

# Extension Connection

In this issue

May 2004 • University of Wyoming

It's about them	2
"When we are at our best"	4
Home on the range on the go	7
Living by the calendar	8
Tradition makes way for non-tradition	11
City slickers: A changing extension paradigm	12
By reservation only	14
Extension behind bars	16
No more border wars	18
Home alone: 4-H fills a niche	20
Just click	22



Glen Whipple

It does not seem possible that I have served as the director of the Cooperative Extension Service for six years, but May was my anniversary. Looking back, the theme of extension these past years has been planning, growth, and adjusting to change in Wyoming and the world around us.

I attended a meeting of CES directors from across the United States a few months ago. Many issues were discussed, but it was crystal clear that getting ahead of change is the greatest challenge facing extension organizations throughout the country. Most systems are dealing with declining budget support, shifting needs, and

changes in the way extension customers access information.

Several years ago when we were in the process of developing a strategic vision and sharing it with our customers and stakeholders in the state, I characterized the challenge facing the Cooperative Extension Service with this quote by Winston Churchill: "You had better take change by the hand or it will take you by the throat." At that time I felt that we were positioned behind the change curve in many respects.

I feel differently now! The efforts of our leadership teams to develop educational programming, our product, have freed the collective creativity and energy of the organization. I believe we are now positioned to move ahead of that curve. My view of the challenge facing extension is more accurately reflected in the words of Margaret Mead when she offered: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

The theme of this issue of *Extension Connection* is the future of extension. The articles highlight efforts of our educators and specialists to define extension's role for the future—facing tough challenges head on, getting in front of change, and making a difference today and in the future. I hope you will enjoy reading about our work and our aspirations.

If you want to discuss the things you read here or talk about your ideas for the future of extension, give me a call at (307) 766-5142 or e-mail me at [glen@uwyo.edu](mailto:glen@uwyo.edu).

Sincerely,

Glen Whipple  
Associate Dean and CES Director



# It's about them

By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology

Speeches and discussions about extension and its future often point out that CES is a good vehicle that needs a tune-up.

Start with a clean slate. Look for the need. Invent to fill the need. Build a partnership around the solution. So advised Jack Payne, vice president of the Cooperative Extension Service at Utah State University, in a talk at the University of Wyoming.

"The general public rarely perceives universities as bastions of customer-service-driven activities. It is exactly that gap that needs to be breached by providing customer-oriented, grass-roots programs; prioritizing local issues; embracing and responding quickly to new technologies; developing learner-specific, learner-driven programs; and disposing of canned programs," Payne said.



*Youngsters learn about team building during Campbell County's "Extension Days." The annual event also offers community residents a chance to meet with CES educators to seek information.*



"Engagement calls for programming from the bottom-up, not top-down," he added. "This will require participation with learners, agencies, and other collaborators to develop and maintain partnerships from the planning through the presentation of educational programs. Finally, results must be measured and market tested, calling for efficient and effective evaluation of programs involving the learners to determine if their needs are being met. We as educators should not be happy unless the learner (our customer) is happy."

Payne also noted in his speech, "We have to decide what we do best, brand it, and deliver it. We are quick to say that we are 'agriculture and more.' We *must* be in order to survive."

Dick Wootton, director of extension and outreach for the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, agrees.

"Land grants say they are different from other universities in that they are highly ingrained with the communities they serve," Wootton points out. "That means we have a pretty thorough understanding of community problems and can help solve those problems by working together with folks," he adds.

"What we need to remember is that it's about them; it's about their needs rather than our agenda."

To reach "them," Platte County CES Educator Dallas Mount sought ideas from his constituents about the kinds of issues in which they wanted help. He then gathered information about those topics, secured speakers, and hosted educational meetings every other week from November through March.

Pleased with the results, Mount intends to pursue "bottom-up" programming next year, again having county residents dictate the direction and relying on interactive classroom discussions to add to the package.

# real people



A delivery system that has been successful in Campbell County reaches out to parents through their children. During yearly “Extension Days,” educators visit all of the elementary schools to conduct activities and to send youngsters home with a packet of information introducing parents to the wide umbrella of free services waiting to help them.

The “Extension Days” also include two-hour time periods in which people in the community can come to the schools to ask questions and explain their needs.

The inclusion of community ideas is assured throughout Wyoming in the form of nine area advisory committees comprised of citizens who have interests in each of the five CES initiative program areas. These groups meet twice yearly to target the needs and priorities of extension constituents.

Educator Troy Cooper of Big Horn County says he walks through the fields to talk to seasonal migrant farmers in his area to find out how he can help them.

“We’re outsiders looking in on minority cultures, and we haven’t figured out how to break into them to find out their needs,” Cooper explains.

“They haven’t connected to the fact that we are a source they can count on and trust. As a result, it’s necessary to beat the bushes to stop and talk to them face to face.”

Cooper says the same doggedness is required to reach small-acreage constituents new to the county and part of a growing urban/rural interface.

“To survive we have to identify these non-traditional audiences and then adapt our mission to what they want,” he adds.

Educator Zola Ryan of Carbon County is part of the Sustainable Management of Rangeland

“What we  
need to  
remember is  
that it’s  
about them;  
it’s about  
their needs  
rather than  
our agenda.”

*Dick Wootten  
National  
Association of  
State Universities  
and Land-Grant  
Colleges*

Resources initiative team effort to distribute a survey targeting small-acreage audiences to find out what information they want, when they need it, and the most convenient delivery method.

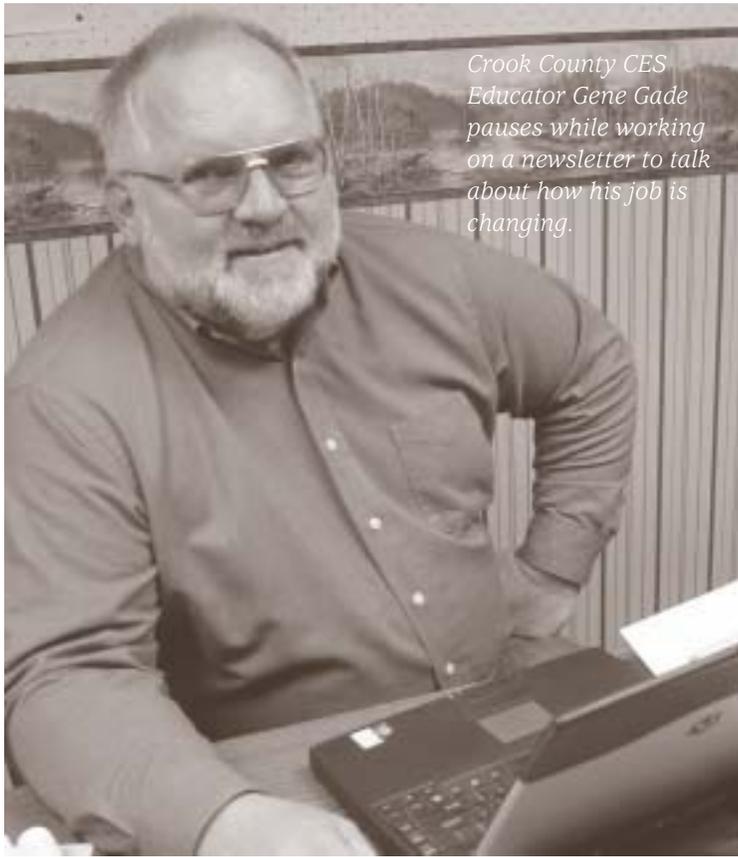
She’s advertising through newspaper notices, radio announcements, and flyers and is also simply knocking on doors to introduce herself and to meet the people she hopes to serve.

