

Cooperative Extension Service  
2009 **IMPACTS**



Americans who grow their own food can expect to save an average of \$500 a year.



## **From Garden to Table project helps Natrona County residents slash food costs and eat healthier**

### **Situation:**

Vegetable gardening is becoming more appealing as people try to save money at the grocery store during tough economic times. Some gardeners are focused on food safety and believe the food they grow is safer, which is related to the growing interest in organically grown food.

A National Gardening Association survey predicted the percentage of households growing their own food would jump from 10 percent to 19 percent in 2009. The association also reports Americans who grow their own food can expect to save an average of \$500 a year, taking into account the costs of gardening compared to buying fresh produce. Saving money on food is the foundation of the University of Wyoming's Cent\$ible Nutrition Program (CNP). CNP educators in Natrona County decided to develop a gardening project using the community garden at the Agricultural Resource and Learning Center, in which the Natrona County office of the UW Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) is housed. Classes met for 90 minutes a week for six weeks during the summer. The goal was to teach students gardening but also to teach how to harvest and cook fresh produce while demonstrating how much money could be saved.

With the assistance of the Master Gardeners and the county UW CES horticulturist, 26 varieties of vegetables and herbs were planted. Highlights added to the curriculum included information about gardening in Wyoming, growing seasons, how to get started, container gardening, when to harvest, and how to take care of fresh garden produce to reduce waste and maximize benefits.

### **Impacts:**

Fourteen students completed the course. Exit surveys revealed eight of the students increased their consumption of vegetables, and seven are cooking more from scratch using fresh vegetables and herbs. One student commented on her exit survey,

- "I loved the use of the garden produce. Next year, I'm definitely trying container gardening!"

Produce harvested from the garden was used in recipes for each class session. As one student commented,

- “I learned how to harvest beets and cook them – I’d never had them before, but now I love them!”

Students used the information to make healthy lifestyle changes and to make plans for next season:

- “I improved my cooking skills by learning how to use fresh garden veggies and herbs.”
- “I was always intimidated by the whole gardening process thinking it would be too hard for me to stick with. Now I know what to do, and I can’t wait until next season so I can try it.”

Program representatives were invited by the City of Casper Downtown Farmer’s Market Committee at the end of the course to be “Chef of the Market” using local produce to demonstrate recipes for those attending the market.

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## **UW Cooperative Extension Service reaches all abilities through Ark gardens**

### **Situation:**

In spring 2009, the state Master Gardener coordinator with the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) contacted the UW CES area educator for Albany and Carbon counties about an opportunity to provide training and mentoring to residents of Albany County Ark Regional Services in Laramie. Ark provides training and assistance to adults and children with developmental disabilities. Working with the residents, Master Gardeners helped prepare raised beds for planting, gave guidance on planting vegetables and care of plants, and provided assistance and guidance for harvesting.

Master Gardeners and Ark residents met throughout the summer. Participants also planted vegetables and flowers at Ark group homes. Flowers were selected to be butterfly and hummingbird attractors, which enhanced the learning experience for residents. Participants and Master Gardeners selected vegetables to plant during a field trip to a local nursery.

The area educator obtained funding for the project from Fiskars, a manufacturer of gardening tools. Its Project Orange Thumb provides communities grant funds, along with tools and materials, to aid in horticulture education.

### **Impacts:**

Seven Ark residents participated in the four-month program. Through observation from start to finish, participants gained skills and knowledge of gardening and were able to demonstrate their new skills in their gardens. Participants also gained self-confidence and showed great pride in the results of their gardening efforts. When vegetables were harvested, residents immediately wanted to eat them for lunch. An added benefit was the nutrition gained through wanting to eat more fresh vegetables. Ark participants shared the impact with the participating Master Gardeners. One Master Gardener stated,

- “We had celebration meals using the fruits of our labors and were able to share the extras with other Ark programs. While vegetables were not always at the top of everyone’s list of favorite foods, we discovered they always taste better straight from the garden and knowing that you nurtured them along.”

The Master Gardener added,

- “Master Gardeners and Ark gardeners came together simply as gardeners to share the joy and satisfaction of working outside and watching things grow. We are now a community of gardeners looking forward to another season of growing together and enjoying the special friendships we have cultivated.”

Ark’s Habilitation Services manager stated,

- “Everyone loved working with people from the community, developing new friendships, and learning new skills. They benefit from the consistency and routine. They had the opportunity to learn so much and be involved in so much more of the process because of the additional people through the Master Gardeners. I really hope the partnership and relationships we made can continue in the future!”

This project provided the extension horticulture program volunteers an experience in working with this diverse audience resulting in a positive experience and outcomes for participants and Master Gardener volunteers.

