

# Daniels County

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*Daniels County Courthouse and The Flower Bin, by Inga Hawbaker.*

**D**aniels County MSU Extension is a non-formal educational program that assists county residents through research-based resources and programs. Established in Daniels County in 1922, MSU Extension assists in the areas of agriculture, natural resources, family and consumer science, community health and development, and youth development through 4-H. Daniels County is in the northeast corner of the state, adjacent to the southern border of Saskatchewan, Canada. Based on 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data, the population in Daniels County is approximately 1,700. Agriculture is the main industry, with over 84% of the land in the county being classified as farmland. The principal crops produced by acre include durum wheat, spring wheat, lentils, hay and haylage, and peas. Established in 1920, Daniels County boasts a variety of small-town community events including Lutfisk dinners, snowmobile races, ranch rodeos, the county's annual Pioneer Days, and a county fair.

## Community Safety at the Daniels County Fair

Historically, the Daniels County 4-H Livestock Show has had an open show area for the 4-H members to exhibit their livestock, meaning that no barrier has existed between 4-H members, their livestock, and the spectators. Having some incidences occur in the past few years, 4-H members and volunteers were motivated to acquire livestock panels for the show area to create a safer environment. The project also proposed the addition of safety and etiquette signs to be hung in the 4-H barns and on gates. The Daniels County 4-H Livestock Committee chose to assist 4-H members in bringing the project to fruition. Employing information provided by senior 4-H members, funds were applied for and received to assist with project costs through the Montana Department of Agriculture's "Rural Community Development Grant" and the Montana 4-H Foundation's "People Partner Grant."

The 2022 Daniels County Fair marked the inaugural use of the panels and signage, which were set up and installed by senior 4-H members. The panels were utilized at both the livestock show and 4-H sale, providing peace of mind for 4-H families. The feedback after the fair was overwhelmingly positive regarding the project, with the following comments provided by volunteers and community members:

- “This worked so well. I know my kids felt better leading their steers in there (show ring) this year.”
- The panels were so nice – everyone felt so much safer. We’ve been needing this for years!”
- “I liked knowing that elderly people were safe – protected, in case an animal blows up or gets away.”
- “They were dual-purpose – using them at the 4-H Sale helped keep the sale crowd around the bleachers.”

While 4-H members are the primary livestock exhibitors at the fair, the Daniels County Fair Board also sponsors open livestock classes on behalf of the county. Therefore, creating a safer environment is beneficial beyond 4-H, extending to other community entities.

