



MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

In Lake County

CATTLEMEN'S CLINIC

When Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was first identified in the United States December 2003, cattle producers were very uneasy as to what the future would hold. Answering that need, Extension responded by focusing the Cattlemen's Clinic on the topic of BSE. The program Extension designed informed producers about trade restrictions, marketing fluctuations, disease prevention and future expectations. This clinic helped ranchers make predictions for the coming year so they could plan and anticipate the market. With that in mind, marketing techniques highlighting Montana's quality cattle reputation and strategies for source verification were an important part of the program.

HORTICULTURE SERIES

MSU/Lake County Extension implemented a series of horticulture classes for small landowners, home growers and gardeners. The goal of the program was to bring "new to the area" people information so they could successfully grow a garden or yard. Additionally, local citizens need annual updates on new products and techniques on growing vegetables and ornamentals. Courses offered through Ronan and Polson high school Adult Education curriculum included: Soils – creating the optimum environment for your garden; Fruit Tree & Orchard Care - water, fertilize, prune, pest control, for quality fruit production; Shelter Belt & Ornamental Trees - evergreen and deciduous tree care and management; Integrated Pest Management - insect management and control; Weed Identification & Control - safe and effective weed management; Vegetable Cropping - selection, fertilization, watering, trouble shooting.

CHERRY PRODUCTION

Montana's sweet cherry industry has increased in production acres every year for 14 years. With the increase in acreage and yield uncertainties, orchardists have become risk management conscious. MSU/Lake County Extension Office and MSU Agricultural Policy Center identified two areas that cherry growers in Montana need to manage risk. 1) An Enterprise Cost Analysis was conducted. 2) Determined sweet cherry operating costs per acre. With the properly identified production cost, orchardists can take advantage of Risk Management Crop Insurance. This feasibility study has made a significant difference for people in the sweet cherry business.

Flathead County Courthouse is located at 800 South Main in Kalispell

Phone: 406-758-5553



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.

WEST NILE

State health officials reported that 228 people in 2003 were infected by West Nile Virus and 4 died. Equine cases numbered 193 across the state. In cooperation with the Lake County Health Department, MSU Lake County Extension conducted a series of presentations covering West Nile awareness, mosquito habitat, mosquito identification, and control. High-risk groups such as Senior Citizens were targeted with the information. The teaching team visited every Senior Citizens program in the area; Arlee, Charlo, St. Ignatius, Polson and Ronan so seniors could be informed about the virus. To help Montanan's with this issue in the future, Extension also conducted two mosquito population-monitoring sites in conjunction with the Montana Department of Agriculture and MSU Entomology.

GRASSHOPPERS

Devastating losses due to grasshoppers in 2003 prompted education for awareness, prevention and control for 2004. A series of seminars were conducted in cooperation with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai (CS&K) Tribal land resources, USDA Animal Health and Plant Inspection Service, and MSU/Lake County Extension. Two Control Districts were formed consisting of landowners in blocks of 10,000 acres each and control products were applied through contract with USDA-AHPIS. A county grasshopper task force was formed consisting of landowners, industry personnel, County officials, USDA agency employees and MSU/Lake County Extension to monitor the hopper situation for governmental involvement with control and cost share.

WEED CONTROL

Weeds are a major agriculture and non-agriculture concern for land management, stewardship, livestock and crop production. Educational components were given for 7 Noxious Weed Trust Fund Districts controlling 6,738 weed infested acres. Extension maintained biological weed control sites for Spotted knapweed and Dalmatian toadflax. In addition to the normal producer audiences, Extension conducted intensive youth weed education classes via local high school Biology students so young people could begin to form a commitment to weed control.

COLUMBIA GROUND SQUIRREL CONTROL

High populations of ground squirrels have become a serious pest problem. Ground squirrels compete with livestock for forage, burrow systems weaken and collapse ditch banks, alter irrigation systems, and damage hay machinery. Workshop demonstrations were held in Lake County for land owners plagued by ground squirrels. They also learned about damage prevention and methods of control through work with Extension.