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## **Wamsutter, Sweetwater County, industry, and UW extension form 'healthy' partnership**

### **Situation:**

Wamsutter Community Health Center, a project three years in development, hosted a grand opening event in January. The event culminated more than three years of effort by the town, Sweetwater County, industry, and individuals. In November 2006, residents at a town meeting determined healthcare as one of the top five needs of the community, along with infrastructure, housing, commercial development, and sewer upgrades. To identify the need and sustainability of a health center in Wamsutter, the town selected the Wyoming-based healthcare consulting firm Human Capital Management Services (HCMS) of Cheyenne.

BP America and Sweetwater County responded to a community investment request and joined with the town to pay for the services. In February 2007, HCMS worked with members of the community and town staff to acquire health and healthcare-related data. A detailed report supported the need for a non-traditional health center in Wamsutter. In addition to medical care, the center will provide space for educational programs on wellness, nutrition, and other health-related services such as dentistry and chiropractic care.

Utilizing the services of HCMS, made possible by a community investment from BP America and Wamsutter, the firm agreed to develop a business plan, help garner broad financial support, and assist the town in seeking healthcare provider services.

### **Impacts:**

Upon completion of the second HCMS study, the town was on its own to turn recommendations into reality. The town entered into a partnership with Wamsutter Community Inc., the all-purpose, charitable nonprofit organization established in 2007. The town contributed land and took responsibility for seeking funding to pay for construction; the nonprofit took responsibility for seeking operational and staff funding. In October 2008, Mayor Ken Waldner sent a letter to Gov. Dave Freudenthal detailing the priority needs of the community with estimated costs. The result was monumental. Gov. Freudenthal requested, and the Legislature appropriated, \$3.5 million in matching funds for infrastructure improvements. Meanwhile, BP America had pledged to

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match the state appropriation up to \$3 million and Sweetwater County already had designated \$250,000 for the health center. From the public and private funds, the town had the funding to construct the building, and the nonprofit had the funds to ensure the first two years of start-up operations.

Of the many partnerships crucial in establishing the Wamsutter Community Health Center, the most fundamental was the partnership created in 2006 by industry, Sweetwater County, the Town of Wamsutter, and the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. All parties agree that, without the extension community development educator, neither the health center nor many other community enhancement projects would be present today. The extension educator serves as coordinator and facilitator for numerous projects on a full-time basis. In addition, the community did not possess the expertise in planning and development the university position has provided.

Without the extension community development educator, neither the health center nor many other community enhancement projects would be present today.



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## Youth entrepreneurs get a head start in business

### Situation:

Wyoming's most valuable asset is young people. The 4-H youth career development issue team was formed to create opportunities for youth to gain valuable workforce education and skills that will benefit them now and in the future. The team secured \$152,000 to help each county build career development programs for youth.

Sublette County is one example of implementation. The county hosted a Youth Business Ventures contest open to youth ages 8-18. An educational workshop on entrepreneurship and business plan writing and development was offered as a precursor to the event. Three individuals and a family of four siblings prepared business plans and competed to begin their entrepreneurial businesses. Each young entrepreneur in the contest was awarded start-up funds ranging from \$390-\$1,000.

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### Impacts:

The state contest involved 21 youth who wrote business plans. Business enterprises ranged from livestock production to designing custom cakes to creating a mobile book store. Through the Youth Business Ventures program, participants collected market research on potential competitors and customer demographics, developed marketing plans, and created financial reports to estimate production costs and potential incomes. Youth presented their business plans and marketing strategies to a panel of business leaders and University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service educators. A total of \$12,923 was distributed to 4-H members to start or expand their business operations.

Direct impacts of the Youth Business Ventures program in Sublette County include youth gaining real-life skills in everything from writing and marketing to budgeting and money management, and the community has become fully engaged in the concept of youth entrepreneurship. A brief summary of the four businesses started:

***Show Pigs from the Farm***, started by four siblings with \$1,000 awarded to purchase a breeding sow that was to farrow that August. They also presented their plan at the state contest and received money to purchase a farrowing crate for the sow. By late summer, they had 10 piglets and have



artificially inseminated the sow along with three others in hopes to have about 35 show pigs to sell to 4-H'ers this year.

**Preston's Lawn Care**, created by a 9-year-old, completed 15 jobs for customers, including three regular customers.

**No Worries Animal Care**, the dream of a 13-year-old who recognized the need for more boarding facilities as well as making house calls while pet owners were away.

**Jake Wash**, earned nearly \$400 from the contest to purchase a portable pressure washer he used to wash parking lots for businesses and cars outside a local wireless provider and coffee shop.

Following up with 4-H participants, 57 percent reported making a profit their first year. One 9-year-old stated,

- "I have already started mowing lawns and am working on finding new customers. I put the money I saved from my business into a bank savings account that makes the most interest."

