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# Quarterly Report



## To: Board of County Commissioners

This quarterly report summarizes major educational programming in the third quarter of 2009 from Southeast Area *Extension*. We are grateful for the continued support of the Counties. If you have any questions, suggestions or would like more specific information about these or other Extension programs, feel free to meet with any member of our staff.

## Invasive Weed Master

CSU Extension Weed Specialist George Beck provided a “train-the-trainer” workshop in Rocky Ford on September 3, 2009, titled “Invasive Weed Master.” The Invasive Weed Master program is designed to assist those who work with landowners such as federal and state agencies, counties, conservation districts, and others.

Dr. Beck equipped attendees with invasive weed information they could take back to their field office staff and members of the public. Topics included weed law in Colorado, weed identification, weed ecology, treatment methods for different weeds, developing a weed management plan, and a hands-on training for calibrating a sprayer.

A number of people attended the one-day workshop and learned a great deal. Due to the response, more trainings like this are planned for the future.

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Invasive Weeds of our area: Tamarisk, Russian olive, hoary cress, and Russian knapweed.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources



5 STATE  
BEEF  
CONFERENCE

### Five States Beef Conference

The First Annual 5 States Beef Conference was held September 2, 2009 in La Junta, Colorado. The event was hosted by Colorado State University, Oklahoma State University, New Mexico State University, West Texas A&M, and Kansas State University, with speakers being beef industry experts from these universities.

Beef producers from across southeastern Colorado attended the event to learn more about topics impacting their business, network and enjoy a nice meal. Jack Whittier, CSU Extension Beef Specialist, discussed winter cow nutrition and Jason Ahola, CSU Professor, discussed options for controlling production costs. Winter feed is often the greatest portion of production costs, and attendees learned how to understand what needs a cow has and the cheapest way to meet those needs.

Marketing of livestock is another important aspect of profitability in the beef business. Scott Howard, CSU graduate student, spoke on Cash versus Grid Marketing and producers had a chance to practice their accuracy evaluating a beef carcass. Rodney Jones, an Agriculture Economist with OSU, discussed the Market Outlook for this fall and the coming year.

Value-added beef is another option for increasing profits, or is it? Manny Enicnias, Livestock Specialist for NMSU, discussed "Value Added Opportunities—Increasing Costs or Adding Premiums." He had evaluated calf sales through Superior Livestock and determined which value added programs increased profit and which actually only increased costs. Doug McKinney, the Value Added Beef Cattle Specialist for OSU, talked producers through how to participate in value added programs and the importance of third-party verification.

The afternoon was jammed full of information to help our local producers succeed in the beef cattle business including strategies to decrease costs and increase returns.

Agents Edmundson and Fickenschler coordinated promotion of the event to the Southeast Area producers and also participated in the conference.

### Organic Farming Field Day and Variety Trial

An Organic Farming Field Day was held at the CSU Arkansas Valley Research Center where variety trials are currently being conducted. Those in attendance not only had the opportunity to evaluate different varieties of peppers and melons grown under organic management, but also were able to learn about organic regulations and valuable sources of information.

Organic seed production was one topic receiving much attention. The Arkansas Valley has some unique opportunities for this type of niche marketing of organic seed.

**Baca County**

**Winning Ways in Southeastern Colorado**

The 2009 Baca County Fair will go down as memorable to fairgoers in many ways. We had rain, rain and then a real thunderstorm during our Junior Premium Sale in which a new record was set for the number of people able to get in the sheep and goat barn—which was already full of sheep and goats!

And not a sole complained.

Of course not, we treasure rain and celebrate its coming every chance we get. Maybe the rain was even a sign that things were looking up in these tough economic times. Our Junior Premium Sale was \$10,000 above last year’s sale and that was a record breaker! We surely appreciate the great support we receive from our local businesses and the role our County Commissioners play in helping us to secure buyers at our annual Junior Premium Sale.

Baca County has 136 enrolled 4-Hers in 2009, an increase of 6% in 2009 with 98 enrolled in livestock, 14 enrolled in horse projects and 85 enrolled in general projects.

4-H and FFA youth weighed in 40 steers and market heifers, 70 swine, 45 sheep and 75 head of goats. These numbers are stable ones for our county although we were surprised that the smaller animal projects of poultry and rabbits didn’t increase.

Baca County 4-Hers also showed innovation by exhibiting science, technology and energy projects such as small engines, wind, entomology and model rocketry.

As our County Fair grows we are looking forward to more innovative ways to bring new and some not so new projects to youth in our area. We’re Extension through 4-H, bringing new and life skills to the youth of Southern Colorado.

**Our First Livestock Project Breakfast**

Giving attention to the quality of our livestock projects has been a priority in Baca County, but acknowledging these winners at our annual achievement banquet seemed to fall short.

We added speakers who talked about how carcasses are graded, made breakfast and held an informative meeting on Saturday, September 12, 2009.

We had 40 people in attendance and Cheyenne Dixon a graduate student in Animal Science from CSU and Deborah Lester, Area Extension Agent were presenters. Awards were given out for the top three grading carcasses in the beef project, top three for all species in the Rate of Gain contest and the top three winners for the ultra sounding of goats and sheep were all awarded. There were many smiling faces in the room!

