

Musselshell-Golden Valley



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Musselshell County Fairgrounds grandstands, by David Jones.

Musselshell and Golden Valley counties are located in the South Central region of Montana. There are 503 agriculture operations which encompass approximately 1.78 million acres. The Musselshell Valley has an exciting history which may be learned about at the local museum, which is open May through September. The Heritage Trail and River Walk follows the Musselshell River and offers beautiful scenery of the Musselshell County Fairgrounds. Golden Valley County includes the town of Lavina and the county seat is in Ryegate. Musselshell County holds the towns of Melstone and Musselshell, and the county seat is in Roundup. The major industries for both counties include cattle production, crop production, and coal mining.

Annual Noxious Weed Workshop

As MSU Extension was cautiously moving forward with some programming and discussing options, an idea for an annual event emerged. The Lower Musselshell Conservation District (LMCD) and MSU Extension developed an annual noxious weed workshop. This year may not have been an ideal start, but it sparked creativity to provide an ideal learning environment. The August workshop was offered in the horse barn at the Musselshell County Fairgrounds, with an

agenda that included topics on Ventenata, Saltcedar, Canada & Scotch thistle, Palmer amaranth, economic costs of weeds, and management strategies for noxious weeds. The workshop drew an audience of 45 people, with 34 of those receiving three pesticide applicator credits.

MSU Extension specialists presented virtually, including Jane Mangold, Kate Fuller, and Tim Seipel. The Musselshell and Golden Valley Weed Coordinator, Meriel Beck, presented about Saltcedar, while NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist Nikki Rife discussed various management strategies for noxious weeds. This event provided an opportunity to network with local producers and check-in since the start of COVID-19 restrictions. The collaboration between MSU Extension and local agencies helps to utilize valuable resources to bring more applicable learning opportunities to area producers.

4-H in Musselshell & Golden Valley Counties

The Musselshell-Golden Valley 4-H program usually makes a round of personal invitations to the fair at local businesses in Roundup, Lavina, and Ryegate. Realizing this would not be an option this year, the 4-H program got creative to advertise

for the fair in July. The Roundup High School Agriculture teacher and FFA Advisor, Lindsey Harper, and Extension agent Jennifer Solf partnered to organize fair spotlights for youth members selling market animals. With prior approval and sanitation measures in place, home visits were made with youth members. They had the opportunity to introduce themselves, talk about their market animal(s), and something they have learned from their projects in 4-H/FFA. Then, youth members invited viewers to the Musselshell-Golden Valley Fair and the livestock sale held on July 25.

This approach introduced several new experiences for Harper and Solf, and 4-H/FFA members. For newer families to the program, it was a great opportunity to provide guidance on projects. Youth members practiced their public speaking skills while giving some additional insight to their learning experiences. Leaders gained technology skills in recording and compiling the videos, as did a senior 4-H member who volunteered to edit the videos and share one each day as fair week approached. Due to the success of the format, planning will be similar for 2021 and will include youth members with projects other than livestock.



Top: Preparing for the workshop with Nikki Rife, by Wendy Jones; **Bottom:** A particularly relaxed group of hogs, by Jennifer Solf

Musselshell-Golden Valley Staff



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