Area farmers continue to benefit from the information provided by the off-station variety test plot located at the Cederberg Farm in Turner. This plot has a 33 year history of providing local answers to production issues that area farmers struggle with. For the first 20 years the plot was directed at addressing the performance of various crops under different fertility treatments. This information has provided a sound fertility recommendation for area farmers that is driven by profit potential of the area land. Currently the focus of the trial is to evaluate the performance of various small grain varieties as they are affected by infestation of the insect pest Wheat Stem Sawfly. Spring Wheat, Durum and a combination seeding of spring wheat varieties are being evaluated for resistance to Wheat Stem Sawfly. Producers have indicated that this information is important so that they can make profitable cropping decisions with the best variety selection to maximize their yields and profits. The plot tour held in July each year attracts an average of 30 producers representing over 35,000 acres of Blaine County farmland. The 2015 Crop Tour also had a hands on workshop of different crop diseases from Extension Plant Pathologist, Dr. Mary Burrows. Participants were given samples of peas and winter wheat with different disease to help better identify these in the field.
Blaine County 4-H

4-H Program
The Blaine County 4-H program offers a wide range of education and leadership opportunities for its area youth. 4-H is the state’s largest out-of-school youth program. Throughout the process, youth develop the life skills that are both relevant for them today and in their future endeavors.

Blaine County 4-H program boasts:
- 138 Youth members
- 7 County 4-H clubs
- 44 Adult leaders/volunteers
- 5 Teen Ambassadors
- 13 Teen Leaders
- 32 Cloverbuds
- 2 State Shooting Sports Tournament participants
- 5 Camp Counselors
- 19 Campers
- 98 Blaine County Fair participants
- 9 Rec Lab participants
- Countless volunteer hours of leadership, community service, and program promotion.

New and experienced members are able to engage in opportunities to be actively involved with not only the 4-H program, but their community as well. These opportunities include county events, camps, club meetings, project work, volunteer work, and much more. Blaine County 4-H is supported by the 4-H Council and the Blaine County 4-H Foundation. Both organizations provide financial assistance to the youth involved in the 4-H program.

Studies show that youth who are involved in 4-H activities experience greater educational achievements, are more civically active, and are more likely to attend college. The 4-H Youth Development programming creates an environment for youth to reach their greatest potential by acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and strengthening their values. Blaine County 4-Hers are encouraged to develop these life skills and become self-directed, productive, contributing citizens of our county.

4-H Youth Lead by Example
The caring support of Blaine County’s 4-H adult volunteers and mentors inspires and motivates our youth to work collaboratively to reach a common goal, help younger members, and give back to their community. We have a strong 4-H leadership program involving both Teen Leaders and 4-H Ambassadors. Blaine County’s 13 Teen Leaders and five Ambassadors are actively involved in helping with a variety of events throughout the year including serving at the Woman’s Tea and at the 4-H Foundation Breakfast. Their big fundraiser is the annual Valentine’s Day Dinner put on in Chinook. They help to organize the event, along with selling tickets, setting up, and serving for the dinner. Throughout the fair our 4-H Ambassadors are busy helping with a wide-range of tasks including helping with large and small animal shows, handing out awards, and helping with the 4-H livestock sale.

4-H Youth Give Back to the Community
Blaine County 4-Hers take advantage of countless opportunities to give back to the community that continuously supports their program. In 2015, Blaine County 4-H began a Fairground improvement project. Youth of all ages contributed to the program by painting murals, building planters, planting flowers, and restoring an older building for use as the 4-H office during the Blaine County Fair. These improvements were enjoyed by all who attended the fair.
Health and Wellness

Blaine County Extension focuses on the needs of families, individuals, businesses, and the community by providing programming in the areas of food and nutrition, health, family issues, and personal finances. Due to higher health care costs and their impact on business, employee wellness is of the utmost importance. Businesses are affected both directly (health care costs) and indirectly (absence of work and reduced work productivity). Wellness programs are a valuable tool for cutting health care expenses. Proactive approaches to wellness are accepted as both cost-effective and necessary for a successful benefits program. Blaine County Extension actively contributed to the county’s wellness program by offering water aerobics classes five days a week throughout the summer.