Mount agrees that it is often difficult to reach extension’s changing audiences.

“Our challenge is to encourage them to turn to us when they have a problem,” he explains.

“Sometimes that happens when people new to the land have a question, ask a neighbor, and the neighbor says to call the CES office,” Mount says.

“In helping people with specific questions, we can always pry a little bit and perhaps suggest that we come out to their place to spend some time and learn about what they’re doing,” he adds. “That’s a way to begin building a relationship and to keep the attention on them, not us.”



*Crook County CES Educator Gene Gade pauses while working on a newsletter to talk about how his job is changing.*

## “When we are at our best”

*By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology*

As he watches the nature of his community and his county change a bit more each year, Gene Gade tries to visualize the role the Cooperative Extension Service will play in the future.

Extension has the same deep roots in Crook County as it has in Wyoming’s other counties, and as an agent in Sundance, Gade understands the pride of tradition to which the land-grant mission clings.

“When we are at our best, we develop new knowledge that is applicable to people’s lives,” Gade allows. “Whether they will need it in the form in which we have delivered it for years, I don’t think so.”

The educator points to larger production operations, fewer people on the rural landscape, and ranchers and spouses who have outside jobs off the

land. He waves his arm to indicate smatterings of new ranchettes. “The whole youth thing,” he says, is different.

“I believe we can remain relevant but not by doing the same things we have been doing forever. We’re in the middle of a societal change, an attitudinal change, and a technological change, and if we don’t recognize that, we are dinosaurs,” Gade predicts.

Sitting at a table in his CES office writing an article for a newsletter, Gade’s thoughts span the 17 years he has spent as an agent in the scenic shadow of Devils Tower.

“There’s no question that extension had a lot to do with making American agriculture the wonder of the world that it is and with developing all these communities. We were vital. People couldn’t go to the information – it had to come to them,” he muses.

“It’s not true anymore. We need a different kind of information and a different delivery system. We are struggling with that, and I think the jury is still out as to if we are going to get there as fast as we need to,” Gade adds.

“We’re justifiably proud of our tradition, and during the 20th century I don’t think you could understate what extension did. But if we think we are going to do exactly what we did in the 20th century in the 21st century, I don’t think so.”

Like many of his colleagues, Gade continually seeks ways to walk the new kind of walk and talk the new kind of talk that will appeal to his rural constituency, which is often lured to do business in larger towns nearby.

“The needs of agriculture are changing,” he acknowledges. “Most of the producers on the major ranches are terrific cowboys who already know the basics of genetics and nutrition. There’s always something new, but they definitely know about the

relevance

# diverse needs

biggies and don't need our help. What you get from ag people these days are only unique or acute problems. That's when they will give us a call."

It is increasingly difficult, he says, to find windows of time to schedule educational ag programs. Sometimes early or late winter works before feeding or when feeding is slowing down. Before calving is a possibility or between calving and haying. There's a narrow opening after harvesting.

"If we mix in the social stuff and combine things like talking about vaccinating cattle, throw in a hamburger, have some other topics, and give them the opportunity to do their other town business in the courthouse, we might get 80 people. Otherwise we might get four. We have no captive audience. Usually if these folks come it's because they really want to be here," he explains.

"Some people just don't like our brand of education. Maybe they had a bad experience in school and don't feel the need for it. Grandpa did it this way, and it still works. I do believe, though, that there are people who have the tradition of extension and are comfortable with it and feel it's valuable. They know they can get good technical information from us, but I do think there's a shift in terms of what they want."

Crook, Weston, and Campbell counties team together each year to plan cutting-edge programs designed for a variety of interests. The impacts of mad cow disease dominated this year's Tri-County Ag Days. A range tour this summer will highlight research, success stories, and problem areas in livestock and forage production. Last year's theme centered on risk-management and marketing and offered hands-on learning with computer programs and Internet workshops.

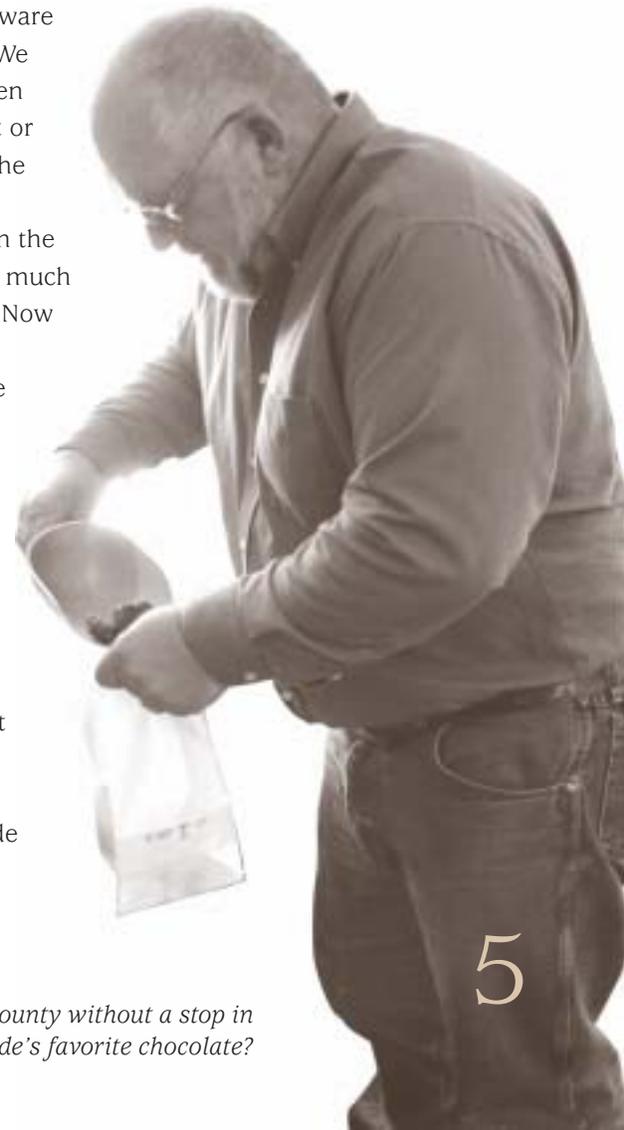
"People are getting computer literate and are starting to use electronic media more. If we are not present in those media in a big way, our clients are going to leave us," Gade notes.

