



Welcome to Fort Peck Reservation

The Fort Peck Reservation is located in the extreme northeast corner of Montana, on the north side of the Missouri River. There are 2,094,000 acres, and 10,381 residents. Poplar is the home to the Tribal Council headquarters. The Fort Peck Reservation is home to two separate Indian nations known as the Assiniboine and Sioux. The reservation is isolated from Montana's populated areas as well as manufacturing centers, but does border oil and gas developments. The largest employer on the Fort Peck Reservation is the Fort Peck Tribes. The main economic driver is agriculture. The area is made up of farmers and ranchers, both Native American and non-Native American and the land is rich in natural resources and most recently, oil and gas development. Communities included on the Fort Peck Reservation are Fort Kipp, Brockton, Riverside, Poplar, Wolf Point, Oswego, Frazer, Lustre, and Reserve.

The purpose of the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) is to support Extension agents who establish Extension education programs on the Indian Reservation and tribal jurisdictions of Federally-Recognized Tribes. This was enacted in 1990 by the "Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act" known more commonly as the Farm Bill. The mission is to empower individuals and communities to increase economic opportunities and quality of life,

improve nutrition and health, and to protect and enhance natural resources and the environment. The FRTEP presence has been with the Poplar-based office since 2000. This is a collaborative effort with the Montana State University-county-based Extension offices and the Fort Peck Tribes. Agriculture, natural resources, nontraditional 4-H, and youth development are what our programs strive to strengthen for our people. The Fort Peck Reservation Extension Program aims to address the needs for sustaining traditional Assiniboine and Sioux values and practices, as well as technological advances that help strengthen best management practices. It also works to teach much-needed life skills via 4-H and youth programs to Fort Peck Reservation youth and families. This is needed to create healthy communities, schools, and families across the Fort Peck Reservation where poverty, suicide and school drop-out rates continue to plague Native American families. The program strives to address the need for positive leadership across the reservation.

Sunset over the Fort Peck Reservation.



Extension Programs Benefit the Public in a Variety of Ways

Advancing youth market projects: Collaboration with Richland County

The market project is a popular one for youth to take. They raise an animal from start to finish, learning about nutrition, market quality assurance, animal welfare, meat quality, and more. In the meat industry, it is widely discussed how to get larger ribeye size, tenderness, and intermuscular fat. This program was created to help teach another avenue of meat science using other cuts to add value to lesser discussed cuts of meat. It was also created because it has been discussed among many elders that our youth are losing a foundational level of knowledge of dressing out an animal.

The equipment for this project was obtained from a Montana 4-H Foundation Innovative Grant and Goss Richland County 4-H Grant. The four-part series teaches how to make fresh sausage, jerky, snack sticks, and summer sausage. The focus for this first year was fresh sausage and jerky making. Meat, spice, casing, and cheese

supplies were utilized with donations and grants from local sources such as Fort Peck Housing, Richland County 4-H Council, and the Tribal Elder Program.

Students learn about different cuts of meat, muscle structure, food science, recipe structure, food safety, and packaging. The project is completely hands-on, so students cut the meat themselves, decide what kind of recipe to use and put it together from a variety of spices and cures, grind the meat, stuff the sausage in natural casing or dehydrate the jerky, and package the final product, complete with labeling.

Over 255 youth and leaders have completed one of the courses. Only 1% of them had ever made fresh sausage and only 22% had made jerky. The students were very intrigued by the process. Several skills were utilized including math skills to figure out recipe proportions, they remembered what temperature meat needed to be cooked to, understood food and equipment safety, and participants wanted to learn more about the process.

Working together to make the final product.



Bovine Connection-Innovative Programming with a Practical Twist

The Bovine Connection committee consisting of MSU and NDSU Extension agents, Roosevelt County Conservation District, and the Roosevelt County NRCS office offered an educational program for area producers and agri-businesses to inform them of upcoming changes and challenges in the livestock industry.

The day of the program we woke up to weather conditions that were less than favorable for some speakers to make it, but were able to use Skype. It did not deter the 70 participants who trudged through the circumstances to get there. Our first interactive presentation was about strategically culling and how it can impact your herd. The next



Profit learning opportunities

speaker discussed the Veterinary Feed Directive. He stressed record-keeping, a good relationship with your veterinarian, and being a sound steward of your cattle.

Fort Peck Reservation Extension agent Wendy Becker gave a presentation on the new value-added beef cut “The Bonanza Cut,” the flat-iron steak, the tri-tip, and the sirloin. The sirloin was discussed because it is being revived in the marketplace as a lean cut of meat. She discussed cooking techniques, nutritional aspects, unique qualities of the cuts, and how they have added more to the value of the carcass. During the break, everyone was able to sample the cuts.

Another speaker discussed production efficiency in beef cattle. He reported on research compiled from several trials at the livestock herd in Ft. Keogh. He talked about fetal programming, how restricted diets will affect future livestock generations, and how it is important to keep mineral nutrition consistent.

The final speaker of the day was Dave Pratt from Ranch Management Consultants. He presented: Ranching for Profit-The Three Secrets to Increasing Profit. His strategies were 1) decrease overhead 2) increase gross margin, and 3) increase turnover.

Participants were mainly cow/calf operators with 100-500 head. All evaluations indicated the bovine program was helpful and they will likely use some information for future decision making on their ranches. Finally, all of the programs provided at the Bovine Connection appealed to all of the participants, all of the subjects were useful and timely to evaluators. With the deadline fast approaching for the Veterinary Feed Directive-being well-informed is crucial. An increase in the value-added cuts showcase also showed what beef check-off dollars have pursued in terms of turning education and research dollars into higher dollar meat cuts.

Financial Fun on the Fort Peck Reservation

The program that the Fort Peck Reservation Extension office conducted was financial literacy about credit scores and job skill development. The program focused on what credit is, how we obtain it, use it positively, and the program included two games to reinforce learning the objectives.

A collaborative effort for funding equipment needed, room fees, meals, refreshments, and booklets, was provided with help from the Montana Financial Education Coalition, Fort Peck Housing Authority and Resident Opportunities and Self Sufficiency Grant.

Over 66 students participated in 10 different classrooms, and 45 adults participated in two-day long Tribal Financial Literacy workshops. The program materials included the book “Building Native Communities-Financial Skills for Families,” from the First Nations Development Institute, and two games developed from Luke Erickson of the University of Idaho, called Credit Score Millionaire, and an app called Night of the Living Debt, and the Montana 4-H Communications Curriculum.

Time was spent going over the basics of credit, and how it affects everybody, then we used the two games for reinforcing the objectives. The adult program allowed the participants to



Learning about credit

receive incentives from housing, as well as CEU credits from the college. Participants learned how to fill out job applications, prepare for interviews, and build resumes. From the evaluations, there was a 100% increase in knowledge of building good credit, 100% increase in the participants ability to increase their credit

score, and 100% plan to regularly obtain their credit report and work to improve their credit score, 100% plan to teach others about how to build good credit.

Many of the students and adults had great

questions that were thought-provoking and real-life situations. They brought up things that others in the room weren't aware of, or had never had to think about. Some of the comments and specific actions to be taken from the class evaluations were:

- They are going to learn to set an appropriate spending limit.
- They want to be careful on how to use a credit card and use it wisely.
- To start building credit and have a successful future.
- Keep my credit score higher and pay off bills and loans
- Use a credit card wisely and build my credit score positively.

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EXTENSION

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