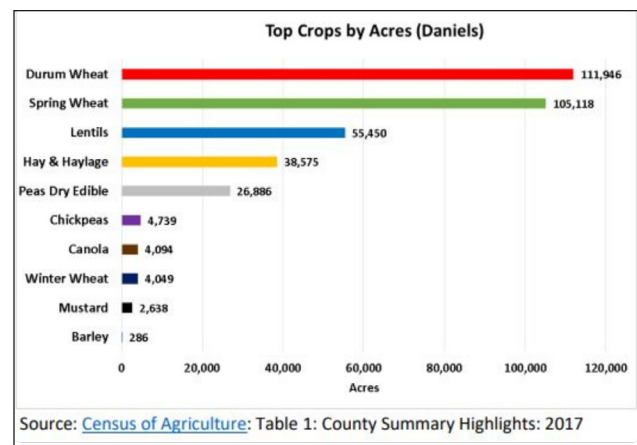


## Pesticide Container Recycling & Waste Disposal in Daniels County

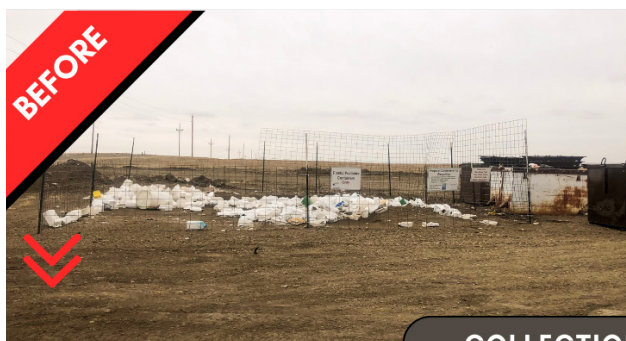
Daniels County MSU Extension and Weed District partner with Solid Waste, the local landfill, throughout the summer and fall for Montana Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) Pesticide Container Recycling Program. Started in 2009, the focus of the program is to keep HDPE #2 pesticide plastic out of Montana landfills. There are currently three recycling bins in the county, resulting in approximately 10,000 pounds of container plastic that is recycled and collected by the MDA annually. Based on this approximation, the program saves approximately 12,500 pesticide containers from entering the county landfill annually.

In spring 2022, the county partnership had the opportunity to ensure the foreseeable future of this project by applying for and receiving an MDA “Collection Point Improvement Grant” to provide needed upgrades to the current collection sites. Approved upgrades included high-rise chainlink panel siding, gates, and the addition of 3/4-inch gravel to the floors of the bins. The overall goal of the improvement project is to elevate the appearance and functionality of the container collection sites, prompting improvement of recycling efforts within the county, meaning stronger adherence to container preparation protocol and more utilization of the collection sites. The project will help reinforce opportunities for needed education regarding the recycling program in the county.

With the event occurring in September 2022, Daniels County MSU Extension and Weed District helped facilitate Scobey as a stop for the Eastern District tour of the Pesticide & Waste Disposal Program. Started in 1994, the Waste Disposal







COLLECTION SITE: SCOBEY



COLLECTION SITE: FOUR-BUTTES



COLLECTION SITE: PEERLESS

**Previous Page: (top)** The newly acquired gate and panels at the Daniels County Fair show area, by Inga Hawbaker; **(bottom)** Top Crops in Daniels County, by Inga Hawbaker; **This Page:** Improved Pesticide Container Collection Sites in Daniels County, by Inga Hawbaker

Program rotates across the state with disposal trucks on a three-year cycle. The disposal day allowed county residents to dispose of accepted materials including pesticides (herbicide, fungicide, insecticide, etc.), pesticide mixes, unknown pesticides, and metal pesticide containers. The program will not revisit the Eastern District until Fall 2025.

Whether through the Pesticide & Waste Disposal or the Pesticide Container Recycling Program, the diversion of waste materials supports efforts to extend the life of the county landfill, while helping to preserve the quality and function of local groundwater, habitat, and other ecosystem components.

## StrongPeople Strength Training Program Impacts Local Residents

StrongPeople is a national, evidence-based community exercise program that has been increasingly popular in Daniels County, led by the previous and now current MSU Extension Agent. While the program is open to individuals of all ages, the curriculum targets the aging population, helping participants retain strength, stay independent longer, and avoid chronic illness. The program grew out of research published by Dr. Miriam E. Nelson of Tufts University on bone density in older adults, which became popular through her first book, *Strong Women Stay Young*.

For the current 2022-2023 winter session, 12 female participants registered for the program. Returning community members attest to the benefits of the exercise curriculum. Previous class participants provided the following statements:

- “It keeps me active and my bones strong and my muscles more flexible.”
- “This program motivated me to keep exercising at home. There is no charge for this program and it is a blessing to many seniors. Thank you!”
- “On 5/11 and 5/12 I planted 600’ of corn and potatoes, and my subsequent stiffness/muscle soreness was minimal. I barely felt the soreness! Thank you, Strong Woman.”

A participant survey found that 86% of local participants could move more freely and easily, had better balance, increased mobility, and stamina, and 100% reported sleeping better and feeling less stressed and anxious. Approximately 67% of participants experienced a decrease in chronic pain, with 100% of the participants reporting that they intend to maintain a similar physical activity routine on their own. Participants value the comradery the program fosters and depend on it to stay active during northeast Montana’s long winter months.

## Daniels County Staff

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

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