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## Master Cattleman Program helps producers hone production, risk assessment skills

### Situation:

With producer input from around the state, the Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Systems initiative team identified the need of a comprehensive educational program for livestock producers. Individual producers indicated more training was needed on successful management strategy evaluation techniques.

Objectives of the Wyoming Master Cattleman Program are to promote the sustainability of cattle producers through use of a comprehensive production strategy and the use of risk assessment tools. Producers first received training on goal setting, insurance options, risk management strategies, and financial enterprise analysis. Subsequent programs covered marketing and production strategies. The program was accomplished through eight, three-hour workshops at four locations during 2009 including Sheridan, Washakie, Uinta, and Fremont counties. Taught by University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service area educators, state extension specialists, and industry experts, the course provided written and Web publications and one-on-one consultations. Forty-five producers attended the workshops with all graduates completing a risk and enterprise analysis for at least two potential opportunities for their operations. Since the pilot course in 2007, 102 producers have participated. Partial funding for the program came from a \$14,490 grant from the Western Center for Risk Management Education.

### Impacts:

Participants completed electronic evaluations at the end of the program. Follow-up discussions with a sample of participants were held one month after the program.

Objectives of the Wyoming Master Cattleman Program are to promote the sustainability of cattle producers through use of a comprehensive production strategy and the use of risk assessment tools.



Using an electronic response system, participants rated the effectiveness of each session from excellent to poor:

<b>Session Topic</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Goal Risk Management		57.2%	35.7%	7.1%	
Enterprise Analysis	13.3%	66.7%	20%		
Cull Cow Management	7.1%	85.7%	7.2%		
Retaining Ownership	20%	73.3%	6.7%		
Scientific Tools for Bulls	16.7%	66.7%	16.6%		
Lasting Legacy	6.3%	50%	31.2%	12.5%	
Niche Marketing	37.5%	62.5%			
Alternative Ranching	30.7%	15.4%	38.5%	15.4%	

When asked if their knowledge increased in the class, 86.6 percent strongly agreed or agreed.

Usefulness of the Enterprise Analysis and Risk Assessment tool:

- 12.5 percent have already used the tools to analyze an operational risk
- 50 percent have not yet used, but definitely plan to
- 31.2 percent plan to use the tool

All participants indicated they would recommend this program to other producers.

Participant shared the following comments:

- "I really liked the sounds of that cull cow strategy until we worked through the partial budget (group work)." - Uinta location participant
- "I thought the financials would come out better on that strategy. It's been a strategy that's worked well for us in the past. I guess I will have to go home and recheck my numbers to see how they are different than the example." - Washakie location participant
- "I am really upset with you for giving us this CD with the (enterprise) analysis tools. Now I am going to be up until 2 or 3 in the morning reworking several scenarios that I had been working on." - Sheridan location participant

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## Laramie County Master Gardeners bolster citizen horticulture efforts

### Situation:

With the steady population growth of Laramie County, the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) has seen a rapid increase in the number of calls concerning lawn, garden, and tree issues. With only a part-time horticulturist on staff, responding to the increased demand is not possible without volunteers.

The Master Gardener course involves 10 weeks of intensive training with 40 additional hours of community volunteer service over a summer. The classes are taught by University of Wyoming entomologists and soil specialists, Master Gardeners who specialize in a specific topic, and the Laramie County UW CES horticulturist.

Following training, each Master Gardener intern performs a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer community service in which they build on their knowledge by helping people with lawn and garden concerns. In 2009, 24 out of 27 Master Gardener students graduated. This is an 88-percent program completion rate.

The Laramie County Master Gardener program requires an additional 10 hours of community volunteer service per year for graduated Master Gardeners; they typically continue to volunteer 36.7 hours per year. There are 243 trained Laramie County Master Gardeners, and there are 118 Master Gardeners current with their requirements.

In 2009, the Laramie County UW CES office handled 6,204 calls, e-mails, walk-ins, yard calls, educational programs, an in-house newsletter written and distributed quarterly for Laramie County Master Gardeners, provided educational material in the public office newsletter *Horizons*, and contacts through Master Gardener events. Another 4,643 volunteer hours were reported by Master Gardeners through house calls, events, and programs, for a total of 3,700 citizen contacts.

Additionally, graduated Master Gardeners and the county horticulturist take interns on house calls or consultations in addition to their work in the extension office answering phone calls and walk-in questions.

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**Impacts:**

The Master Gardener volunteer program is very effective in meeting the high-volume demand of educational outreach for horticulture concerns. Master Gardeners volunteer at the county fair, at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens with its new Children's Garden, at the Plant Select garden, and at a demonstration vegetable garden. Master Gardeners have been working with the City of Cheyenne on the Greenway, which is a transportation path for walkers, joggers, and bikers, conducting a plant inventory and identification and recommending trees to plant.

