

## Sustainable Agriculture Helping Agriculture Survive in Tough Economic Times

MSU Extension in Chouteau County provides research-based agricultural education and outreach to farmers and ranchers.

Agricultural education and outreach for farmers was achieved through a wheat streak mosaic virus (WSMV) field day, Golden Triangle cropping seminar and MSU Agricultural Research Center / MSU Extension in Chouteau County field days. The wheat streak mosaic virus field day educated 33 producers about wheat streak mosaic virus management. In addition, 57 producers delivered plants to the Chouteau County Extension office. The plants tested positive for WSMV. Educating producers about the ramifications of tearing out winter wheat and seeding a spring cereal grain helped save producers 40 bushel per acre in winter wheat yield. If producers would have destroyed their winter wheat and seeded spring cereals, their yields would have been zero. Economic impacts to producers, who did not reseed their winter wheat crop to a spring cereal grain prevented **\$256,000** in yield losses.

The Golden Triangle Cropping Seminar educated 60 producers about crop residue management, soil fertility, stored grain insects, low pH soils management and fertility/water interactions in the soil. Producers who attended the seminar reported significant economic impacts. One producer will try to build more organic matter. One producer will utilize suggestions on low pH management. One producer will rotate crops more often. One producer will practice better stored grain management. A 10,000 bushel bin could result in a cost savings of **\$25,000**.



One producer will consider implementation of cover crops. Two producers will utilize summer fallow for disease management. One producer will add livestock to his rotation. Two producers will include legumes in their rotation. If two producers rotated 500 acres into green peas instead of winter wheat the economic advantage for the two operations would be **\$300,000** according to 2016 market prices. The field days near The Knees, and Highwood educated 58 producers on management of cereal grains and low pH soils.

Chouteau County Extension educated 184 Golden Triangle producers on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or pesticides in the environment. IPM programs updated producers on a variety of topics including wheat streak mosaic virus, jointed goat grass, wheat stem sawfly, and knapweeds.

### Welcome to Chouteau County

County Seat - Fort Benton  
"Birthplace of Montana"

National Wild and Scenic Missouri River  
Historic Sites of Lewis and Clark Expedition  
Top County in Wheat Production in Montana



### Chouteau County Extension is Montana State University, US Department of Agriculture and Chouteau County cooperating

Chouteau County Extension provides access to useful information and expert knowledge via workshops, demonstrations, community meetings, publications, videos, the internet and other learning opportunities.

MSU researchers and educators work together to help communities, business, families, environment and agricultural enterprises thrive.

## Diabetes Empowerment Education Program™

In close collaboration with and significant support from Mountain-Pacific Quality Health, MSU Extension in Chouteau County held its first Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP)™ series of sessions in Geraldine. The Geraldine Tuesday Club co-sponsored the DEEP sessions by enthusiastically recruiting attendees. We had six participants who attended weekly for a total of nine hours. The sessions were offered at no cost to the participants.

Attendees indicated a clearer understanding of what diabetes is, how it affects the body, why it is important to make lifestyle changes and how those changes can minimize complications a diabetic typically experiences. They also indicated the information they learned in the sessions would help them be more aware and influence behavior changes in their daily habits in regards to eating, physical activity and monitoring of their health.

## Food Preservation

MSU Extension offered residents of the Golden Valley the opportunity to learn how to preserve fruits, vegetables, meats and fish through hands-on classes offered in Cut Bank, Shelby, Chester, Fort Benton and Big Sandy. Both hot water bath and pressure canning methods were taught and experienced by the participants. They also learned about canning equipment, why they would want to preserve foods, safe food handling practices and the most recent research-based food preservation protocols, resources and recipes.

The food preservation experience of the participants ranged in having never done it to very experienced. They also represented all ages. Ninety percent indicated they gained a better understanding of safe food preservation practices and also indicated they felt comfortable canning at home. Participants also had the opportunity to have their dial gauges tested to be sure they are pressure canning their food at the correct pressure in order to get the food to the correct temperature to destroy the microorganisms.

A total of 76 participants experienced the food preservation classes offered by the joint effort of Extension agents in Chouteau, Glacier, Liberty and Toole counties.

## Estate Planning

Chouteau County residents had the great opportunity to have Dr. Marsha A. Goetting, Professor and Extension Family Economics Specialist, present a free workshop in March on estate planning. Goetting presented information on why estate planning is important and the different options on how your personal property can be distributed in the event of your death.

Goetting provided an interactive presentation with realistic examples of what happens if an individual does not have a will or has not properly initiated their estate plan. Everyone valued Goetting's willingness to provide insight on their individual situations.

Of those in attendance, 71% indicated they "gained a lot" of knowledge as a result of attending the presentation. When they were asked to indicate the actions they expected to take, 17% indicated they would discuss estate planning with their spouse and also their adult children, 17% would review their insurance policy beneficiaries, 21% would review their ownership titles on their mutual funds, stocks and bonds and 25% would review the ownership titles of their checking and savings accounts and Certificates of Deposit.



Meat Preservation class participants and instructors.

# Extension Programs Benefit the Public in a Variety of Ways

## Master Gardener Program Yields 240 hours of Community Service

A Level 2 Master Gardener Program was offered in Chouteau County. Eight gardeners completed their training. Gardeners learned about soils, plant biology, vegetables, lawns, irrigation, insects, diseases, trees, shrubs and integrated pest management. Eight Master Gardeners will return approximately 240 hours of volunteer service to the community through this program. In addition, 95% gardeners attended Extension-sponsored horticultural programs in Chouteau County including herb production, an orchard tour and Integrated Pest Management in trees.

