

2021 MSU EXTENSION HIGHLIGHTS

Glacier County

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This past year, 4-Her's gave back to the community through numerous service projects: planting flowers at the senior center, cleaning the library flower beds and yard, highway trash cleanup, and more. Photo by Kari Lewis.

Glacier County is home to Glacier National Park, the Blackfoot Indian Reservation, 75 miles of international border, and thousands of acres of crops, rangeland, and hay fields. The nearly 13,500 residents are immersed in agriculture, oil and gas, and tourism industries. MSU Extension in Glacier County strives to meet the needs of the community, 4-H, and agriculture producers.

This past year's drought and hail created many challenges. In-office forage nitrate tests provided a key decision-making tool for producers harvesting forages potentially high in nitrates. Educational programs addressed cow herd winter supplementation needs, range management, and heifer selection. Additional programs covered crops, business planning, financial management, reducing grocery expenses, a 'Reimagining Rural' series, numerous 4-H events and more.

Our local MSU Extension office welcomed a new SNAP-Ed nutrition instructor to specifically serve the Blackfoot Reservation and an FCS / 4-H and Youth Development agent position has been created.

'Meat and Compete' teaches cooking, presentation, and communication skills

'Meat and Compete' was a kitchen competition to help 4-Her's learn to cook lamb, beef, and pork, along with learning how to set a table, fold napkins, attractively present a meal, and use proper meal etiquette. After three hands-on kitchen sessions, groups prepared a meal of their choice and presented it for the competition.

Members prepared lamb chops, BLT sandwiches, and meatballs and gravy throughout the series. For the final session, groups drew for a meat ingredient, and then selected a recipe and planned the meal and table setting. They shopped for ingredients within their budget, and then cooked and prepared the meal. They gave a short, oral presentation on their dish and answered judge's questions.

As a result of Meat and Compete, 4-Her's said they would plan to use correct chopping techniques. They learned different cooking techniques, proper meat cooking temperatures, and gained confidence in the kitchen. One senior 4-H'er predicted she would "Save a lot of money!" Overall, participants rated the series 4.8 out of 5 and shared that beyond cooking, they

enjoyed spending time with other 4-Her's, learning to adjust to working with others in the kitchen, and overall had fun.

Meat and Compete' was sponsored by a Montana 4-H Foundation grant with additional resources from the Montana Beef Council, Montana Woolgrowers, and Montana Pork Producers. Through Meat and Compete, these 4-Her's 'Learn by Doing' and they honed their teamwork, communication, budgeting, and time management skills.

Montana's Next Generation Conference makes virtual impact

The 2021 Montana's Next Generation Conference hosted 559 producers from 37 states/provinces for the virtual event. Montana producers represented 150 different towns. Six, two-hour evening virtual sessions covered financial recordkeeping, land leasing, profitability and marketing, beef nutrition and colostrum, family communication, succession planning, and legal updates.

As a result of the conference, 66% of participants planned to devote more time to recordkeeping this year, 55% planned to analyze their operation's various enterprises operation for profitability and one-third planned to begin using or switch to new recordkeeping software. One participant noted, "This lit a fire to start doing the things I know I should be doing, and when I start my own branch of the business, to make sure I start right, especially in the types and quality of records I keep."

Some highlights of intended behavior change include:

- 45% of participants planned to write a will
- 39% of participants planned to begin having family meetings
- 31% of participants planned to meet with an attorney or CPA regarding succession planning.

Several participants noted the need for increased communication in their family business, with one remarking, "Family meetings are something that rang a bell. We need to meet and discuss all daily and weekly activities on the ranch."

Overall, the conference was rated 4.5/5 and received great reviews for the virtual format, which allowed families to participate from home and network with speakers and producers from across the nation.

'March Money Makeover' and 'Saving Time, Saving Money' financial programs

To serve high demand for additional financial classes, we offered a virtual 'March Money Makeover' book club to 19 participants. They met weekly during March to learn about





Previous Page: (top) Through Meat and Compete, 4-Her's learned to cook beef, lamb, and pork. The finale included presenting a recipe to a panel of local judges. by Kari Lewis; **(bottom)** The 'Saving Time, Saving Money' class includes hands-on cooking. Participants made stir fry and fruit and yogurt parfaits. by Kari Lewis ; **This Page:** Colostrum is extremely important in starting calves, and Dr. Brian Vanderlay of University of Nebraska-Lincoln shared critical information for ranchers on the topic., by Kari Lewis

paying off debt, living on a budget, and saving for the future. Over five weeks, the average participant paid off \$5,400 in debt, cut up two credit cards, and saved \$2,500 for their emergency fund. One participant said, “We plan to be debt free by the end of the year and have our house paid off within five years.”

Throughout the classes, there was discussion on how to reduce grocery expenses. This led to a ‘Saving Time, Saving Money’ meal class with 14 participants. These classes taught participants about saving money on groceries and planning and cooking healthy meals. As a result, participants planned to meal plan and only buy items on their list, compare prices on grocery items more often, try to save \$10/week on groceries, and make more deliberate choices when shopping. One participant said “It made me feel more enthused to continue working at saving money when buying groceries.”

The class was also offered virtually, reaching 10 individuals. Virtual participants planned to meal plan and only buy what’s on their list, track prices of commonly used items in their home, prep foods to reduce food waste, and reduce the number of times they eat out each month.

Glacier County Staff



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

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