As part of the CES Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources initiative team, Gade has helped create public service announcements for television and radio to help educate the general public about Wyoming, its resources, and the stewardship provided by extension.

He is also working with the team to post natural resources fact sheets on the Web and to develop "have program will travel" range college offerings that can be presented wherever and whenever needed.

In addition to the challenge of squeezing educational efforts into the busy lives of agriculturists, Gade and his co-workers struggle with finding time for traditional 4-H activities. "We're very aware of the school calendar. We don't plan anything when there's an athletic event or a prom or something," he explains.

"It used to be that in the summer 4-H was pretty much the only game in town. Now there are a multitude of other programs, and the school activities go year round. The county fair used to be a social occasion and everybody came and enjoyed it. Electronics have altered everything. Kids don't stay home and hang out the way they used to. There's a lot to lament about that change," Gade adds.



*What's a tour of the county without a stop in Aladdin to buy Gade's favorite chocolate?*

# vision

Nevertheless, 4-H clubs are “fairly stable” in Crook County. “Last year we had more leaders and members than we have had in a long time.” Most of them are in the 9-13 age groups. “The older kids develop other interests, get jobs, and become more involved in school. We lose most of them at that point.”

Non-traditional after-school 4-H programs earmarked for at-risk youths and their families and for students needing remedial and academic enrichment have become norms. Tobacco prevention is another area of focus.

“We’re also trying to expand into some program areas where we haven’t had strong enrollment like natural resources and technology. If we just define ourselves as serving rural youths, we’re going to lose half of our audience,” Gade says.

A CES audience that is expanding in the Sundance area is that of retirees and ranchette owners interested in horticulture. “They want to know what will grow, how to landscape, and how to deal with the climate,” he reports. Drop-in visits, phone calls, and e-mails are on the rise as a result of the area’s demographic changes. Training courses for Master Gardeners in the three northeast counties are expanding.

Gade laughs a bit when he recalls talking to people who want to know how many cows can be run per acre in Wyoming and why magnolias aren’t grown in the state.

He grew up on a farm at a time when the Cooperative Extension Service faced different challenges and when the future of extension wasn’t yet a topic of debate.

Today, Gade says, “Personally I see some of the pitfalls inherent in defense of the status quo, but I struggle with the answers like most of my colleagues in Wyoming and elsewhere. If our organization can master the 21st century challenges, we can be as relevant as we ever were. If we can’t, we probably deserve the inevitable phase-out. Most of the time, I’m an optimist.”



*Gene Gade revisits research acreage where he worked with UW scientists to study management techniques for combating leafy spurge.*

# Home on the range on the go

By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology

Although he confesses to occasionally writing things down between his ears and is reluctant to show visitors his organizationally challenged office, Gene Gade is actually very much in control, particularly when it comes to projects he is passionate about.

A Cooperative Extension Service educator in Sundance for the past 17 years, Gade has adapted his research and pursuits to best meet the changing needs of the folks he serves and his own interests.

Take leafy spurge – please! Gade and University of Wyoming colleagues recently completed a wide-reaching, multi-year project that resulted in the development of an integrated approach to managing the well-known “Scourge of the West.”

“Crook County has been the mother lode of leafy spurge in the area,” he notes. The study involved millions of dollars and thousands of tests over a period of decades in conjunction with herbicide and competitive grass and grazing trials. Beneficial insects also played a part. High-tech underground fiberactive TV cameras enabled the researchers to watch the roots below the ground as the weed was being treated above the ground.

“We think that if producers will apply the tools we have given them, they can get it knocked back so that it doesn’t affect them economically like it used to,” Gade says.

He enjoys working on short-term demonstrator projects with progressive producers and also helping individuals like a young rancher just phasing into the management of an older operation and a widow moving off the land after half a century.

Gade has researched the herbicide destruction of worthy riparian zone plants and helped develop a nationally known Western Integrated Resource Program, now online, that provides practical tools for integrating management of the physical, biological, financial, and human resources of agricultural operations.

He had a hand in securing grant funds to bring the Wonderwise science education curriculum for youths to Wyoming’s counties. One of his latest



*The volumes of materials in Gade’s office reflect the expertise he has developed as a veteran CES educator.*

collaborations resulted in a workshop for producers and wildlife biologists on animal grazing behavior that was presented by one of his college graduate advisers.

“I try to have at least one or two big projects going in each aspect of my work,” Gade says. Those endeavors involve many cross-county and cross-state enterprises.

In between he approaches traditional types of tasks like helping someone reseed a pasture with alfalfa, answering calving questions, and tackling weed and pest inquiries. There are always programs on the calendar and travel days to accommodate meetings and conferences.

One morning he is writing an article for an area newsletter, preparing a Master Gardener training program, developing educational worksheets for the Web, and composing television scripts to inform the public about Wyoming’s natural resources.

Come fall, Gade will begin a six-month sabbatical to seek financial support to turn the Vore Buffalo Jump near Sundance into a state historical and tourist site featuring active excavation and ongoing educational research. He is president of the foundation promoting the development of the Native American buffalo harvesting pit.

He’ll still come into the office one day a week to keep in touch and will rely on colleagues in nearby counties to help serve clients.

Come spring, Gade will be back for good, ready to fill his mental calendar with new projects that will hit home.



# Living by the calendar

By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and  
Technology

Meet Dawn Sanchez: A smiling, red-haired blur racing from event to event and multi-tasking in between and along the way. And always reaching out to her community. And usually enjoying every minute of it.

“Let every gentle word that blows bring happiness to you,” reads a sign in her colorful, stuffed-animal-filled, book-filled, game-filled, plant-filled, memento-filled office. She takes it to heart and knows how to spread her organized gentleness.

Meet the modern Cooperative Extension Service agent: A well-educated Jill-of-all-trades who lives by the calendar, shows up everywhere, and caps a hectic week by working all weekend.

