



MSU Extension Education & Research Improving the Quality of Life

In Yellowstone County

ServSafe – One hundred sixty one employees and managers involved in the food service industry have completed the 8-hour certification class this year. The classes are offered every other month with attendees coming from Montana and Wyoming. Funded by a grant from the Montana Beef Council, the FCS Agent teams with County Sanitarians to insure that all food handlers at the Montana fair are trained appropriately.

Sewing Festival – 2004 marked the 10th anniversary of the Rocky Mountain Sewing and Craft Festival held in Billings. The festival annually hosts 300 – 400 students and vendors from a wide geographic area and features over 100 different workshops for students and opportunities for vendors to find new buyers for their projects.

Homebuyer Education – Homebuyer education is crucial for the first time homebuyer since it provides the needed education for them to be more successful in the purchase and care of this large investment. It is also required as a qualification in many down payment assistance programs. The FCS Agent teaches a Home Maintenance class each month for the prospective first time homebuyers to provide information necessary to care for a home.

American Indian Homeownership – The FCS Agent works with a coalition of local organizations and business people to facilitate homeownership for American Indians. Statistics show that American Indians are much less likely to own homes than non-Indians. The goal of the task force is to bring the level of home ownership closer to par through education and other means of assistance.

CAFO/AFO – CNMP – The Yellowstone County Ag agent has worked with several animal feeding operations to develop a waste management system for their operation and to evaluate their production systems to identify potential environmental concerns. Three operations have developed a complete Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan with the assistance from the agent.

Spring Fever – The Yellowstone County Ag agent worked with the Yellowstone FCS agent and MSU-Billings faculty and staff to organize and teach the second annual *Spring Fever* series of workshops. *Spring Fever* is a collaborative event developed by the Yellowstone County Extension Service and the MSU-Billings College of Technology. During the 2004 *Spring Fever*, 26 different workshops and seminars were offered with 593 class seats filled. The event culminated with lectures by Dr. Temple Grandin, a noted Livestock Behaviorist, who also has autism. Grandin's lecture on livestock handling was broadcasted via interactive video to 17 sites throughout Montana.

Windbreak Establishment and Care – Over 20,000 seedling trees and shrubs are planted in Yellowstone County annually for the purpose of establishing farmstead and rural home windbreaks. The Yellowstone County Ag agent worked with 43 individuals and families to teach proper tree establishment techniques and subsequent care. Teaching opportunities were accomplished through workshops and on-site visits.

Alfalfa Management – Alfalfa remains a vital crop to the Yellowstone County ag economy. The opportunity exists in Yellowstone County to increase average alfalfa yields. The ag agent worked with 35 alfalfa producers to help increase hay yields and profitability. Alfalfa establishment, renovation, irrigation, and harvest system, general economics, and marketing were included in both office and on-site visits.

Yellowstone County Extension Office is located in the Courthouse, Room 106, Billings Phone: 406-256-2828



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.

Drought Mitigation – Drought continues to affect ag production in Yellowstone County. The ag agent worked with producers to find ways to deal with the ongoing drought. The agent helped producers analyze livestock forage strategies, ration balancing, forage nitrate levels, and livestock drinking water quality.

NILE Ag in the Classroom Program – The Yellowstone County Extension Service was involved in organizing and teaching the 2004 NILE Ag Education program to area youth. Over 1480 fourth grade students attended the Ag in the Classroom program at the NILE (Northern International Livestock Exposition). The program highlighted the importance of agriculture to Montana and the world.

After School Coalition – The youth serving organizations in Yellowstone County have come together to provide after school programs to youth. One example is the collaborative effort done between 4-H and the schools in the Billings School District that have received money through the 21st Century Learning Grant. Over 170 young people benefit from 4-H programs at the sites bi-monthly.

Animal Quality Assurance Training – All 4-H members are required to attend a AQA class with and parent or guardian prior to attending the Montana Fair. This year a curriculum was designed to address the excessive adult involvement issue. Adult involvement in youth projects is beneficial, but youth exhibitors still need to do a majority of the work. 4-H Agent, Roni Baker designed the curriculum to focus on the real purposes of the livestock projects. As a result of the training, 98% of adults were not excessively involved in the 4-H members projects at the 2004 fair. In the past, 50% of the adults were excessively involved.