The Master Gardeners assisted the Stride Learning Center, a pre-school program for learning disabled children ages 3 to 5, with a sensory garden, allowing participants to touch and smell herbs and assisted them with their public plant sale.

One Master Gardener volunteer went the extra mile and completed a certificate in horticulture therapy. The program provides therapeutic training on gardening that results in a calming effect with participants, won a grant for \$4,500, and was able to set up raised bed vegetable gardens with grant funds at Attention Homes, a Laramie County half-way house for teenagers.

Master Gardeners have volunteered 4,643 hours of service to the Laramie County community in 2009. Volunteer time in Wyoming is now valued at \$17.73 per hour, which is a return of \$82,320.39 back to Laramie County community members.

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## Cooking with Kids summer program leads to families sharing mealtime

### Situation:

Today's hectic lifestyles often lead parents to make less-than-desirable food choices at dinner time. Unfortunately, many parents are not fully aware that **how** they feed their families can be just as important as **what** is served. Research has identified numerous benefits when families choose to eat meals together, including:

**Prevention of many risky behaviors:** teens will be less likely to become depressed, use illegal drugs, abuse alcohol, smoke cigarettes, develop eating disorders, or get pregnant.

**Better school performance:** language skills learned during mealtime conversation help children do better in the classroom and on tests.

**Improved nutrition:** children who have more family meals get more of the nutrient-rich foods that build strong bodies and smart brains – more fruits, veggies, lean meats, and milk.

**Prevention of weight problems:** smart eating habits help children grow up with a healthy weight, lessening the risk for eating disorders or the multitude of chronic conditions associated with excess weight.

The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service area nutrition/food safety educator and Cent\$ible Nutrition Program educator partnered with the Sheridan Senior Citizens Center, Northern Wyoming Mental Health Center's Kid's First summer program, Sheridan Junior High School, and Sheridan Recreation District.

This partnership of local nonprofit entities resulted in eight nutrition/cooking programs as part of a summer camp for at-risk youth. Each individual program included an educational component followed by the youth (aged 12-14) preparing a meal to be shared by their families that evening. This was no small task – attendance for the family meals averaged 50-75 guests.

### Impacts:

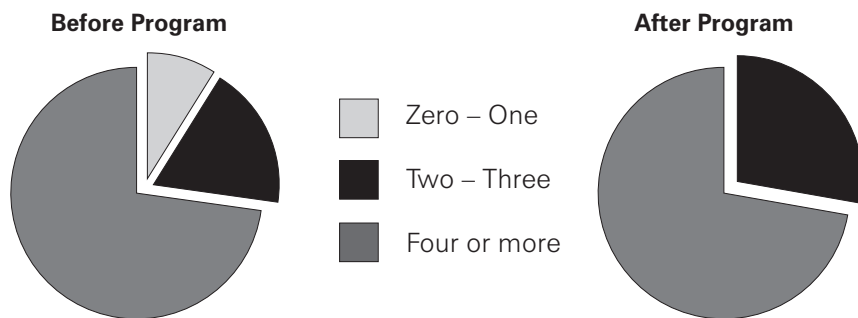
The experience provided great opportunities for youth to improve nutrition knowledge and food preparation skills. The importance of eating together was modeled through the family dinner event, and parent surveys indicated improvements in frequency of family meals as well as involvement of their child in meal preparation.

The importance of eating together was modeled through the family dinner event.



Pre- and post-surveys were filled out by the parents. Graphical representations of the positive results follow:

***How many times this past week did your family eat the evening meal together?***



***How often does your child help prepare the family meal?***



Participants learned and practiced invaluable nutrition and food safety skills that culminated in a shared family dinner.



**Impacts:**

Short term – Participants learned and practiced invaluable nutrition and food safety skills that culminated in a shared family dinner.

Medium term – Parents of participants indicated improvements in frequency of family meals as well as involvement of their children in meal preparation.

Long term – It is hoped participants will maintain these practices, potentially leading to improvements in behavior, school performance, and overall nutrition and health.

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Many youth were better prepared to take better care of their animals through improved management and handling techniques.



## Training helps assure quality livestock in Sheridan County

### Situation:

Tracing food to its source is much easier for today's consumer, thus making producers more accountable for their products. Consumers are demanding a quality product; therefore, following quality assurance practices with livestock is important for all producers, big and small. Sheridan County 4-H believes the objective of quality assurance is important to ensure the community knows 4-H and FFA youth are taking care of the animals and the product. All youth selling livestock in Sheridan County actively participate in youth quality assurance programs.

