Jerome County 4-H Crops Education Program

The Situation
Jerome County has a well organized and established 4-H Livestock Program. This program educates youth about animal production (beef, dairy, horse, sheep and swine), the responsibility associated with raising animals and how to publicly demonstrate their showmanship. In addition to livestock projects many youth have shown interest in crop production projects. Previous to 1993, youth with crops projects had little exposure to formal education in crop production. Also, these youth had little opportunity to display their personal talents and presentation skills other than exhibiting beets at the Jerome County Fair.

Our Response
In 1993 we established the Jerome County 4-H Crops Education Program to formally educate youth about basic crop physiology and production. Through a series of six (6) monthly educational seminars and workshops we were able to develop a better understanding and appreciation for crop production in nine (9) 4-H youth, their parents and their club leaders. This program included the following sessions:

- Sugar beets and wheat: Budgeting, soil testing, seed quality and planting
- Soils, soil types and their characteristics
- Irrigation scheduling and weed control
- Beneficial and pest insect identification and management
- Nutrient management
- Sugar beet petiole sampling and fair preparation; and last irrigation of wheat

In July, the youth had an opportunity to publicly present their project during the Jerome County 4-H Crops Projects Tour. These presentations were evaluated and awards were given for the top three project presentations. These presentations provided the youth with invaluable public speaking experience.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors
Although most of the educational sessions were taught by the Jerome County Agricultural Agent, two of the sessions were taught by invited experts. An Amalgamated Sugar Company field man taught petiole sampling and demonstrated how to prepare beets for exhibition at the fair. The U of I Extension

The University of Idaho is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educational institution. University of Idaho, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Idaho counties cooperating.
Entomologist taught the session on insect identification and management. The Amalgamated Sugar Company also generously sponsored a picnic lunch and provided awards.

**Achievements**

The number of youth in 4-H crops projects increased 12% from 1992 to 1993. Youth, parents and leaders involved in the crops projects were educated on a wide range of topics that were timely and well received. Youth were able to interact with University of Idaho and ag. industry representatives. All youth and adults involved had positive comments on the educational and public speaking opportunities provided though this program.

**The Future**

Next year's format will be similar with the inclusion of one or two field trips to major commodity receiving, grading and/or processing facilities in the Magic Valley. The Amalgamated Sugar Company has become supportive of the Jerome County 4-H Crops Education Program and wants to be actively involved in recruiting additional youth to participate in 1994.

**For More Information**

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