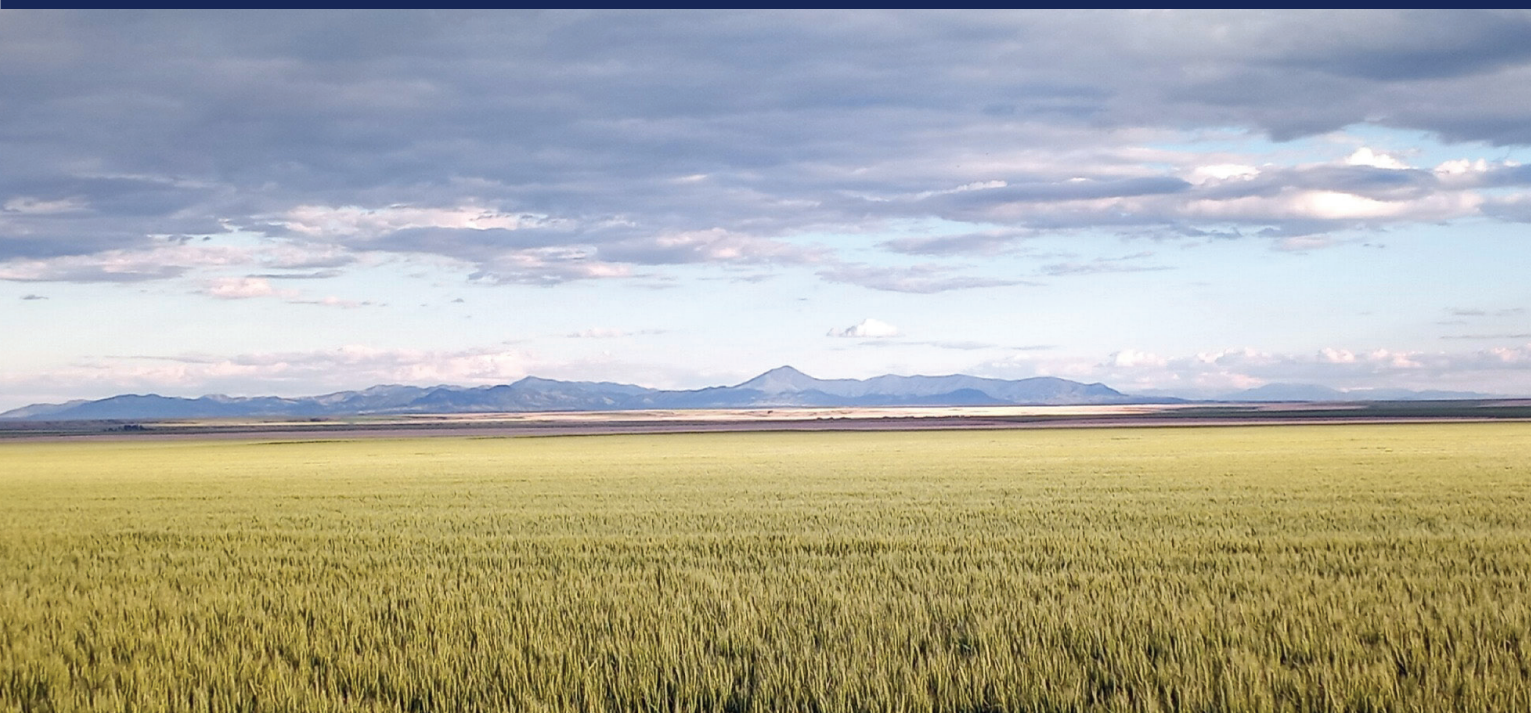


# Chouteau County



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*View of Highwood Mountains from the field by Deb Evans.*

**C**houteau County, established in 1865, was one of the original nine counties of the Montana Territory. Once the largest county in the Montana Territory and second largest in the United States, Chouteau County covers 3,972 square miles. With a population of about 5,765, Fort Benton, Big Sandy, Geraldine and Highwood are the largest communities with smaller communities in Carter, Loma, Floweree, Shonkin and Square Butte. As part of the Golden Triangle, Chouteau County is the top winter wheat producing county in the state. With these statistics, it is no wonder agriculture production and agriculture-related businesses are the top industries.

## Dining with Diabetes

One of the requests most often asked by participants during previously offered diabetes classes is “What can I eat?”

In response to this question, Chouteau County MSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent Janell Barber presented the four-week series “Dining with Diabetes” in Fort Benton. Participants met two hours each week, learning about the basics of diabetes and nutrition, increasing their knowledge about making healthy food choices, discovering healthy versions of familiar foods, and making connections with others through sharing and learning. By participating

in the class and through hands-on preparing and cooking of a main dish, side dish and dessert, the individuals were better informed on how to manage their diabetes through meal planning, carbohydrate planning, portion control, and reading nutrition labels.

The participants indicated the class content and the recipes provided were highly beneficial. One comment was the class “hit it out of the ballpark” for them. Many of the participants tasted cooked kale for the first time and indicated they would try it again at home. Crunchy beet and sweet potato chips were one of the favorite recipes as a healthy option in place of potato chips. Through weekly SMART goals, the individuals realized positive gains in increasing their physical activity, increased awareness of reading nutrition labels which helped them decrease the amount of carbohydrates consumed, and they increased their vegetable intake.

This series was supported with the help of a registered dietician explaining the programs she offers for individuals with diabetes and answering questions from the participants. The generosity of the Fort Benton Lions Club was significant. They provided funding for the purchase of the food and have committed more financial help for future classes.



Through high praise from the participants, Barber has received requests for additional classes which are being scheduled for next year.

## Agriculture Education

### CHOUTEAU COUNTY JUNIORS AND SENIORS LEARN ABOUT AGRICULTURAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Eighteen agricultural businesses educated 70 up-and-coming graduates on employment opportunities in Chouteau County to promote growth in agricultural-related careers. Planning of the event was a collaborative effort between Chouteau County MSU Extension, Chouteau County FFA advisors, and Highwood School.

### AG DAY FOR 4TH AND 5TH GRADERS

The fifth annual Chouteau County Ag Day took place in May at the Chouteau County Fairgrounds. In attendance were 95 fourth and fifth graders from Big Sandy, Fort Benton, Geraldine and Highwood. Planning of the event was a collaborative effort between Chouteau County MSU Extension and six other agricultural groups. Presentations included Sheep to Sweater, Soil Erosion and Soil Tunnel, Farm to Table, Farm Machinery, Pollination, and Horses on the Ranch.

### SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Agricultural education and outreach for farmers was achieved through the Golden Triangle Cropping Seminar and Integrated Pest Management of Grasshopper presentations. One producer will improve Canada thistle management. Another will scout more for grasshopper pests. Potential lost revenue would total \$140,000.

A range management field day took place near Geraldine. One producer stated that the field day helped him accurately determine stocking rate, which in turn gave him the comfort level to increase the number of cows he manages. Just this year alone, he was able to increase profitability by \$20,000.



**Top:** Dining with Diabetes participant enjoying the food made during class, by Janell Barber; **Bottom:** Tyler Lane presenting during Ag Day, by Deb Evans

## Chouteau County Staff



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

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