The Sheridan County 4-H educator partnered with local FFA advisers to offer training to FFA members and 4-H youth. Classroom presentations and hands-on activities were used to teach youth about animal care, management, carcass quality, handling, medications, and records.

Nine programs were conducted reaching 55 4-H and six FFA members.

### Impacts:

The programs made a large impact on youth who participated. Evaluations and enthusiasm exhibited by participants validated impact. Many commented how they have changed their behavior but also shared their new knowledge with their families, and, as a result, family operations have been affected by the program. Many youth were better prepared to take better care of their animals through improved management and handling techniques. Two methods were used to evaluate the programs: a formal survey, and a non-formal evaluation through individual conversations with participants, leaders, and parents.

4-H youth put their new knowledge into action with their livestock projects. Not only did participants plan to use with their livestock what they learned, but also with other livestock on their ranches. Responses on the most important things learned and what they planned to use included:

- "I think the blind spot activity was really worth learning. I'll use it."
- "Feeding them [animals] at the same time."
- "[I learned the] importance of recordkeeping, importance of medications, and administration."

- “Injecting medicine during brandings.”
- “[I learned] to not hit and bruise the animals because it damages the meat.”
- “[I learned] how to treat and care for your animal so that the consumers’ product is the best.”

A beef carcass contest was reintroduced in Sheridan County. Beef carcasses that went to a local meat processor were evaluated for quality and yield grades. None of the carcasses showed evidence of improper handling or stress. There were no dark cutter carcasses, only one graded as Standard, and only one had a Yield Grade 4. This provides evidence youth in Sheridan County have put quality assurance measures into practice. When observing youth working with their animals during the Sheridan County Fair, quality assurance was evident as youth used ethical practices when managing their livestock.

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## Wyoming AgrAbility promotes success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families

### Situation:

Wyoming is a state with no history of support services specifically for production agriculture families with disabilities. The high occupational injury rate among agriculture, the lack of disability expertise, and the lack of services necessary to accommodate disabilities deprive many individuals from continuing productive lives in agriculture. Through education, networking, and assistance, the Wyoming AgrAbility project builds the service capacity for Wyoming communities to meet the needs of farm/ranch families affected by a disability, develops a network of professionals to support farmers/ranchers with disabilities, and provides rancher/farmer access to assistive technology (AT) products and services to maintain their operations.

The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) partners with Gottsche Rehabilitation, Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation, and the Center for Rural Health Research and Education on the Wyoming AgrAbility project.

Project members address the three AgrAbility goals:

1. Provide direct education and assistance to ranchers/farmers annually; use Web-based technology and in-person training of professionals and service providers; establish an AgrAbility Web site; conduct a needs assessment.
2. Establish an AgrAbility advisory group and develop a peer network of ranchers and farmers.
3. Provide on-farm technical advice to 10-25 clients annually; make AT devices available; make the Wyoming Assistive Resource base available to ranchers/farmers.

The project, which started in 2007, continued efforts on marketing AgrAbility to increase referrals and direct assistance to producers and their families through displays at numerous meetings and conferences.

- More than 900 AgrAbility brochures were distributed through Wyoming and the Intermountain West. The publication, *Selected Resources from Wyoming AgrAbility*, informs agencies and organizations of Wyoming AgrAbility materials and information. Nine hundred fifty copies were distributed.

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- In partnership with UW CES, educational news articles for farm safety and health week were developed.
- Wyoming AgrAbility again partnered with UW CES' small-acreage initiative to include articles on ranching and farming with disabilities in the newspaper insert *Barnyards & Backyards* with circulation estimates for 19 rural newspapers totaling 76,213.
- An AgrAbility newspaper insert was included in 21 Wyoming newspaper outlets with an estimated 140,000-plus readership. Efforts included general media releases to 33 regional media outlets and targeted radio spots to 20 Cowboy State News Network stations for 360 spots.
- Educational presentations were delivered to approximately 184 ranchers/farmers, agricultural and healthcare professionals, and UW students.
- Fifty-six independent living specialists, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and occupational therapists, were trained on rehabilitating ranchers and farmers.
- Five hundred forty educational fact sheets and AgrAbility brochures were distributed at healthcare and agriculture conferences and awareness presentations.

Consultative services included help in managing chronic pain, low vision, work modifications, assistive technology modifications, back pain, and knee replacements.



**Impacts:**

Wyoming AgrAbility provided consultative services to 22 individuals, including eight work-site visits. Consultative services included help in managing chronic pain, low vision, work modifications, assistive technology modifications, back pain, and knee replacements. Additional research and technical assistance included infant ventilator, health insurance, autism, saddle adaptations, multiple sclerosis, stroke, post-secondary education accommodations, and AT funding options.

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Lives have been saved, illnesses avoided, healthcare costs controlled, fewer work days missed, and local businesses and institutions are stronger.