Salinity: a Seeping Issue for Blaine County Landowners

Saline seeps have always been a problem for producers in northern Montana. Typically the seeps are relatively small, but lately it seems like more and more acres of farmland are lost to saline seeps. Since this has been a concern for producers, the Blaine County Conservation District, MSU Extension, and the NRCS offices held a Salinity Control and Soil Health Workshop. The Montana Salinity Control Association (MSCA) was invited to speak to Blaine County Landowners. The MSCA works with individuals and other entities such as Conservation Districts and the NRCS to provide technical assistance when reclaiming saline seeps. MSCA covered a wide range of subjects such as dryland saline seep development and reclamation technique; and ground water flow direction and the recharge area for specific saline seeps. Also in the program, an agronomist from the NRCS spoke about the benefits of crop systems to help control saline soils. MSU Extension Agent Ben Hauptman explained forage establishment and seed bed preparation for salt tolerant forages. This program helped landowners identify problem areas, as well as give them tools and resources to improve land affected by saline seeps.

Blaine County Farmers Enroll in New Farm Bill Program

In February of 2014, the Agricultural Act of 2014, commonly referred to as the Farm Bill was signed into law. This new bill had many changes to existing programs or removed them all completely. These changes have major impacts on farmers within the state of Montana. Montana State University, along with many other universities and partners in the nation, provided decision tools designed to help farmers learn the new programs and decide which program would be the best for their operation. In Blaine County, the Farm Service Agency and MSU Extension hosted numerous producer meetings to educate farmers on the programs that were available for them to be enrolled in and also gave tutorials on how to use the decision tools. These programs were attended by 50+ area producers. In addition to these meetings, the MSU Blaine County Extension office provided individual assistance with the decision tools and farm bill related materials to over 30 Blaine County farmers. According to the FSA, 626 individual farms were enrolled in one of the new Farm Bill programs for the 2014 season, and the number is expected to be greater than 700 for the 2015 season.

SNAP-Ed Serves Up Nutrition

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) offers a free educational program to all SNAP, WIC, or HeadStart eligible people, along with nutrition classes to first, third, and fifth grade classrooms. This program provides hands-on nutrition education with a research-based curriculum. Joann Beard, Blaine County’s SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator, has been providing this important program for 14 years. Participants learn practical tips for choosing healthier foods, preparing meals, learning appropriate food safety practices, modeling good food choices for family members, and incorporating ways to be more physically active.
Contact Us

Blaine County Extension

Area Women Participate in Strong Hearts for Montana Research Study
Heart disease is the leading cause of death among adults in Montana. It is important to recognize risk factors, along with making important healthy lifestyle choices. A new research study, Strong Hearts for Montana, is taking a look at how to reduce heart disease and improve quality of life, especially for those living in rural communities which are commonly underserved.

Baine County has been selected to be one of 12 rural areas in Montana to participate in an exciting cardiovascular disease prevention study. This study is a collaborative effort between Cornell University and Montana State University Extension. Strong Hearts for Montana is simultaneously implementing one of two similar programs throughout the 12 communities, and will use the data collected to further develop their findings. If the study shows beneficial results, not only will the programs be available to the wider community, it will be made available nationwide as well.

Blaine County Extension is excited to be a part of this research program due to the importance of cardiovascular health, and the potential impacts it will have on women nationwide, especially those living in rural areas. Blaine county’s involvement in this program is an important step toward cardiovascular health.

Chronic Disease Self-Management
Blaine County Extension teamed up with the Blaine County Health Department and received a grant opportunity to be able to bring the Living Life Well program, a six-week workshop series, to its area constituents. This is an important program that was developed by Stanford University for those living with a chronic disease and their caregivers. Participants discuss their problems and concerns, along with learning self-management techniques. The goal of this program is to help people better manage their chronic conditions and deal with the frustration, fatigue, and pain that can accompany a chronic disease. The Living Life Well series encourage participants to engage in healthful behaviors such as exercise, cognitive symptom management, coping skills, and communications with physicians.

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