

Carbon County



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Nikki Bailey & Sheri Hatten on 4-H Exchange in Moab.

The Carbon County MSU Extension office is located in Joliet and is staffed by MSU Extension Agent Nikki Bailey and Administrative Assistant Sheri Hatten. With support from the Carbon County Commissioners, MSU Extension has met the needs of clientele across the county including a robust 4-H program with more than 300 members, traditional agricultural producers, and new small acreage landowners. One of the exciting aspects of working in Carbon County is the opportunity to create programming that serves many different areas of emphasis and groups of people.

Forward Motion in Carbon County 4-H

Carbon County 4-H has made strides to move forward while building on past successes. Changes were made in the Livestock Quality Assurance classes to improve youth knowledge and understanding of carcass quality and the interpretation of ultrasound carcass results. In these workshops, 4-H and FFA members created and measured their own ribeye or loineye models, judged cuts of meat, learned how carcass data affects the final product, and taste-tested meat samples of varying quality grades. The workshops also featured a panel of experienced showmen and a nutrition presentation. These hands-on trainings improved youth knowledge of carcass data. Youth applied

this knowledge to the results of their actual animals at fair, providing more “meat” to the ultrasound contest.

The 4-H Council Memorial Playground was completed at the Carbon County Fairgrounds in July. This playground and the surrounding fence was installed by a group of Carbon County 4-H and FFA youth and parent volunteers. The fence features memorial plaques and plaques for those who donated to the project. Inside the fence, the playground adds a safe space for youth to play and a memorial bench in honor of a lifelong 4-H volunteer. The playground was a multiple year effort of MSU Extension staff, volunteers, and local leaders, who raised over \$20,000 that resulted in a safe area for youth to gather for years to come.

Following the pandemic, many states cancelled their 4-H Exchange programs, Carbon County took a different approach. The MSU Extension staff loaded up the 4-H Exchange teen leaders and drove to Utah. The trip focused on agriculture and natural science education. Youth visited dairies, orchards, national parks, and cultural areas in Salt Lake City and Moab. Whether hiking the Arches or visiting the Tabernacle, teens learned about our country’s national culture and natural treasures. They also learned about the challenges facing dairy and fruit farmers in Utah and the creative ways they are marketing

products to overcome these challenges. One teen reported, “With 4-H Exchange it’s not just about seeing the sites, I actually learned a lot about agriculture and nature and the importance of preserving it. This isn’t an experience you get anywhere else.”

Combating Pests and Problems Through Education

Carbon County MSU Extension worked with local agricultural producers and small acreage landowners to combat the effects of drought, pests, and fire. As the year progressed, it became evident that lack of moisture, increased insect pressure, and high temperatures were going to be challenging for producers. Based on these concerns, Carbon County MSU Extension provided education through presentations and one-on-one consultations for preventing wildfire damage through grazing and land management, as well as tools to help the land recover after the fire.

To meet the need for insect control education, south central region MSU Extension agents presented a webinar focusing on grasshopper and alfalfa weevil control. Producers learned about grasshopper control and weevil control while earning two Private Applicator points. From across the region and state, 122 participants joined this webinar. This workshop applied information from research and gave producers a plan for moving forward.

Carbon County MSU Extension saw an increased number of nitrate tests in 2021 and an increase in the number of higher than average results. Nitrate levels in forage can cause health problems including abortions and death in livestock and need to be closely monitored, specifically in cereal forages. Carbon County MSU Extension was able to nitrate test in the office, giving fast results to producers and analysis of lab results to provide feeding recommendations. Almost half of the nitrate samples tested were higher than average, resulting in feeding recommendations of only feeding at half the rate to pregnant livestock. Recommendations from MSU Extension became critical to prevent nitrate toxicity loss in livestock herds.

Finally, pests and environmental stress also affected trees and other plants in the area. Numerous plant pests were identified. Recommendations were given for pest issues including crown rot on alfalfa, *Dioryctria* moth on pine, and *Rhizosphaera* Needle Cast in Spruce. One such tree diagnostic visit was even featured on Yellowstone Public Radio. From horticulture and grazing visits to 4-H events, the radio program captured the daily work of MSU Extension Agents Nikki Bailey and Callie Cooley (Yellowstone County) in the weekly series Field Days. Through this radio show, the public gained knowledge of MSU Extension reaching new audiences.



Top: Carbon County 4-H members working on the Memorial Playground, by Nikki Bailey; **Bottom:** Nikki on a Field Visit Explaining Pasture Weeds, by Sara Brown

Carbon County Staff



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

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