Sanchez, headquartered in Evanston in Uinta County, agrees to be shadowed on a particular Friday to illustrate the changing nature of her vocation. And what a day it is! “I always plan too much and have to learn to say no more often,” she understates.

“Whatever is happening today or tomorrow is what gets most of my attention today,” confesses Sanchez, rushing to an early morning meeting with community leaders to help plan the annual “Safe Kids Day” for 400 youngsters, many of whom are Hispanic and will need interpreters.

Gathering around the corner from the CES office at a local breakfast hangout, Sanchez and the other committee members discuss contacts that need to be made with the fire, police, ambulance, and game and fish departments as well as plans for securing sponsors and donations and creating handouts in English and Spanish. When the children show up on

their special day, they will participate in hands-on activities to learn about the importance of bicycle helmets, seat belts, water and boating safety, and other kid-wise topics.

Back in the office, Sanchez answers e-mail messages and returns phone calls. Another confession: “I spend so much time on the phone that it’s insane!”

Current issues include a livestock implant program, welding a rack to hold sheep for a judging contest, a youth summit in Douglas for junior leaders, a teen nutrition peer mini-grant, a brucellosis presentation, puppets that warn of the dangers of smoking, and a high school workshop on body-size acceptance. Between tasks she writes a letter of recommendation for a 4-H youth.

Cent\$ible Nutrition Educator Beth Mikesell, whose office is down the hall, stops by for an organizational session to plan two educational school visits the pair will make in the afternoon.

The next meeting is with Annie Erickson, office secretary, to note items still needed for a junior leaders’ retreat that will begin that evening. A pizza cutter, blindfolds, extension cords, and garbage bags are among the scores of necessities that make the list.

A “small crisis” is handled. It is discovered that the junior leaders who shopped for retreat groceries the previous night inadvertently neglected to refrigerate some of the perishables.

*On another day, Sanchez might have been seeking a VISTA volunteer to work with Hispanic youths or hosting a family night to introduce parents to CES services.*

She might have been gathering together Evanston and Bridger Valley 4-Hers for an achievement night or a skill-a-thon. Every other Tuesday she works in Lyman, serving more of the needs of the large county.

# energy

Visualize her sending newsletters, postcards, and e-mails to keep leaders and youths informed. Soon each 4-H club will have its own Web site. On another day she helps secure grant funds for robotics and global positioning system units.

Now she is teaching the techniques of judging vegetables and reminding her charges to learn “parts, parts, parts” as they evaluate classes of horses.

There she is sitting on a beef quality assurance committee and a stock sale committee for the fair board. She’s working on a livestock curriculum to teach kids how to raise wholesome products.

See her making plans for a natural resources camp for fifth and sixth graders and looking on as junior leaders plan a 4-H camp with Sweetwater County.

That’s her at the high school with at-risk students who are learning how “character counts” so that they can pass the information along to wide-eyed youngsters.

One day she is creating public service announcements for the radio and joining with colleagues to produce a tail-docking video.

Now it is today, a Friday, and there is more to do.

Following a quick lunch at her desk spiced with more e-mails, phone calls, and paperwork, Sanchez meets Mikesell in a back room to pack materials needed for their school programs: moose tracks, a moose-crossing sign, a food pyramid chart and geometric container, food models, “fishing” licenses, snacks, a bottle of “germs,” a dirty-hands inspection machine, grain bottles, farm table “crops,” more snacks, more charts, more kid-oriented goodies.

The organized hodgepodge checked and double checked, the two women load a CES van and forge ahead to school number one during a spring blizzard.

Second graders bounce back from recess, excited by the moose tracks and chattering curiously



*Second graders are quick with answers for Sanchez about when hands should be washed.*



*Her work week won't end at 5 p.m. Friday. Sanchez boxes groceries for the weekend retreat she will share with 4-H junior leaders.*

# new traditions

about the visiting ladies with the intriguing props. The Marty Moose shirts the two are wearing describe the message they will deliver about what to do every day in a simple, appropriate way: romp and play, wash your hands lots, nibble your food and enjoy, graze on plants, lap up six-eight glasses of water, value every creature...including you.

The next hour whirls by as the excited kids learn about the importance of a balanced, nutritious diet and spend 20 seconds or the time it takes to sing the alphabet song to wash mysterious bottled “germs” off their hands.

“Are those made of rubber?” they inquire about realistic food models being used to illustrate healthy meals and portion sizes. “Are those purple things bacteria on my hands?” they wonder as they inspect their supposedly clean fingers under the glow of a machine. It’s back to the soap station for some of them.)

As a reward for their efforts, the little ones receive “fishing licenses” that entitle them to dip carrots and apples into a yummy concoction of

peanut butter, yogurt, and vanilla to “fish” for goldfish crackers.

Running late for their next adventure, Sanchez and Mikesell pack their traveling activities, crowd everything into the van, and drive through the blizzard to another school where first through fifth grade Hispanic students await a lesson on grains.

There’s more fun as the children learn about wheat, corn, rice, and flour and dip their hands into large containers to feel the processed crops run through their fingers. Making “goofy grain sandwiches” with peanut butter and cereal on different kinds of bread delights them, and the room quiets only when little mouths are full.

Letters written in Spanish are sent home to let parents know what their youngsters are studying. The students’ English vocabularies have been enhanced by CES programs. Last year the youths studied horticulture and learned how to nurture their own plants.

It’s time to stack the van once again so that it can be unloaded back at the office. It won’t be empty for long. Sanchez sorts and boxes the staples and treats selected by the 4-H junior leaders for their weekend of team building and leadership training at a nearby camp. There will also be time for snowmobiling, sledding, a movie, and popcorn.

Sanchez, of course, will accompany the youths for their jam-packed two days and two nights. As they arrive armed with sleeping bags and anticipation, she is already cramming essentials into the van.

Will she get much sleep during the retreat? “Ha!” she laughs.

Sanchez waves goodbye, still a smiling, red-headed blur. Whatever is on the calendar for Monday will have to wait until Monday.



*Sanchez helps Hispanic youngsters make “goofy grain sandwiches.”*



*The future of extension, says Dawn Sanchez, is "change." She multi-tasks to keep up with it.*

## Tradition makes way for non-tradition

*By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology*

**T**he question: What is the future of extension?  
The answer: "Change."

Dawn Sanchez, a Uinta County educator with a master's degree in cooperative extension, expands her answer.

"Our role in the county has changed. When I first came here, we didn't have a huge rapport with the schools. Now we are viewed as school partners who provide lots of helpful activities," she says. "We also work with a multicultural center and a community youth coalition to provide services to young people with special needs."

As a result, Sanchez says she finds herself spending much more time on non-traditional 4-H and community programs than she did in the past.