## Food safety coalition shields Wyoming residents' health

### Situation:

Microbial contamination of food is a serious public health problem. Each year in the U.S, food-borne diseases cause approximately 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 5,000 deaths. With approximately 60 percent of food-borne illness outbreaks nationwide attributable to food service establishments, food service personnel are key to reducing the risk of food-borne illness.

The Wyoming Food Safety Coalition (WFSC) is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary partnership that has become the primary source of food safety education throughout the state. The heart of WFSC is a core of local trained teams, most of which include a county-based University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) educator and a health inspector from either the Wyoming Department of Agriculture or a local city/county health department, or both. These teams plan and conduct a wide variety of educational programs. U.S. Department of Agriculture grants helped establish WFSC, and workshop registration fees now fund WFSC.

### Impacts:

In fiscal year 2009,

- Coalition team members trained 1,570 food handlers in the following workshops: Basic – 154; Intermediate – 237; Advanced – 23; ServSafe – 278; Day Care – 447; Food Preservation – 190; Other (i.e., temporary food permits, other sanitation training, “Food Safety Works” programs, etc.) – 241.
- In-house training reached 379 individuals.
- Consumer programs and displays reached 1,488 individuals.
- News releases and public service announcements distributed via print and other media avenues reached thousands of readers and listeners statewide on a regular basis.

### **Medium term**

Based on data from an evaluation project conducted by UW CES for WFSC, this year's 515 participants in WFSC's Going for the Gold Advanced and ServSafe workshops are estimated to have made the following changes:

- 97 percent (500) made at least one change related to cleanliness; for example, washed their hands more often.
- 80 percent (412) made at least one change related to cooling food; for example, put food into shallow containers or cut meat into smaller pieces before placing in refrigerator.
- 78 percent (402) made at least one change related to food preparation; for example, prevented cross contamination by keeping raw meats, cooked foods, and fresh produce separated.
- 75 percent (386) made at least one change related to other miscellaneous areas; for example, monitored critical control points more closely.
- 70 percent (361) made at least one change related to cooking food; for example, used a stove or microwave – not a steam table – to reheat food.

### **Long term**

Overall: Improved food-handling behaviors such as those listed above increase the likelihood food served in Wyoming is safe, and, therefore, lives have been saved, illnesses avoided, healthcare costs controlled, fewer work days missed, and local businesses and institutions are stronger.

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## Master 4-H Volunteer Program training energizes educator efforts

### Situation:

Volunteers are essential to the success of the 4-H program. Conversations with adult volunteers and 4-H educators throughout Wyoming determined many volunteer leaders believe they do not have skills necessary to be successful in the leadership roles available to them. The Master 4-H Volunteer program was created to strengthen and enhance the 4-H volunteers' educational background so they are more effective in volunteer roles at the local, area, and state level.

A team of 4-H educators and the Wyoming 4-H Program volunteer development specialist designed and implemented the Master 4-H Volunteer Program. Resources included curriculum and activities developed to provide hands-on experiential learning opportunities. Funding from the Helen Miller Grant, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service Program Enhancement Fund, Wyoming State 4-H Leaders Council, and county in-kind contributions were essential to the success of the program. These partners contributed \$4,845 to create and implement the pilot program.

The first Master 4-H Volunteer training was held in conjunction with the 2009 State Leaders Conference. To qualify, volunteers completed an application and submitted two letters of recommendation. Upon completion of the training, participants agreed to give back 20 hours of service and teach at least one workshop in the coming year for other volunteers. Twenty-seven Wyoming 4-H volunteers applied and were accepted into the 11-hour, intensive program. Each participant completing the program received a tool kit valued at \$100 including curriculum materials and implementation activities for Character Counts to aid in putting into effect what they learned.

### Impacts:

Participants completed a survey the end of each day. They were asked to give feedback on open-ended questions and rank each topic covered on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most positive and 1 the least positive. The following information was collected:

- "How useful was the information?"

The average score was 4.89. Participants believed the time spent was of good use.

Upon completion of the training, participants agreed to give back 20 hours of service and teach at least one workshop in the coming year for other volunteers.





- Participants were asked to rate knowledge gained in each topic area. The range of scores was 4.11-4.52, indicating an increase in knowledge in each topic area.
- “How do you plan to use the information?”  
Fifteen participants reported intentions to use information to improve club meetings. Eight will be helping county councils be more effective.
- Additional comments from participants:  
“Awesome. How do we get the Wyoming extension (4-H) working as a partner with the Wyoming Department of Education?”  
“I intend to go back to my county and help our agent.”  
“Building leaders in youth and other adult volunteers make for a better 4-H group and community.”

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4-H group and  
community.



