

Richland County



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Richland County MSU Extension Office, by Richland County Extension.

Named to attract settlers, Richland County is the thirty-second largest county in area in the state of Montana with 2,084 square miles. Richland County is Montana's twentieth most populous county, with an estimated 10,803 residents according to 2019 census data. Sidney, the county seat, is the state's nineteenth-largest city, with a population estimated at 6,173. Other towns in Richland County include Crane, Fairview, Lambert, and Savage. Agriculture and oil production are widely recognized as two of the staples of Richland County's economy. Much of Richland County is located in the Bakken Oil Zone and cattle, wheat, sugar beets, pulse crops, and other small grains are the top agricultural commodities.

4-H collaborates with Richland County to address a county need

4-H provides opportunities for youth to participate in learn-by-doing projects that guide them in experiential learning. In Richland County 4-H, the top projects are beef, swine, photography, wood science and foods and nutrition. Through project work, youth can develop a positive self-concept, learn life skills and improve the world around them.

Youth also participate in club meetings, service-learning projects, and activities that allow them to grow and develop. Approximately 11% of the school-aged population in Richland County, or 235 youth, are active in the 4-H program. The total enrollment of Richland County 4-H has grown by 22% over the past 10 years.

With the continued growth in the program, Richland County was facing a unique challenge; the livestock barns at the fairgrounds were inadequate and could no longer accommodate the animals that youth would bring to the fair. In addition to the size of the barns, there were safety concerns with the structures. In facing this challenge, 4-H partnered with the Richland County Commissioners and the Richland County Fair and Rodeo Board to address the issues.

Over the past three years, through teamwork and collaboration, 4-H and Richland County conducted a community needs assessment, developed a plan and constructed a brand new livestock complex at the Richland County Fairgrounds. While this complex benefits 4-H, the impact reaches far beyond the youth program. This new facility provides a location for community members and groups to come together to work, play and celebrate in Richland County. This facility will also make an economic impact on our community. Richland County

can host new and larger events, bringing more resources and support into the local economy. One Richland County 4-H member said “Fair was really nice with all the new buildings that everyone’s thankful for.”

Foods and Nutrition are a hot topic in Richland County

Carrie Krug, MSU Extension Richland County Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agent, offered various foods and nutrition programs throughout the past year.

At Sidney High School, Krug was asked to present the changes to the American Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate to culinary arts students in four classes throughout the year. Over of the 60 students strongly/somewhat agreed that they learned something new.

As chairman of the Richland County Nutrition Coalition (RCNC), Krug and other community entities worked together to participate in nutrition-related events throughout the year. One of our local organizations asked the RCNC to present a nutrition topic. As many of the organization’s members are teens/young adults, they asked to discuss general nutrition, easy cooking in a dorm room/living on their own, and ways to save money at the store. With assistance from two other RCNC members, Krug offered Healthy Eating and Microwave Cooking! Participants learned how to make omelets and mug cakes in the microwave and overnight oats (in the fridge). As a result of participating in the program, one participant indicated they planned on utilizing the “rain check” technique at a local grocery store.

The RCNC also had a booth at the Healthy Kids Expo. Youth who stopped at the booth participated in a milk alternative sampling, and many tried a new kind of milk. More than 70 youth and six adults tried at least one different kind of milk. Many participants liked Soy Milk, Oat Milk, and Fairlife Lactose-Free milk and were surprised by the different types and flavors of milk.



Top: Richland County 4-H members pose for a photo in the grandstands at the new 4-H livestock complex, by Josie Evenson; **Bottom:** Participants showing off their creations at the Healthy Eating and Microwave Cooking program, by Carrie Krug MSU/Richland County FCS Extension Agent

Richland County Staff



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