"Parents have really stepped up to the plate," she notes. "It's those volunteers who go to bat for us and try to keep our traditional program strong despite the many directions in which our office is being pulled."

Instead of each club having several leaders with expertise in different topics, the Uinta system is relying more on a smaller number of county-wide leaders who organize programs and work with youths from several locations on their projects.

Flexibility, Sanchez says, is necessary to help meet everyone's needs. A Youth Agriculture Program in Evanston allows at-risk young people who are not 4-H members to use livestock housing and equipment to raise their own animals to show at the fair.

Traditional activities are being adapted to satisfy the direct interests of youths. For example, a ranch horse project is evolving into a therapeutic riding program for 4-Hers who are interested in horsemanship but not showmanship.

The changes are making more room for Lonestar members who might not be able to commit to a monthly meeting but who nevertheless want to pursue projects with the help of family members, neighbors, or county-wide leaders. The growth of the Lonestar option, Sanchez says, is perhaps another sign of the future of extension.

"I want kids involved in any way I can. I don't care if their only goal is to get their hunter safety card. If all they want to do is go fishing, then great. I just want them to be involved. If they just want to raise a lamb, they are still learning responsibility and still meeting their objectives. If I can only have them for one day, I want them for that day," Sanchez adds.

"The beauty of the 4-H program, in the past and still today, is that kids can set their own goals and become as involved as they want and still be successful."



## City slickers: A changing

By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology

Rural extension means receiving a phone call at home on Christmas Eve and being asked how to cook prime rib.

Urban extension means fielding 5,000 inquiries a year about horticulture alone.

Rural extension means knowing nearly all the folks in the county and being the main game in town.

Urban extension means educating tens of thousands through sound bytes and speaking of “community development” more often than of “agriculture.”

For some rural counties, the future of extension is still comfortably laced with face-to-face questions and answers.

For the state’s more urban counties, however, tradition is shifting, and the Cooperative Extension Service sometimes finds itself looking at newer faces with different needs.

“We have familiarity with the people, and they have familiarity with us,” says Bill Taylor, Weston County CES educator in Newcastle.

“Although things are in a state of flux as we become more technological and are competing with other information sources, extension here is probably still viewed as the only place to go to see somebody in person and actually sit down and talk about their problems,” he adds.

“We may get somewhat of a wider variety of questions because there’s no one else to ask,” Taylor explains. “It’s kind of like ‘I didn’t know anybody else to call, so I called you.’

“I think we’re still viewed in a very authoritative manner because we are the main source from the university, and people may value that a little more,”

he says. “On the other hand, we can’t specialize as much as other counties because our staff and resources are limited.”

In nearby Niobrara County, the least populated one in Wyoming, CES is an integral part of nearly all community activities. The office is housed in a new fairground facility, and the building is used for everything from weddings to funerals to railroad meetings to Bible schools to conferences.

“We are always involved in everything going on in the county because this is where everything takes place. The community is very supportive,” says educator Tammie Jensen of Lusk.

“This area has always had an extremely strong extension background,” says fellow educator Denise Smith. “People who live here now are third and fourth generations who grew up with extension and still expect that same service and help. They know all of us and feel comfortable coming in here to ask questions.”

In the state’s largest cities of Cheyenne and Casper, however, the CES identity is being redefined. Laramie County Educator Phil Rosenlund, a 35-year CES veteran, says his office now partners with decision makers and key agencies to promote community development and to offer programs dealing with financial management, business retention and expansion, mediation and leadership training, and safety issues such as mosquito control.

“There are more choices for people in a larger town, but CES still fits and works well with some of these choices,” Rosenlund says. “People know we are affiliated with the University of Wyoming and that we provide non-biased information. Our quality sells,” he adds.

Despite the fact that Laramie County’s population of 80,000 is almost 20 times that of Niobrara, “We get around quite a bit and are pretty well known,” Rosenlund says.

# bright horizons

## extension paradigm

Tom Heald, a CES educator in Casper's Natrona County, paints another view of CES's influence in the urban setting. He relies on radio and television to help spread educational information to a large, busy populace and foresees the time when interactive tutorials will be downloaded to provide education.

"We have cultured the agricultural community because that is our culture within CES," Heald says. "But guess what? We have a whole bunch of people who find they have the financial resources to move out into the country. They work in town and commute to their haciendas. They literally don't know us. They're new to the land and their backgrounds are not ag related. They don't know their CES office," he explains.

Natrona County's challenge, Heald says, is to reach out to such new-to-the-land people to find out what information they want and how they want to receive it.

"The traditional method has always been the ag paradigm with winter meetings and ranch visits in the summer. But now if you are working in town and you want your weed question answered, you want it answered right away," Heald adds.

"Collectively the new-to-the-land people and CES need to figure out how best to work with one another, and I think they both want to."



*CES Associate Director Duane Williams, left, and Associate Dean and Director Glen Whipple serve as a sounding board to provide feedback for a role-playing activity during mediation training in Cheyenne.*

For the state's more urban counties, tradition is shifting and the Cooperative Extension Service sometimes finds itself looking at newer faces with different needs.



## By reservation only

*By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology*

When Milt Green and his colleagues go to work every morning, they face a delicate balance between the mission of the University of Wyoming and the expectations of the Wind River Indian Reservation community they serve, a balance skewed by a distrust of outsiders spanning more than 100 years.

“I am not a Native American, and everything I have learned has been very much a trial by fire. Hopefully I have learned my lessons well,” says Green, a UW Cooperative Extension Service educator on the reservation. “The tribes are usually very tolerant of my lack of knowledge about their traditions and are willing to help me understand.”

Green says many of the folks he and his co-workers deal with in the American Indian community have been disappointed before by agencies offering educational programs that never materialized. Since the signing of the original treaties, promises have been made but not kept.

For extension to break that mold, Green says it needs to listen better, respond better, and learn how to blend cultural pride with modern realities.

“For many of our clients, their vision of the future is to be safe until the end of the day. They are concerned with meeting basic life needs. The idea of talking five, six, or 10 years down the road doesn’t have any meaning to them. Their concerns are immediate,” explains Green, who has worked as a CES educator at Wind River for seven years.

The past battles the present as well as the future for many of the American Indians who live on the reservation, he adds. Two and three families often share housing and vehicles. Residents are 30 miles from towns that offer employment opportunities and the accompanying infrastructure that supports

jobs. Meanwhile, tribal elders are concerned that the younger generation is very quickly losing cultural pride and heritage because of a sense of urgency.

“It’s not that the people we try to work with don’t value our information, it’s just that traditional extension delivery systems aren’t effective here. Many times there are entitlement questions with respect to trust responsibility that I don’t always fully understand. I have to take the time to learn what those issues are,” Green notes.