## Producers reap benefits from farm financial management course

### Situation:

Producers typically have strong production and technology skills but fewer skills relevant to business assessment. Discussions with the local Farm Service Agency loan officer exposed a need for farm financial courses. Young producers in Park County expressed an interest in farm financial management training.

Two University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service specialists and the Northwest Area extension educator were awarded a grant from the Western Center for Risk Management Education to conduct a nine-session financial management class. Topics were taught by a variety of instructors, including UW extension educators, specialists, and community professionals.



Eleven producers enrolled representing eight farming operations. Participation in the Challenge Group involved nine all-day sessions. Each session began with classroom presentations followed by farm tours hosted by group participants. The wide-ranging content introduced participants to and helped them apply risk principles, interpersonal communication skills, financial assessment tools, management development and succession strategies, labor management tools, and business planning tools. Further, participants and the extension specialist in agricultural entrepreneurship had confidential conversations regarding participants' farm financial records.

### Impacts:

At the end of the course, participants reported how much they had learned on class topics (on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being very little and 6 being a lot). Ratings ranged from 4.3 to 5.6.

Participants were asked, "As a result of this class, what actions do you plan to take in the future to improve your personal finances?" A sample of responses:

- "I plan on looking at risks more and deciding if they are worth the reward."
- "Keep budgets."

Participants and the extension specialist in agricultural entrepreneurship had confidential conversations regarding participants' farm financial records.



- “More in-depth analysis of various enterprises.”
- “Plot a more solid business plan on paper so it can be acted on easily. More organized and be up-to-date.”
- “Use the recordkeeping and time management skills learned and incorporate those in my plan.”
- “This class showed me how to get started and how to read and interpret the bottom lines – Big Help.”

An evaluation was mailed to assess the impact six months after the class. Two response forms, representing three producers, were returned.

All three have taken action to improve personal finances. Specific business planning concepts implemented from the class were measuring herd performance, initiating marketing strategies, breaking down goals into smaller pieces, and planning better for the future of their operations. Respondents said they made progress in meeting some of the goals written into their business plans. One had begun accurately measuring herd performance and made positive growth in marketability, while two others had improved their barley yield and are able to pay off an operating loan earlier than in the past. Two have crop insurance and have now set aside money for an emergency fund.

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## Community Development Education team building better government and nonprofit boards

### Situation:

Western Wyoming communities are facing growth issues and becoming more complex in their mixture of peoples, cultures, and economic viability. In 2005, the need for board training was identified during an assessment for a leadership institute in Sublette County. A local steering committee was instrumental in designing the first board trainings offered by the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) Community Development Education (CDE) initiative team.

Building Better Boards was implemented for boards appointed in Teton and Lincoln counties in 2006. Shortly thereafter, commissioners in counties from other regions of Wyoming voiced the need for board training. In 2007, the CDE initiative team partnered with the Wyoming Association of County Commissioners to create the *County Appointed Board Member Handbook*, an educational tool for use in Wyoming's communities. The CDE team received funding from UW CES to create an online video training tool for use with the handbook. Individuals participating in Building Better Board workshops are given a copy of the handbook and the link for the companion video (<http://rtadmin.powweb.com/cde/>) for an online opportunity to reinforce the objectives of the workshops.

County-appointed boards, municipal boards, and nonprofits struggle with similar governance issues: parliamentary procedure; meeting management, including recording of minutes; open meeting laws; human resource issues; ethics; confidentiality; liability; fiduciary responsibilities; board roles; planning and implementing programs; maintaining compliance with scope of duties; and "playing well" with others.

Nine board training sessions lasting four to six hours were offered in 2009. More than 100 participated in seminars designed by local steering committees comprised of 40 volunteers who determined topics. County-appointed, elected, and nonprofit board members were invited to participate. Local resources joined extension educators to teach the local courses.

County-  
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boards, and  
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## Impacts:

Elected officials who have offered training for their boards report the boards have more productive meetings, are following agendas, and creating more rewarding experiences for board members. Directors and managers of county boards reported a more reasonable amount of time expended in board meetings, and the meeting management skills of members have improved. Some boards that participated had meetings that regularly lasted until midnight; they now finish their business in two-hour sessions. Decision-making skills have increased, open meeting laws are better understood and complied with, parliamentary procedure knowledge has increased, there is more effective agenda development and better use of the consent agenda, and there is better understanding of officer roles.

The Kemmerer Senior Center readdressed its board governance over its program(s) and was able to bring the center back into compliance with its granting agencies requirements. Members have taken the time to learn about the legal framework of their respective boards and create policies to govern their programs.

Directors and managers of county boards reported a more reasonable amount of time expended in board meetings, and the meeting management skills of members have improved.



