Partnership with City of Arvada to Give 4-H Animals a Home

The CSU Extension, 4-H Program in Jefferson County has a new partnership with the City of Arvada on the city’s Moore Farm property at 72nd and Ward Rd.

4-H members have the opportunity to keep a steer, chickens and bees at the farm property. This really opens up the opportunities for 4-H members who live in residential neighborhoods to keep animals. The youth who are not able to keep these animals at their homes may apply to participate. This gives them a hands-on experience that they wouldn’t be able to have without this partnership.

Sarah Liepold, a 1st year 4-H member has been selected as the recipient of the 1st steer to be housed at the farm. Sarah has named her steer Fezzik, and is doing really well with leading and combing him in preparation for the steer show and sale at the County Fair in August.

Sarah’s steer is currently half sponsored thanks to Mahnke Autobody in Golden and Arvada. No one says it better than Sarah: “When Fezzik got there, I was so excited. Glen [4-H Livestock Superintendent] showed me how to brush Fezz and how to tie a good knot. I go to the farm twice a day to talk to Fezz and feed him.”

Applications are open for 4-H members to keep Chickens and Bees on the Property as well! Anyone who would like to meet Fezzik and learn more about this amazing partnership should contact Extension 303.272.6620.

Cottage Food Classes take off

Growing Cottage Foods “industries” that want to ensure the safety of food produced in home kitchens has peaked interest in classes offered as a multi-county effort for Jefferson, Arapahoe and Boulder counties. Forty participants attended the class held on the Jeffco Fairgrounds in March.

A series of workshops on Cottage Food safety held in each county office attracted local residents with an interest in how to safely operate a food business from their home kitchen. Taking the three-hour class and passing the test meet the state requirements to operate such a business.

As a result of questions during the classes another series related to the business side of operating a home kitchen will begin soon.
Symposium Responds to Gardeners Ready to Beat Winter

When the sun shines in January gardeners are ready to dig in! It may be too early to plant in the garden, but there is always a right time to learn new techniques.

Some 136 interested gardeners flocked to the Fairgrounds and the CSU Extension Spring Gardening Symposium in January. Participants were extremely satisfied with the level of teaching at the presentations and reported that what they learned will change how they garden.

Topics at the symposium: Building Your Terroir; Going Organic; Insects and Disease; Saving Seeds as if your life Depended on it; Top ten Vegetables to Grow on the Front Range, and; Top 5 Best Tips for Seed Starting Success. Jefferson County Master Gardeners taught the classes and answered questions.

Getting Ready to Garden: Think Seeds!

A first ever Seed Swap in February brought 55 interested gardeners to swap seeds they had saved and learn about seeds brought in by others. Lots of energy and excitement surrounded the event and a related partnership with Jeffco Libraries.

There will be a spring launch of a Seed Library at the Golden library. The primary goal of a seed library is to share heirloom seeds with the community to enable them to produce their own food. The Seed Library will offer the five easiest seeds to save: beans, lettuce, peas, peppers and tomatoes.

Library patrons who want to participate will be asked to check out three seeds for every one plant they want to grow. Participants will also receive guidelines for seed saving. At the end of the season, participants will be asked to bring back twice the number of seeds they checked out. Seed saving classes will be offered by CSU Extension in April and June.

4-H Membership Expanding

The 4-H year is well underway with 336 youth members (up from 312 last year) and 32 pending enrollments in the 4-H program as of mid-March. The program has 121 adult volunteer 4-H leaders with more pending approval.

Early 2015 activities that have drawn interest in 4-H programs include:
- **School tours at the National Western Stock Show.** Several 4-H members and the two agents from Jefferson County joined other counties in greeting school busses each day for school tours of the show. Nearly 17,000 school children were able to visit the stock show through this opportunity. (See one thank you note below.)

- **Leadership Development Conference** in Denver in January was attended by six 4-H members and 4-H Agent, Barbie Garnett, to
learn leadership skills with a focus on 14-18 year old members.

- **4-H Day at the Capitol** on January 23 (see photo attached) gave five 4-H members, three leaders, and 4-H Agent Lisa Sholten, time to visit with Colorado legislative leaders about 4-H and youth development.
- **Youth Fest leadership camp** in February was attended by five 4-H members attended. The camp for 9-13 year olds focuses on leadership skills. A leader acted as chaperone for this group attending the camp in Larkspur.

- **The 4-H Western Heritage Project** combines a comprehensive study of the Old West with the fastest growing shooting sports discipline in the world – western action shooting. The purpose of this project is to provide an avenue for 4-H members and adult leaders to experience the lifestyles and cultures of the Old West from the period of around 1860-1900 through a living history approach to learning while instilling the concepts of gun safety and personal responsibility. Members dress in Old West clothing, shoot replica firearms of the frontier period, and expand their knowledge of U.S. history. Leaders in Jefferson County became certified to instruct a pilot of two shooting sports disciplines which are slated to become official state projects next year: .22 Pistol and the Western Heritage Project.

Keeping current with interests of today’s youth also encourages participation in 4-H. In January, the Jeffco 4-H program added ten LEGO EV3 Core Sets to the robotics program supported with a donation of four laptops from a 4-H leader and six more on the way. By providing updated equipment Robotics members can explore more deeply into the world of LEGO robotics! Peaking their interest on January 26, the robotics group had a guest speaker, David Long, from School of Mines to talk about robotic engineering and design. He brought a couple robots that were larger in scale than the Lego robots! *(See photo below.)*
Summer Camp Registration Soars, Published

Registration for ENOR 4-H environmental day camps has soared with these popular summer camps quickly filling. Compared to 2014, camp registration is up nearly 9% as of the end of March.

The impact of the camps on youth and learning out-of-doors is reflected in a recently published book by BJ Meadows, one of the founders of the camp. Reflections includes a chapter about ENOR.

Book Cover

Building Farmers Joint Program Attracts Jeffco prospective farmers

Five Jeffco residents participated in a joint program with Denver and Arapahoe counties for Building Farmers. Class participants met for 8 weeks learning the details of establishing a farm business and how to create a business plan. Each participant presented their plan to the class on the final day and received feedback. CSU campus staff, experienced small farmers and county extension directors provided the programming. Participants ranged from those who simply have a dream to those who have land and are on their way to establishing their business.

Native Plant Masters Magnify Impacts

Results are in from the Native Plant Master® Program (NPM) and they are significant. Last year, 440 citizens were trained in the Jefferson County NPM Program where they learned about native plants, sustainable landscaping and invasive species.

The impact of the program was magnified by 356 volunteers who donated 1,489 hours to educate others using information they learned in NPM. These volunteers educated an additional 7,647 citizens, further enlarging the circle of citizens who understand the important role natives play, their potential for reducing water use and other inputs in sustainable landscapes and threats that non-native invasives pose to Jefferson County’s Open Space and other natural areas. A total of $21,544 was brought in from user fees which are used to support the program.

NPM provides hands on training that helps county citizens solve their real world challenges including Colorado’s drought-prone climate, the increasing cost of water and control of invasive weeds.