Many residents, for example, are reluctant to stop in at the CES office, which used to house a governmental agency that still conjures negative associations. “I can see people in a restaurant or at a meeting somewhere away from my office, though, and we can sit down and talk about things,” Green says.

“When I’m visiting with these folks, I listen but don’t write. One of the worst things I can do is start taking notes. I have to listen as best I can and gather as much information as I can and then write things down for my reference once I’m back in the pickup,” he explains.

Timing is also an issue when Green tries to plan educational CES programs for residents of the reservation since many of them operate on a day-to-day basis. “One of the strategies I have used out here has been that the people who show up for a meeting or gathering of mine are the only people who could have been there, and whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened. There might be one person or 20 or maybe nobody,” he says.

“It’s a situation of false starts. Sometimes I have to restart a program three or four times before I finally find the one thing that is different that makes it work.”

However, he says, many of the efforts of the CES staff are appreciated by the tribes, and Green is proud of the successes that have been accomplished at Fort Washakie.

Through 4-H activities, he says, young people have had the opportunity to maintain and enrich their cultural heritage. “Some of the kids do very

# commitment

well at the county fair,” he notes. Traditional livestock projects are rare, though. “The few kids who have livestock are involved in it for very different reasons than kids off the reservation,” Green explains.

Programs to help prevent diabetes and promote good nutrition have been very successful. “Diabetes and poor nutrition are big health problems here, and the Cent\$ible Nutrition efforts have been very productive,” Green says.

Part of the reason for good participation is due to the dedication of nutrition aides in going to people’s houses, picking clients up if necessary, waiting until they are ready, and then bringing them home after the programs. “We have been able to document people who have made choices that had a positive impact on their health,” he adds.

“I think some of our best successes have been through the schools. They have used our services a lot,” Green says, describing “Marty Moose” activities for children and entrepreneurship and job-skills training for young people who will soon be candidates in the workforce. “My most urgent concern is the young people and where they might be heading.”

Another “unique and positive” development Green cites is the willingness of 4-H leaders on the reservation to participate in national leadership conferences. “We have tremendous volunteer support, and I think these gatherings provide a forum where diversity really has an opportunity to strut its stuff. Through 4-H, diversity barriers can be broken down very quickly. It’s a wonderful organization in that sense.”

Green believes CES has a significant role to play, but he wishes that some entities within the greater university were more aware of and supportive of the needs. “I think there are some neat things that could happen as a total outreach effort on this reservation to provide lifelong learning opportunities for the general population,” he says.

With that goal in mind, Green perseveres. “I love the people; I love the work. I see everything that could be done and should be done if there were just a little pocket of money sitting somewhere that this office could use to really yield some great benefits,” he says.

“Meanwhile, I am here, and someone is in our office every day representing the College of Agriculture and CES. I think it is extremely important to Native Americans that we carry out our trust responsibility based on the original treaties. It is vital for these people to know that the University of Wyoming supports what they are doing in any way it can. This is a real opportunity to be partners and to provide better educational services to Native American people.”



*Leader Margaret Haukass (standing on the right) of the Native Stars 4-H Club on the Wind River Indian Reservation teaches 4-H leaders how to make jewelry, key chains, pen covers, eye glass strings, barrettes, belt buckles, and medallions during a workshop at the Western Regional Leaders’ Forum in Anchorage, Alaska. Standing on the left is her daughter Earli.*

# Extension behind bars

*By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology*

The notion that extension must reach out where needed is dramatically demonstrated in counties where educators venture “behind bars” to offer informational programs to inmates.

As part of job training activities at the Wyoming Honor Farm in Riverton, Fremont County Cooperative Extension Service educators teach classes in artificial insemination, beef management, and weed identification.

Weston County presents courses in horticulture and nutrition to inmates at the Wyoming Honor Conservation Camp and Wyoming Boot Camp in Newcastle.

Through hands-on programs focusing on financial savvy and nutritious cooking, CES educators in Niobrara County give life skills and hope to those incarcerated at the Wyoming Women’s Center in Lusk who will eventually rejoin society and make a new start.

“Most of them are pretty eager to learn,” says Cent\$ible Nutrition Educator Shirley Huizenga, who has taught at the women’s prison for the past four years. “They start out with no experience and end up excited because when they get out they will know how to do more things.”

Educator Denise Smith of Niobrara, who teaches financial management classes at the women’s center, adds, “So many of them didn’t come from homes where they were taught life skills involving money management, proper nutrition, health care, personal relationships, taking care of their kids, etc. Hopefully by the time they get out we will have helped them enough so that they won’t end up back in prison again.”

In a series of spring and fall classes, Smith shows inmates, many of whom have been convicted of money-related crimes, how to budget to stretch their money to provide for shelter, food, clothing, health care, utilities, and other basic needs.

Through interactive games and class discussion, they learn that disbursing too many dollars in one direction can topple their entire plan. An exercise in which they are given an income of 20 beans forces them to prioritize their needs and to realize the importance of saving money for emergencies.

Utilizing Cent\$ible Nutrition training in food preparation, safety, and healthy eating, the inmates, many of whom lack kitchen skills, are taught how to plan and cook nutritious, inexpensive meals.

In the “learn-by-doing” extension tradition, the women explore the basic food groups and discover, for example, how to prepare staple mixes that have multiple uses, bake bread and biscuits, serve vegetables and fruits, make hard-boiled eggs, cut up and bake a chicken, and create homemade soups.

Using realistic food models, they assemble well-balanced meals with appropriate portions, paying attention to items that offer more in terms of nutrition and less in terms of calories. An activity in which the inmates determine the sugar content of their favorite beverages is a good eye opener, Huizenga says.

Most of the women are in their 20s or early 30s, she adds, and many have children waiting on the outside. “When they leave prison and go back home, they will have some skills they can use to help their families get along better. Our goal is to encourage them to make their food dollars stretch so that they can practice better nutrition,” says Huizenga.

Trish Pena, a Cent\$ible Nutrition educator in Newcastle, has been visiting the Wyoming Honor

opportunity

Conservation Camp each week for the past four years to offer the same type of nutrition, cooking, and food safety curriculum for incarcerated men.

“They like it so much that they want to go home and teach their spouses or girlfriends what they have learned,” Pena says of the 19 to 25 year olds she works with.

“They have made mistakes, but they are willing to change and want to get on with their lives. If they can learn to make better nutritional choices, perhaps it will help them to make other good choices,” Pena adds.

“There’s definitely a need out there that’s not being filled,” Huizenga says. “So many people tell me that they don’t know how to cook and that they just prepare what’s quick and easy to do. I think

learning about good nutrition is very important for their health and the health of their families.”