**4-H**



*Kyle Feuerstein of Springfield Ag 4-H Club with his wind turbine created for the special Wind Activity*



*Montana Cook of the Walsh Busy Bees wins a \$50 cash prize from Deborah Lester, Area Extension Agent, for her prime beef carcass sponsored by Cook Oil of Walsh*

## Bent County

The 2009 Bent County fair was an immense success according to participants, fair board and community members. The fair encompassed 4-H, FFA and other Bent County youth through project displays, Kid's Day games and skill challenges, livestock shows, horse shows, junior rodeo and even a dog agility contest. Youth were introduced to new friends, projects, events and hands on learning opportunities.

Kid's Day was organized by one of the Cloverbud leaders and participation grew by over 20 youth since 2008. Activities included sand art, fishing, watermelon seed distance, putt-putt and beyond. It was such a success more people have volunteered to help next year.

The livestock sale brought in over \$88,000 which is up from last year. This is a testament to the community involvement and support of Bent County youth. The fair board met shortly after fair and gave a positive report and look forward to next year's fair activities.

Bent County sent over 35 entries to State Fair in livestock, general, home economics, Creative Cooks and Cake Decorating contests. All projects showcased the hard work each member put forth in learning their project.



*Cheyenne County celebrates their 100th Fair*

## Cheyenne County Fair

This year's Cheyenne County Fair proved to be a wet, yet successful year once again for the Cheyenne County 4-Hers. Through the muck and the mud, torrential rains, and a tornado during the pig show, eyes were focused and spirits remained high. The weather couldn't even stop parents and spectators from coming to the shows and the sale, despite hurricane like symptoms, was as successful as ever. The Cheyenne County Extension Office wishes to congratulate all exhibitors for a job well done.

## Crowley County

The 2009 Crowley County 4-H & FFA Progress Show held July 18-25 was a great success. There were 50 4-H and FFA youth participating. We had 28 family and consumer science and general projects, of which 6 went on to the state fair. We had youth participate in the cake decorating contest and in the shooting sports .22 state contests. There is no sale in Crowley County, so members that want to sell their animals participate in the Arkansas Valley Fair. We are small but mighty!

## Kiowa County

The Kiowa County Fair once again proved to be a great fair. 4-Hers completed and showed droves of general and livestock projects with the quality for which Kiowa County is known. This year, thanks to the fair board and their generous efforts, the livestock shows and sale were held under a new pavilion. The Extension office offers a hearty thank you to all that made this new project possible. The dedicated volunteers faced major obstacles in both time and resources. It truly was a pleasure to witness what can be done when people roll up their sleeves to make magic happen.

## Otero County

We have another Arkansas Valley Fair behind us and another successful year. This year there were 168 Otero and Crowley County 4-H and FFA youth participating in the Arkansas Valley Fair and 97 participating in the sale. The week of fair activities covered all the shows, sale, parade, horse races, demolition derby, and even time for a carnival ride. The Arkansas Valley Fair caps the summer as many of the local schools start the following week, so this allows youth one last week to celebrate summer.

The highlight of the fair was the return of the Otero County 4-H Kitchen in the new Event Center building on the fairgrounds. Exhibit day, the display of the general and family and consumer science projects, and the 4-H Kitchen were all held in the Event Center. This was a huge asset and upgrade from the old building and the tent that has been used the last few years. This was the first activity in the new building and 4-H is very thankful.

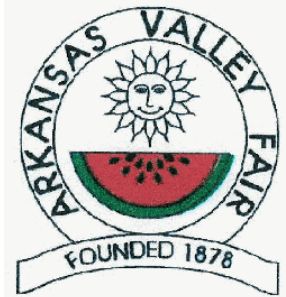
There were 76 4-H youth and 9 Cloverbuds who participated in the Otero County 4-H Exhibit day to kick off the start of the Arkansas Valley Fair. Not only were the youth successful at the Arkansas Valley Fair, but many went on to be successful at the Colorado State Fair. Seventy general and family and consumer science projects were taken to the Colorado State Fair from Otero County. Out of that 70 there were three Grand Champions, one reserve grand champion, 9 champions, and 11 reserve champions.

Otero County stood tall in the 4-H state contests. There were youth participating in cake decorating, creative cooks, fashion revue, shooting sports, livestock, rabbit, poultry and dog shows. There were two youth who participated in the State Fashion revue with one of them making the top 15. The shooting sports shotgun teams shot the lights out. The Senior Skeet team placed 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 5-stand team placed 2<sup>nd</sup>, with one of the individuals being the high shotgun individual overall. Two youth made the Colorado State Fair Livestock Sale.

Even though competition is not the focus of the 4-H program it drives the youth to “Make the Best Better”.



