McCone County MSU Extension provides non-biased, research-based education to constituents in the county and neighboring areas. In 2020, McCone County MSU Extension offered programming in Agriculture, Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Science, and Youth Development.

McCone County was established in 1919 and was named in honor of state senator George McCone. McCone County encompasses 2,594 sq. miles. Circle is the single incorporated town in the county and is also the county seat. The county has a population of 1,700 people. Agriculture is the primary business in McCone County.

**Welcome to McCone County**

McCone County MSU Extension offers programming that addresses production issues, nutrition, forage testing, water testing, and marketing for livestock producers. Programming is also offered for crop producers dealing with specialty crops, weed control, rental rates, and general crop production topics. Face-to-face programming is done through producer meetings and workshops, as well as one-on-one consultations in the office and/or at the farm or ranch.

A very effective means of communicating with the producers about a wide variety of issues is the weekly newspaper article, “Notes from Nelson.” The focus of this weekly column is current agricultural issues. The issues addressed often result in calls or visits to the Extension office to further discuss the topics addressed. The McCone County MSU Extension agent also teams with several other Extension agents who present current issues and information via a weekly radio spot on a Miles City radio station.

A very popular service of MSU Extension continues to be in the area of weed, plant, and insect identification. Samples are brought in on a regular basis. Samples that cannot be identified immediately are submitted to the Schutter Diagnostic Lab on the MSU campus. Although not as many as in previous years, a number of forage samples were brought in for nitrate content analysis. Livestock water quality continues to be a local concern. Educational efforts were put forth to help make livestock producers aware of managing for water quality.

A major programming focus for the past year has again been in the area of All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) safety. ATVs are widely used on most Montana farms and ranches. Farmers and ranchers, as well as their employees and family members, are involved in too many ATV accidents that result in serious injury and deaths. Approximately 18 youth and 4 adults were involved in ATV Safety-related events through the McCone
County MSU Extension office. Other specific programming efforts included addressing stocking rates, rangeland noxious weeds, alfalfa management, and custom rates.

**4-H Youth Development**

McCone County 4-H has 48 members and 10 leaders in four different clubs: the Ambitious Ants, Green & White, Washington Warriors and the Redwater Wranglers. The 4-H program offers youth opportunities through a number of events and activities throughout the year.

Enhanced life skills are gained through club meetings, project work, judging events, summer camp, mini-congress, market quality assurance, Rec Lab, club trips and outings, special interest group meetings, shooting sports events, trainings and educational workshops, County Fair, fundraising events, a livestock jackpot show and the achievement program and banquet. We have a few countywide fundraisers, including fruit sales in the spring and Greytak calendars in the fall.

Involvement in 4-H allows youth to gain hands-on experience through project work. That hands-on experience forms the basis for post-secondary institution selection and, ultimately, career choice and development. The 4-H program also allows many opportunities for adults to be involved in life skills development of youth through project leadership as well as assisting with various projects and activities. The 4-H Cloverbud (for ages 5-8) enrollments continue to rise with increased interest and participation. In the 2019-2020 year, we had nine Cloverbuds. We have added many new options to work on throughout the year and to bring to the fair.

The 4-H Program Assistant promotes 4-H and gives hands-on efforts working with each member to introduce them to what 4-H is about as well as working diligently to meet the needs of each member within their project.