## “Rolling Cows” A Cattle Semi Rollover Exercise for Emergency Responders

A cattle semi rollover exercise took place in Fort Benton in an effort to train first responders and others in case of an actual incident involving livestock. The event began with introductions and logistics followed by a functional scenario and break-out discussion groups. Followed by a working lunch, a live cattle hands-on exercise at the



Cattle hauler demonstrating gates and ramps inside the cattle pot.

Chouteau County Fairgrounds took place. Dr. Jeanne Rankin, MSU Extension Agro-Emergency Coordinator, and Linda Williams, Chouteau County Health Department, trained emergency responders from Chouteau County and neighboring counties such as fire fighters, DES coordinators, law enforcement, truck drivers, veterinarians, Extension agents and livestock producers how to humanely and safely deal with cattle at the scene of a trucking accident. The exercise was sponsored by MSU Extension, Chouteau County DES, The Montana Beef Council, The Chouteau County Health Department, and the Chouteau County Strengthening Community Agro-Security Committee (S-CAP).

## Fundamentals of Farming and Ranching for Families Conference

The 2016 Fundamentals of Farming and Ranching for Families Conference took place in November. It included workshops on sharpening financial skills on an infrequent salary, yard and garden care, basic first aid, what to expect when you call 911, farm safety and home safety. In addition, a panel discussion of experienced farm and ranch individuals shared information about their own experiences related to: insight on the relationship as a spouse and as a partner of an operation; hints and suggestions for safely using technology to help add efficiencies to record keeping and/or organization; and being prepared for the unexpected. The panel took questions from attendees.

The attendees gained practical information to apply to their daily lives and be prepared for unexpected events that arise.

## Over 22 Tons of Waste Recycled

MSU Extension in Chouteau County and Fort Benton Recycles held the fifth annual electronic recycling event for Chouteau County and neighboring counties in April. It was held in conjunction with the Fort Benton spring clean-up weekend. In addition to electronic recycling, we also collected books, textiles, shoes, soft toys, appliances and scrap metal. The one-day event was a huge success with 18,115 pounds of electronics recycled, in addition to 2133 pounds of textiles, 5.1 tons of scrap metal including appliances, 4347 pounds of cardboard, 9497 pounds of books and 20 bins of paper shredded. The recycling committee has collected a total of just under 58 tons the past five years. The volunteer recycling committee meets on a regular basis and holds monthly collections as well as oversees drop off bins that the public has constant access to.

The recycling committee has included local high school students to help with our recycling efforts such as transferring the cardboard from the trailer to the cardboard compacting machine. The response to our recycling efforts has significantly helped to reduce the amount of refuse at the local waste disposal site, has freed up space in homes and businesses where e-waste and other unused items were

stored, and ensured that toxic chemicals and/or metals in the electronics were disposed of safely and appropriately to protect our valuable natural resources.

Fort Benton Recycles was recently named 2016 Recycler of the Year by Recycle Montana.



Rock and soil formations in Chouteau County

# 4-H and Youth Programs "Learning in Progress"

The 4-H program cultivates responsibility in youth through experiential learning, which promotes youth and community development. Youth education and outreach was achieved through Market Animal Quality Assurance (MAQA), 4-H camp, Ag Days, project/demonstration day, noxious weed education for hunter safety classes and the Chouteau County 4-H Fair.

Twenty-six 4-H youth received MAQA certification. MAQA is a program designed to teach 4-H youth about producing a quality product. The goal is to assure livestock buyers that they are purchasing a safe, nutritious and good tasting product. Youth learn the importance of taking good care of their market animals. The end result is promotion of market animal quality, 4-H and the livestock industry.

4-H camp took place at the Kiwanis campground south of Havre. Four youth participated with Blaine, Phillips, Toole, Liberty, Pondera and Glacier County. The camp was an excellent opportunity for youth to meet new people and develop confidence and leadership skills.

Chouteau County Ag days educated 100 fourth and fifth graders about the importance of agriculture to Chouteau County and the state of Montana. Planning for the event was a collaborative effort between Extension, the Conservation Districts, School Principals, FFA, 4-H, NRCS and Farmers Union. Youth learned about soils, durum from field to pasta, farm machinery, soil erosion, and horsemanship on the ranch.

Fifty-three 4-H youth participated in project/demonstration day. Youth developed skills in projects which included entomology, public speaking, cooking and sewing.



Chouteau County 4-H members posing for a picture with their 4-H shirts sponsored and provided by Havre Torgerson's.

Chouteau County Extension provided Entomology Education to ninety youth at Farmers Union Camp in the Highwood Mountains.

Forty-six youth were educated in noxious weed awareness and hunter/land owner relations.

The 4-H county fair provided educational opportunities including project interview judging, market livestock weigh-in, bred-heifer ultrasounds, market animal showmanship and confirmation, the heifer show, small animal show, round robin, livestock judging, awards ceremony, market livestock sale and 4-H carcass judging.

## Contact Us



**EXTENSION**

**Chouteau County**

[www.msuxextension.org](http://www.msuxextension.org)

Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

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*Something for everyone...*

Chouteau County Extension is your MSU resource. Take advantage of free to low-cost educational opportunities including hands-on workshops, presentations and access to hundreds of written publications. MSU Extension serves all ages with resources on topics that range from protecting the environment, growing crops and raising livestock to managing finances, growing businesses, building and supporting healthy communities and families.