



MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

In Toole County

Noxious weed education to hunter safety classes - Teaching youth about the importance of agriculture and our natural resources is one of four of the top priorities identified by the Toole County Extension Advisory Council. Noxious weed education for hunter safety students was the most successful youth education class for 2004. Out of 28 participants, 80% of the attendees did not know what a noxious weed was or how they could play a role as a sportsman to assist the landowner with weed management. Ninety of those in attendance improved their knowledge and understanding of noxious weeds, which will reduce noxious weeds spread in our county and state.

Tree Seminar at the Ratzburgs - Horticulture education was one of four of the top priorities identified by the Toole County Extension Advisory Council. The Tree Seminar at the Ratzburg's was the most successful horticulture education program for 2004. Bob Gough (MSU Horticulture Specialist) educated 55 people about tree varieties disease and management. The seminar was hands on with over 20 different varieties of trees. One hundred percent of those in attendance improved their knowledge and understanding of tree selection disease and management.

Ewe-Cost Spreadsheet - Cascade and Pondera wool members learned how easy it is to create a financial profile and use that profile to make knowledgeable business decisions. Real life numbers were presented from a Montana sheep operation. Nineteen participants improved their knowledge and understanding of financial management as it relates to their sheep operation. One producer commented that the spreadsheet was valuable because it was easy to use and saved time. Four producers who attended are currently using the spreadsheet to manage their operation.

Cropping Seminar - Increasing profitability in cropping systems is one of four top priorities identified by the Toole County Extension Advisory Council. The Golden Triangle Cropping Seminar was the most successful cropping program for 2004. Four specialists educated small grain producers about the economics of tillage verses non-tillage, small grain variety performance, the economics of soil testing, and improving farm efficiency with GPS systems. Twenty-two farmers attended the seminar in Shelby. As a result of attending the seminar, two producers will seed the new sawfly resistant Spring wheat "Choteau" which under normal conditions could increase profitability \$5-10/acre. A 2000 acre farm could increase profitability by \$10,000-\$20,000. This seminar was a collaborative effort with 7 MSU Extension agents, 3 MSU specialists and one GPS technician.

Forage and Livestock Production Seminar - Increasing profitability in ranching operations is one of four top priorities identified by the Toole County Extension Advisory Council. The Forage and Livestock seminar was the most successful ranching program for 2004. Dennis Cash (MSU Forage Specialist) covered forage production from species selection to haying. John Paterson (MSU Beef Specialist) talked about the future of the beef industry in America and presented a new user-friendly ration balancer program. Fourteen ranchers attended the seminar. Eight of the participants ordered the Dryland Pastures in Montana, which provided detailed information in establishing grasses and forages. Two producers asked Extension for ration balancing assistance, which could save \$5 per head in feed costs, and add \$1000 in income for a 200 head operation. The seminar was a collaborative effort with seven counties and the Blackfeet Reservation.

Toole County Extension Office is located at 226 First Street South in Shelby

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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.