In the past when the women’s center was less crowded and employees were available to transport soon-to-be released inmates to part-time outside jobs, the Niobrara County CES office used to hire prisoners to help with office work.

“They would have to fill out an application and be interviewed just as they would when they were back in their community looking for a job,” explains Smith. “While they worked here, we tried to give them a variety of duties so that they would have some experience for their resumes.”

She praises the vocational schooling, which includes computer training, that is offered at the prison. “Hopefully through all of these efforts the return rate will be lessened, they will be able to have their families back, and they will lead normal, productive lives,” Smith says.

The educator tells the story of one inmate who worked in the CES office in Lusk more than 10 years ago but recently listed Smith as a reference on a new job application. “I remember her well. She has been out for years and has gone back and made a good life for herself and her family. Her kids are in 4-H.

“A lot of the inmates are people just like us who made a wrong turn because they were in a desperate situation,” Smith adds.

Huizenga hopes that offering extension programs within the prisons will result in other success stories. “I think the more you can teach and train them while they are in prison, the better off they will be when they get out,” she says. “The more knowledge and information they have, the easier it should be for them to do something different with their lives.”

# challenges



Photos courtesy of State of Wyoming



# No more border wars

*By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology*

Sharing information and expertise across state lines is one sign of the changing role of the Cooperative Extension Service.

“I see extension as a natural conduit for agencies to be able to communicate that may have had barriers in the past,” says Mary Martin, a Teton County educator who collaborates as much as possible with her counterparts in the neighboring Teton County in Idaho.

Years ago when agricultural agents regularly came and went from the expensive Jackson area, the University of Wyoming worked out an agreement to pay a CES educator just across the border in Idaho to spend one day a week in Wyoming helping clientele with questions concerning natural resources and horticulture.

In turn, Martin shared community development and family and consumer sciences’ ideas and completed a rural health study and an economic analysis for the other Teton County.

“It was a wonderful arrangement because he had knowledge about our high-altitude mountain environment,” she said of her Idaho colleague.

That agent has since retired and has been replaced by an agricultural economist who Martin

says is interested in the work of the CES Enhancing Wyoming Communities and Households (EWCH) initiative team and would like to help coordinate leadership training between the two counties.

“We really do impact each other tremendously,” says Martin, who would eventually like to see the two counties operate as one extension office. “We are going to get farther working together, and it just makes sense for us to do that.”

Meanwhile, CES has helped organize the Teton Area Advisory Forum to serve as a vehicle for agencies and groups to come together to talk about regional topics of interest.

The College of Agriculture contracts with Utah State University in Logan to provide extension help to dairy farmers in Star Valley. “I use these dairy specialists like they were my own university,” says Lincoln County Educator Hudson Hill, who has a dairy background of his own.

The Utah agents visit monthly to help with producer questions related to rations, nutrition, record keeping, herd improvement, bulk-tank averaging systems that focus on fluid pounds in milk production, and bacteria, protein, and fat content.

When the valley possessed 511 active dairy farms, UW operated a dairy research unit and offered more resources for producers. With just 25 small dairies surviving in the area, the collaborative

cooperation



Photo courtesy of NRCS

partnership now provides the needed help.

“I ask the specialists a question, and I have an answer right away,” says Hill.

Another example of multi-state cooperation is the Wellness In (WIN) the Rockies healthy lifestyles program, which combines the services of CES and the colleges of agriculture and health sciences to help promote good nutrition and exercise practices to clients in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho.

Weston County Educator Bill Taylor regularly crosses the state’s borders in the interests of CES. For the past year, for example, he has been working with a team of 14 extension colleagues to provide



# coordination

risk and financial management training for producers in northeastern Wyoming, southeastern Montana, western South Dakota, and western North Dakota.

“Our county also services a number of customers from South Dakota as well as having a significant number of 4-H members who live across the line,” Taylor says. “These people are an integral part of the Newcastle community who go to school here, shop here, and call our office with their questions.”

As a member of the EWCH team, he has been involved in writing a proposal with the Western Rural Development Center in Logan, Utah, to provide community leadership training in the western U.S. In a project crossing international lines, Taylor is part of a group of UW specialists and educators offering an international online course called “Enterprising Rural Families: Making it Work” in conjunction with agencies in Canada and Australia.

“We are all limited in resources, so the more that we can expand our network and share our knowledge and expertise, the better off we are,” Taylor says. “Needs and issues don’t stop at political boundaries.”

“The important thing,” he adds, “is being able to deliver the best help possible to our customers more readily.”



By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology

# Home alone:

students rotate in and out. “Still, we have tried to use the 4-H projects as a base for after-school activities,” he says.

While traditional clubs form the heart and soul of 4-H, latch-key kids, at-risk youths, diverse groups, and other unique audiences are finding a new after-school home with the Cooperative Extension Service.

“It’s amazing how talented most kids are,” says Rindy West, a Campbell County educator. “With non-traditional groups you can do as much as you ever wanted.”

West and her colleagues, for example, offer activities in such areas as leathercraft, science, geology, and Wonderwise to youths from 5 to 18 at the Boys and Girls Club of Campbell County.

“It benefits them, and it benefits us,” she says. “An after-school program is really needed, and some of the kids who participate end up joining 4-H.”

West often relies on junior leaders for assistance at the Boys and Girls Club. “It’s a wonderful leadership and community service opportunity for them, and it helps me out a bunch. For the juniors to actually teach something is really kind of empowering for them,” West says.

4-H in Gillette also reaches out to at-risk students under the wing of the Youth Emergency Services (YES). Some live in a group home, and others are assisted by foster families.

In addition to participating in short-term projects relating to nature, lake habitat, animals, birds, robotics, technology, and visual arts, YES youths also learn about Cent\$ible Nutrition and financial management. Both Lori Jones and Daun Martin of the CES office teach classes at the home.

Educator Warren Crawford of Carbon County points out that it is difficult to focus on youth development in such programs since different

West agrees that such challenges exist. “New, innovative ways are best for approaching these kids, I think. We try to turn them loose and let them try hands-on activities,” she says. “Our motto is to learn by doing, and kids like that need every opportunity to be creative.”

Grant funds have been secured to pilot a program in Carbon, Converse, Niobrara, and Uinta counties in which VISTA volunteers will be used to provide after-school activities and to work in some areas with at-risk youths and Hispanic families.

Latch-key programs for youngsters 5 to 8 are thriving in Park County. Educator Melissa Johnson and her colleagues and volunteers in Powell host more than 20 little ones at the CES office every spring and fall to teach them about animals, physical fitness, hand washing, entomology, dough art, and table etiquette. Parents are invited to a tea party at the end during which the children utilize the skills they have learned.