*Lakota Roberson with her market beef project*



## Prowers County

### Sand and Sage Round-Up

The fair had events ranging from a demolition derby, tractor pull, youth competition in general and livestock projects, a PRCA rodeo, a carnival and even a little Babe Ruth baseball action. The fair not only emphasized 4-H and FFA youth, but also included community youth to experience agriculture, animals, technology, science and fun. The fair board met following the conclusion and decided to increase a few activities and maintain the traditional events. They would also like to enhance the general and home economic project participation by switching activity scheduling to accommodate more youth and parents. The livestock sale posted over \$83,000 from community members and this is another example of the importance of valuable youth programming. We will continue to work by the motto, after 108 years it is never too late to participate and we'll all jump right in to make the upcoming fairs even stronger.

Prowers County sent over 40 projects or animals to State Fair competition. All exhibitors did a wonderful job representing the diversity of youth interests and programming available through our volunteer leaders. They received many champions, reserve champions, blues and more.

### Holly Gateway Fair

The Holly Fair is a community fair with the intention of bringing together members in a competitive spirit through open classes, livestock and even horse races. Youth competed in open, 4-H, FFA and livestock classes. Holly also serves as another opportunity for 4-H youth to complete their projects by displaying them in another venue within the county. Members brought in foods, visual arts, financial champion displays and livestock. From all accounts open classes were up and that demonstrates local investment and interest in showcasing Prowers County creativity, production and over 100 years of tradition.

## Food Preservation in the Valley

Many folks put in a garden for the first time in their life or perhaps for the first time in a long time. Some of these folks wanted to learn how to enjoy their bounty all year long by learning food preservation techniques.

In July and August, agents Jean Justice and Kaye Kazsa conducted two day-long canning workshops.

In July, ten local women spent the day in Eads either updating their rusty skills or learning new skills if they were beginners. We even had a 12 year old attend with her grandmother. A call from the grandmother that evening said her granddaughter had a ball and looks forward to helping preserve their family's produce.

In August ten women of varying ages spent the day in Ordway learning food preservation skills. At least five of these women had never canned a thing in their life but as a result of the workshop definitely plan to do so in the future.

## Family & Consumer Science



Classes included the “how and why” of safe food preservation in the home. Participants canned meat, green beans, tomatoes and made jelly. Although there are other methods of preserving foods such as freezing and drying, time restraints didn’t allow hands on experience with these. However, while their foods were processing participants did watch videos on the correct techniques for freezing and drying.

All in all they were fun packed days of learning ways to improve the health of our families with home grown and preserved foods.

## Dining with Diabetes

During September another class of “Dining With Diabetes” was offered to the residents of Otero and Crowley Counties. There were eight participants who learned about eating properly to control their diabetes. This class is especially helpful for those who are newly diagnosed with diabetes or for those having trouble putting their dietary recommendations to work. This particular class was a “family affair” as we had several members from an extended family attend to give support to their loved one with Diabetes. For those individuals who are suffering with chronic diseases such as Diabetes, family support is crucial.

During the four week class participants have a chance to taste appropriately modified foods that will help them control their glucose levels. They learn simple changes they can make to improve their diet.

After four weeks of classes, most of the participants had already made behavioral changes in their eating habits and lost weight which is also important in keeping diabetes under control. A six month reunion is scheduled to follow up on those behavioral changes.

Because there is such a high incidence of Diabetes in the Arkansas Valley, and because the Center for Disease control now considers diabetes an epidemic, we feel this program is very pertinent to our community.

## Las Animas School Lunch Program

School Lunch Program employees of the Las Animas schools increased their knowledge of meal planning and nutrition at an in-service training given by Agents Kasza and Justice in early August. Participants were especially interested in the portion on reading labels, and indicated they learned to read labels more closely. With a small class of just six personnel, we used a very interactive teaching style, leading to much interesting discussion.

The classes were the second phase of this project. Earlier, Kasza and Justice had evaluated school lunch menus from spring 2009, and made recommendations to the program manager to lower fat, salt and sugar, and increase nutrients while making meals more appealing. As a follow-up, we will compare 2010 menus with the 2009 menus.





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## A note from the Area Director—Jean E. Justice

Summer and fairs are once again a fading memory as we start into the fall season. As you can see from this report we once again had seven very successful county fairs.

Unfortunately, our “full staff” didn’t last too long. Scott Brase, our Area Cropping Systems Agent, left us in July to join his uncle in the insurance business. However, we did get permission from Dr. Young to fill this critical position without waiting a year or more. Applications were due September 28 and we had no applications. The deadline was extended to Oct. 12 and we then had one applicant who is actually interviewing for a similar position on the Western slope. Therefore, CSU has decided the position will have to be re-advertised. Under these conditions, interviews will not happen until after the first of the year. I realize this isn’t the news you wanted to hear, but there is nothing else that can be done under the circumstances.

We all realize that our economy isn’t the best right now, and that budgets are tight at all levels of government. We just want to reiterate how appreciative we are that our county partners feel that they are getting value for their dollars and continue to fund Extension in our Area. I believe we have one of the best “teams” of agents in the state and they will continue to provide your communities with relevant and pertinent educational programming because of your support.

THANK YOU from the entire “Southeast Area Team”.

Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Colorado State University is implied.

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