

IMPACT



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“Mission Thanksabunch” Saying Thank You Makes a Difference

The Situation

Recognizing and thanking contributors is crucial to maintaining community support for 4-H programs. Market animal projects are a large part of many county 4-H programs and finding ways to retain existing buyers and recruiting new ones can be a challenge. In addition, it is important to recognize all 4-H supporters regardless of how much they contribute or what projects they support.

According to the 2000 Idaho census, Minidoka county has lower wages than some of the other counties in Idaho and unemployment rates have remained high over the past decade. Minidoka county employment is heavily dependent on food processing—primarily potato and sugar processing. Simplot announced the closure of the potato processing plant in Heyburn in 2002. This closure displaced approximately 600 employees and had a negative impact on area businesses. It has been estimated that the Simplot closure will result in \$200 million of economic loss in the Mini-Cassia area. Despite the struggle with economic growth and poor agricultural prices, businesses and individuals in Minidoka County have continued to strongly support 4-H youth development programs.

Longtime 4-H supporter Max Twiss from Les Schwab Tire in Paul, Idaho, says he continues to support 4-H because he appreciates the work ethic that is developed by 4-H kids, and feels the sale is the best use of his advertising dollars. Past 4-H members are now doing business with his tire store.



4-H members and parents prepare a free breakfast before the 4-H market animal sale at the Minidoka County Fair.

Our Response

A project called “Mission Thanksabunch” began in Minidoka County in 2000 to thank market animal sale buyers. Mission Thanksabunch is about thanking buyers, not demanding their support. This has been a great opportunity for 4-H youth to personally show their appreciation. Youth enrolled in a market animal project must visit a buyer from the previous year’s sale, thank them for their past support and invite them back to the current year’s fair and livestock sale. In addition, they present a gift from the 4-H/FFA Livestock Sale Committee, a sale brochure and breakfast tickets. Youth must also invite one additional business or individual that did not purchase an animal last year. Gifts, sale brochures and breakfast tickets are also provided. At the fair, youth have their photograph taken with their animal. Immediately after their animal is sold they deliver the picture to the buyer and sincerely thank them for supporting the sale and the 4-H program.

The mission is complete when the youth sends a thank you to their buyer. This must be done before livestock checks can be picked up.

Program Outcomes

The number of livestock buyers at the Minidoka County Fair has increased from 116 to 142, a 22% increase from 2000 to 2004. Sale receipts for 2004 have increased by 84% for this same period, reaching an all time high of \$225,510.30 for 185 animals in 2004. The number of new buyers, which also includes those who have not bought in the last five years, rose by 43 in 2001, 36 in 2002, 39 in 2003 and 33 in 2004. These statistics support that making the extra effort to say “thank you” works in communities.



4-H teens thank the community by decorating and donating a tree to the local Red Cross Christmas fundraiser.

Mission Thanksabunch has evolved to include much more than the original intention. The 4-H/FFA Livestock Sale Committee budgets \$2,300 each year to purchase gifts, newspaper advertising that advertises the sale and thanks individual buyers in the community, cookies for the buyers at the livestock sale and wooden plaques for the sale buyers each year.

Mission Thanksabunch was originated primarily by the Minidoka County Livestock Sale Committee for livestock projects but has crossed over to every aspect of the Minidoka County 4-H program. The Bridal Brats 4-H club sends Christmas cards to all 4-H supporters. A free breakfast, organized by the Hogs ‘n Heifers 4-H club, is provided to anyone interested in buying at the fair.

The Minidoka County 4-H Teen Association has become involved by helping at the fair sale and donating a Christmas tree to the Red Cross Caring and Sharing Fair, with all proceeds going to support the Red Cross. The county Extension Office, encourages 4-H youth and adults to serve the community, maintains a list of names and addresses of 4-H supporters and coordinates Mission Thanksabunch.



Mission Thanksabunch incorporates several ways to thank area businesses and individuals who support the 4-H program in Minidoka County.

Future Plans: The Minidoka County 4-H Program and the 4-H/FFA Livestock Sale Committee will continue Mission Thanksabunch, and will continue supporting the community through local service.

For More Information

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