Lemhi, Custer & Butte counties celebrate National Agriculture Week

The Situation
2008, Shannon Williams, Extension Educator, met with her advisory committee to determine projects and programs for 2009. They requested she educate the public about where their food comes from during National Agriculture Week. The committee wanted citizens to make the connection between hamburgers and the cattle they see on the range and in pastures in Lemhi County.

Our Response
To respond to this request, we researched past Ag Week programming in Lemhi County. The National Agriculture Week web site also provided examples of activities and programs. An Ag Week Committee was formed with representatives from the Extension Office, Lemhi County Cattlemen, Lemhi County Cattlewomen and the Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District. The goal of the week’s activities was to teach people that their food comes from agriculture. All of the committee members had great ideas and volunteered to coordinate the activities. They also helped by organizing sponsors for the various activities.

As plans were developed, Custer and Butte County Extension offices were invited to collaborate in Ag Week. Each of these counties also found partners to help them with their Ag Week activities.

To reach youth and adults it was decided a variety of methods would need to be used. Using a two pronged approach, agriculture education opportunities for youth and awareness events for adults were held.

Three grants have been received from the Idaho Beef Council to support an awareness breakfast. In 2009, the grant was for $1,000, in 2010 for $1402 and the grant for Ag Week 2011 is for $2,500. Donations from United Dairymen, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Farm Bureau, Local Cattlemen and Cattlewomen organizations, and private citizens helped fund educational supplies, radio trivia prizes and part of the breakfast.

Preschool and Kindergarten classes received Ag Week Education packets. To learn about agriculture through active learning, elementary students disected a Snickers® candy bar, participated in a nutrition lesson called “Got Calcium,” a wildlife forensics activity and an agriculture web activity.

Salmon Middle School youth participated in a “Science Day” program including visits to the following stations: beef, sheep, swine, range, soil, water, bee, goat, equipment, vegetable, noxious weed, forage, and aquaculture. Salmon High School participated in a “Barn Yard Olympics” assembly focusing...
on local agriculture education and a skill contest in 2009. Agriculture careers were the topic in 2010.

To educate adults in Salmon, local agriculture industry volunteers manned a display of beef product information and answered consumer questions. The display was set up at the local grocery store. The group educated adults on the quality, nutrition and safety of beef.

To raise agriculture awareness a theme day “dress up” contest was held for local Salmon businesses and Salmon High School and a radio trivia contest was held. “Century Ranches” that have been in operation for 100 years in Lemhi County were featured in photo displays created by the Lemhi County Cattlewomen and were displayed in local downtown Salmon businesses.

Educational programming in Custer County included presentations and activities in Mackay Elementary School, Stanley Elementary, Challis Elementary and Challis High School. With the assistance of the Custer Soil and Water Conservation District, Custer County Weed Department, Challis and Mackay FFA Chapters, they presented school assemblies, made cow puppets, food pyramid activities, ice cream in a bag, and tortillas in a bag.

Three communities, Salmon, Challis and Arco hosted a free drive-thru breakfast open to the public in 2009 and 2010. The drive-thru breakfast was modeled after the Steele Memorial Hospital Auxiliary’s Breast Cancer Awareness Week breakfast. The Idaho Beef Council requested the breakfast contain beef and a local catering company developed a breakfast burrito made with beef sausage. Participants drove through stations staffed by local cattlemen, cattlewomen and FFA youth where they received a burrito, apple, string cheese and milk. They also received an insulated lunch bag in 2009 and a reusable grocery sack in 2010. The bags were filled with brochures about agriculture.

Program Outcomes

In 2009 Salmon, Challis and Arco served 550 breakfasts combined. In 2010, 325 breakfasts were served in Lemhi County and 150 were served in both Arco and Challis for a total of 625 breakfasts. Volunteer agriculture industry servers have become more efficient and more people are served in a shorter period of time. Participants now call to gain more information on the breakfasts. Breakfast patrons enjoy meeting and visiting with people in agriculture industries during the activities. School participation has grown with partnerships between the Idaho Fish and Game, Extension Nutrition Program, Lemhi County Cattlewomen, Lemhi County Extension Office, Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District and other agriculture industry volunteers. The Salmon youth Ag Week program reached over 900 youth in 2010. Participants in the “Science Days” have shared three things they learned at each station and discussed them upon return to class. Over 65 volunteers came together to make Ag Week successful in Lemhi County. Ag Awareness programming has reached almost 4,000 adults in Lemhi County through radio, displays and the breakfast in 2010.

Future plans include serving more breakfasts at more locations. In 2011, two new drive through breakfasts will be added in Mackay and Leadore. Plans also include hosting an educational program at every school within the Butte, Custer and Lemhi counties area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Shannon Williams, Extension Educator
University of Idaho Extension, Lemhi County
200 Fulton St., Ste 202
Salmon, Idaho 83467
Phone: 208.756.2815 ext.283
Fax: 208.756.6915
E-mail: shannonw@uidaho.edu

Katie Hoffman, Extension Educator
University of Idaho Extension, Lemhi County
200 Fulton St., Ste 202
Salmon, ID 83467
Phone: 208.756.2815 ext. 301
Fax: 208.756.6915
E-mail: khoffman@uidaho.edu

Sarah Baker, Extension Educator
University of Idaho Extension, Custer County
PO Box 160
Challis, ID 83226
Phone: 208.879.2344
Fax: 208.879.6690
E-mail: sdbaker@uidaho.edu

Chad Cheney, Extension Educator
University of Idaho Extension, Butte County
Pox 832
Arco, ID 83213
Phone: 208.527.8587
Fax: 208.527.8587
E-mail: ccheney@uidaho.edu