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## Converse County producers learn benefits of range monitoring, grazing plan implementation

### Situation:

Grazing plans and rangeland monitoring are essential for livestock producers and are often required by state and federal agencies when grazing livestock on public land. Three workshops in Converse County taught land managers different techniques to use when developing grazing plans, including range monitoring.

The carbon credit program attracted participants to the first workshop. The carbon credit program is open to all ranchers who own their land. Ranchers are able to sell carbon credits to the Chicago Climate Exchange to enhance ranch income. To qualify, ranchers must show proof of having a grazing plan in place. Workshop participants discussed the carbon credit program, grass growth basics, range monitoring tools, and grazing system alternatives, and participated in hands-on learning about range monitoring techniques and grazing plan development through the use of field and group activities.

The second workshop was a field day for women in agriculture. Participants learned how to successfully execute two range monitoring methods and identify common rangeland plants.

The third workshop targeted small-acreage landowners. They learned to use a grazing response index and different grazing distribution techniques, such as water placement and electrical fencing.

University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service area educators and specialists partnered with the Converse County Conservation District, Southeast Wyoming Research, Conservation, and Development, and the U.S. Forest Service to conduct the classes.

### Impacts:

Forty individuals participated in the three workshops. Attendees evaluated the carbon credit workshop, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The overall score was 4.6. When asked through a written evaluation if they would use this information to change how they manage their property, participants replied with a very enthusiastic yes. A sample of comments included:

Participants learned how to successfully execute two range monitoring methods and identify common rangeland plants.



- “I will revise my grazing management plan to incorporate some of the techniques learned here.”
- “I can’t wait to use some of the spreadsheets provided.”
- “I plan on implementing photo monitoring and the grazing response index measurements.”
- “I will start resting a pasture for a full 12 months.”
- “I am going to develop a grazing plan and enroll in the carbon credit program.”

The Women in Agriculture field day was evaluated through observation. Each participant increased their knowledge in plant identification and rangeland monitoring. Participants commented on taking what they learned back home to implement on their properties.

Small-acreage workshop attendees were asked to evaluate the workshop, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. When asked the overall score, participants rated it a 4.2. Knowledge of topics discussed increased for every topic with most knowledge gained from discussions about plant response to grazing and use of electrical fencing. One participant stated, “I will change the way I graze my livestock and the way I use the grass resource [because of this workshop].”

I will change the way I graze my livestock and the way I use the grass resource [because of this workshop].





A series of schools were developed to further the educational opportunities of those who depend on rangelands for their livelihood, are responsible for the management of state and federal rangelands, or are just interested in rangelands and want a better understanding of their management.



## **Rangeland Management School 501 offers range grazing, monitoring expertise**

### **Situation:**

The Wyoming section Society for Range Management began offering its Rangeland Management School 101 in 2004. There have been 16 schools throughout the state as of May 2009 with more than 500 ranchers, federal and state land management agency personnel, and college and high school students participating. The 101 school is not sufficient for ranchers and land managers to fully grasp the methods and benefits of rangeland grazing management and monitoring. Thus, a series of schools were developed to further the educational opportunities of those who depend on rangelands for their livelihood, are responsible for the management of state and federal rangelands, or are just interested in rangelands and want a better understanding of their management. The capstone school of these is the 501 school, a two-day program that ends with participants developing a grazing management plan.

Serving as presenters were University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service educators and specialists; U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service rangeland management specialists; and Wyoming Weed and Pest Control District supervisors. A \$1,000 grant was received from the Wyoming Private Grazing Lands Team to help defray costs. Additional sponsors of the schools are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management.

### **Impacts:**

Two 501 schools were held in 2009 with 43 attendees. Many participants indicated they were going to obtain ecological site descriptions for their rangeland pastures and study the state and transition models developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to determine management strategies to achieve desired plant communities. Some stated they would attempt to improve livestock grazing distribution and grazing management, including monitoring forage residual levels. Improving their weed control efforts was also indicated as a result of attending this school.

Participants at both schools completed an evaluation form in which they were asked to indicate their knowledge level of the subject matter prior to and after the school on a 1 to 5 rating with 1 being least knowledgeable and 5 most knowledgeable. They were also asked if there would be any management changes in their operation based on what they had learned, what they liked most about the school, and what they would like to see changed.

Attendees indicated 23 percent were knowledgeable about the subject matter prior to participating in the school. After the school, 65 percent of the participants believed they were now knowledgeable.

Some comments on what was liked most:

- “The work group problem at the end of class was great. Could do more of these or a larger part of the class.”
- “The way it tied all facets of management together, i.e., plants, livestock, wildlife, and management practices.”

Attendees indicated 23 percent were knowledgeable about the subject matter prior to participating in the school. After the school, 65 percent of the participants believed they were now knowledgeable.

