Laboratory.

98 producers toured the seeded test plots of the collected samples.

**Soil Moisture survey** - Twenty-four locations were measured for depth of soil moisture in the spring of 2004 and reported in the agriculture newsletter that reaches 806 individuals. The information was provided as an aid in making planting and fertilizer application decisions.

**Cutworm Monitoring** - Four locations throughout Hill County were monitored for eight weeks for populations of adult pale western and army cutworms. This information is used to forecast spring cutworm activity.

**Annual Forages** - Cereal crops harvested for forage have the inherent risk of nitrate poisoning. Twenty-five producers submitted samples to screen for nitrates. Twenty-one of the twenty-five samples submitted tested positive requiring either delayed forage harvest or further testing before the feed was considered safe for livestock. This effort helped to provide safe feed to an estimated 2,500 head of livestock. Additionally, twelve producers attended a workshop on high nitrate feeds.

**Farm Management and Cropping Systems** - As part of a statewide program, six Hill County farmers (two no-tillage, two reduced-tillage and two conventional tillage) were surveyed concerning the input costs of their operation. These numbers will be pooled with survey information from four other counties. The information will be used to show a representation of the costs of the various cropping systems.

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Hill County Extension Office is located at the Courthouse in Havre

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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.

## **Continuing Education Opportunities**

For the past twelve years, the Hill County Extension Office and Extended University at MSU-Northern has offered educational workshops for residents in the region through Cabin Fever Institute. Cabin Fever Institute supports the mission of providing researched based information to constituents in Montana. This past year, 460 individuals enrolled in over 600 classes. Participants came from 18 counties in the state. Seven individuals enrolled in classes for college credit, two individuals received renewal units for teacher certification, 27 real estate agents received 12 continuing education credits, 42 individuals received private pesticide applicator points, 29 individuals received commercial pesticide applicator points, and 14 insurance producers received continuing education credits. Participants state that the knowledge they have obtained over the years has been used to improve agriculture production practices, improve job skills, make better management decisions, learn new technology, and improve business skills.

## **Hill County Youth Programs**

Youth are the future of our communities and our country. The program provides education to develop leadership, skills and awareness of issues relevant to our community.

Weed Education – Hill County has designated burdock a noxious weed. One hundred thirty eight fifth grade students and six teachers learned how to identify burdock, some beneficial by-products and some environmental concerns. Following classroom instruction, students, teachers and 33 adult volunteers participated in daylong burdock digging activities in Beaver Creek Park. Participants dug 346 pounds of burdock roots. This activity has decreased the amount of burdock in a small area of the park that is grazed by livestock thereby decreasing seed dissemination by livestock and wildlife throughout the park and neighboring ranches. Students now are more aware of problems associated with noxious weeds and how they can help reduce the spread of weeds.

Hill County Conservation District hosted training for 150 fifth grader students in the county. Hill County Extension facilitated a watershed lesson where students learned how the environment and their own actions affect the watersheds.

## **4-H Project Training Activities**

It is always fun to learn with friends. Members enhanced skills during eighteen project trainings held this past year. Teen leaders developed their leadership skills while assisting fellow 4-H members during many of these training activities. In depth training was offered in four projects over a 6-week to 9-month period. Community service learning has always been an important part of 4-H. This past year members assisted the local food bank, Boys and Girls Club and the care center. Along with these county projects, individual clubs were involved in community service.

4-H Camp is a yearly activity. Sixteen teens planned, organized and facilitated a three-day overnight camp for 80 4-H members. To enhance leadership skills the teens participated in a camp for leadership training where 92% stated that they improved communication and decision making skills, accepting differences of others, useful/marketable skills and self-responsibility.

## **A Healthier Community**

Food Stamp Nutrition Education provided a six-week series of nutrition classes to 178 individuals in the county, including Rocky Boys Indian Reservation. During this series, participants learned how to improve food resource management, improve family nutrition and food safety practices. During the year, 150 individual attended single nutrition programs and 243 attended demonstrations. Not only adults are learning nutrition practices, 46 youth attended classes.

Fifteen restaurant managers became certified through the National Restaurant Association ServSafe program. Twenty-three restaurant employees attended a ServSafe training and received a certificate. The awareness of food safety in the foodservice industry is a start to a healthier community.