“The socializing is really important, and we hope we are inspiring them to become 4-H



Latch-key kids, at-risk youths, diverse groups, and other unique audiences are finding a new after-school home with the Cooperative Extension Service.

# learn by doing

## 4-H fills a niche



“We can give the kids something different but still create a pathway for some of the traditional 4-H programs.”

*Melissa Johnson,  
Park County  
educator*

*Cent\$ible Nutrition Educator Lori Jones of Campbell County makes tortillas with youngsters at an elementary school in Gillette.*

members. If you get them started young, they tend to stay in the program longer,” Johnson says.

“It’s a good way to introduce the parents to 4-H to show them that we are building life skills and not just taking pigs to the fair,” she adds.

Park County junior leaders, like their counterparts in other areas of the state, visit kindergarten through third grade students in schools to teach everything from how to pick healthy snacks to physical fitness to how to sew buttons to choosing appropriate seasonal clothing. The 4-H junior leaders meet with principals to plan the programs.

“It’s a big social thing for the young kids. They don’t want it to end. At this age they want to learn, and they want to be there. It’s a blast for us because the kids are so eager,” says Johnson.

“I am finding that offering after-school enrichment is the best way to reach kids,” she adds. “The farming and ranching life is changing. We need to find new programs that fit the needs. I see us partnering with more agencies in the future. We can give the kids something different but still create a pathway for some of the traditional 4-H programs.”





## Just click

*By Vicki Hamende, Senior Editor  
Office of Communications and Technology*

The “e” word is coming. E-Extension is a national, collaborative, Internet-based system in which expert teams from land-grant universities will develop and determine the “best-of-the-best” information and make it accessible to every county Cooperative Extension Service office through multiple electronic modes, formats, and applications.

The ultimate goal is to create a preferred, trusted source of education to share with community residents as they solve their life issues.

E’s coming. “In my opinion it is not only a good thing but an organizational necessity,” says Glen Whipple, College of Agriculture associate dean and director of the Cooperative Extension Service.

E-Extension is one more sign of the technological wave CES will likely ride to accommodate its 21st century constituents.

Many counties already serve up solid and wide-ranging Web site menus to make it easy for their customers to grab quick and helpful information.

The Platte County site, for example, provides agricultural and natural resources links to horticulture, livestock, weed management, the Wyoming Hay List, drought updates, the sustainable management of rangeland resources, young beef female workshops, news releases, and newsletters.

A click on family and consumer sciences will offer programs on family financial management, food safety, family life, nutrition education, the home environment, and starting a business.

There is a 4-H library for project and state fair news. Cent\$ible Nutrition’s show features lessons, recipes, training materials, bilingual information, success stories, and a discussion of its objectives.

The viewer will discover pictures and biographies of the CES staff, town maps, and trails to organizations, agencies, and media outlets throughout the area.

Lincoln County’s page welcomes the reader with photos of 4-H kids in action, includes calendars, newsletters, and program information, and offers consumer tips on several topics. Also look for brucellosis updates, dairy worksheets, seedling tree information, Master Gardeners’ classes, and pesticide training sessions.

The site for Laramie County adds categories for horticulture and for one of the CES state initiative teams. The Sublette County spot also promises community development materials.

CES agents aren’t the only ones mastering Web design. 4-H member Lelani Hipol of the Tye Dyes Club in Uinta County created an interactive site for the Evanston Animal Shelter.

Goshen County Educator Wayne Tatman tells a story about asking a group of residents if they wanted to be added to the mailing list for the CES newsletter. No need, they replied. They read it on the Web. “More technology is out there; maybe we should use it,” he jokes. His office is considering the creation of a database that would revolve around people’s interests.

Wyoming constituents can now take online courses pertaining to their livelihood. Specialists in the University of Wyoming’s Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics alone have developed scores of offerings that link producers with information and with each other.

CES is partnering with the Wyoming Geographic Information Science Center, housed at UW, to use orbiting satellites collecting land surface data to help producers glean information about how to improve their management practices and how to spot damage before it is too late to reverse it.

# making a difference

The state CES office has applied for a U. S. Department of Agriculture grant to fund a geospatial extension specialist. 4-H youths in some areas are already using hand-held global positioning system units and cameras to conduct historical and ecological field research to help local agencies pinpoint important geographic information systems data.

Carbon County's Warren Crawford is writing a grant for mapping software. His 4-Hers are hoping to photograph and map all the barns in the county and also to track elk migration patterns. Converse County's Sarah Cary has guided youths in locating historic landmarks and trails, determining fire lines, assessing property boundaries, investigating water drainage, and studying wildlife movements.

Stepping into any county office is a sure way to notice the effect of technology on the way extension is doing its job.

Computers with the latest Microsoft office products are now available on every desk and are updated on a regular basis. CES employees can communicate instantly with the use of e-mail, and a majority of the offices are online around the clock, reports Barb Farmer, manager of the CES Communications and Technology office.

4-H enrollment forms and fair tags that used to take weeks to type on layers of carbon paper are now quickly computerized. Address and project changes can be processed in short order, and lists of various categories can be transmitted instantaneously.

The CES reporting system is now online and accessible at all times from any computer. The 4-H Plus, Fair Plus, and Data Master programs are quick producers of information.

Meetings and trainings can now be videotaped, burned into CDs, and delivered statewide.

Printed copies of CES bulletins are being replaced by easily accessible Web versions.

Farmer remembers predictions made in the past that every household would soon have a computer. "The notion seemed so far-fetched at first, but in such a short period of time it's almost here."

Adapting to the changes has been difficult for some people, she adds. "Most of them, though, realize the importance of technology and the way it can help us."



*Barb Farmer, manager of the CES Office of Communications and Technology, helps county employees adapt to computerization.*



*Laramie County CES Horticulturist Catherine Wissner, left, regularly visits Idle Thyme Farm in Carpenter to assist owner Shelly Elliott with her organic fruit and vegetable operation. Elliott also raises pastured poultry*

University of Wyoming  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Dept. 3354  
1000 E. University Avenue  
Laramie, WY 82071

Extension  
Connection

May 2004

**Editor**

Vicki Hamende

**Layout and Design**

Tana Stith

Send comments or  
suggestions to:  
Glen Whipple  
Dept. 3354  
1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY  
82071-3354  
(307) 766-5124  
glen@uwyo.edu

UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING



Printed on recycled paper

*The University of Wyoming  
is an equal opportunity/  
affirmative action institution.*

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LARAMIE, WY 82072  
PERMIT No. 1