CALVING SEASON

BY KACEY RIEDEL COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR

The moisture we received this past winter, while excellent help in reprieving the drought, has been the cause of heartache in other areas. There have been road closures throughout the state, programs had to be canceled and rescheduled, but more importantly it has affected agricultural producers particularly cattle producers this calving season. Seeing what is happening throughout the country with flooding and storms is heartbreaking.

While this calving season has been trying it is heartwarming to see the relief efforts for flood and storm effected ranchers. Loads of hay have been delivered, the Kansas Governor even "signed an executive order to waive permit fees for truckers hauling hay through Kansas into parts of Nebraska that have been affected by flooding." The Nebraska Farm Bureau has set up a 501c3 and an informational exchange portal and the Nebraska National Guard has used military helicopters to drop hay for cattle stranded by the flood waters.

While the weather has not been as severe as some of these other areas, such as Nebraska, South Dakota, and other Midwestern states the agricultural community locally has been affected as well. Just this year I personally have already lost over 20% of my calves due to the weather and I am not even done calving. I know I am not alone in having an increased number of fatalities. The weather this calving season has caused many producers to be creative in finding ways to get calves out of the cold. I have had numerous calves in the house trying to get body temperatures back up and played musical cows, shuffling mama cows and baby calves around the few covered structures. We even purchased five dairy calves to graft on to mothers who lost their calves during the storms.

Even as temperatures warm up cattle, producers are not out of the storm just yet. There are post-blizzard implications producers should take into consideration. The Fence Post shared an insightful article titled "Veterinarians say ranchers now need to turn to post-blizzard care for cows and calves." The article stated there are increased chances of down cows, scour outbreaks and frostbite. The article has been shared to our Facebook page and can be found at: www.thefencepost.com/news/blizzard-and-flooding-strikes-during-calving-season/. The local FSA Office recommends producers bring in documentation of losses as part of the Livestock Indemnity Program. See the March 18, 2019 Colorado FSA Disaster Bulletin at: content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFSA/bulletins/2377bbc
4-H Update

BY ANDREA JETER 4-H COORDINATOR

Spring is here in full force for the 4-H program. Babies are springing up everywhere. Who will be raising this year’s Grand Champion animals? We have been busy in the office setting up project meetings and are already saying “wow only 4 and a half months until fair!”

We held our 2nd annual Rocky Mountain Oyster Fry Dinner on March 9, 2019 at the Lewis Arriola Community Center. We served 237 ticket holders and made over $5000.00 for both the FFA and 4-H Stakeholder Scholarship funds. The Silent Auction, Desert Auction and Live Auction were very successful. We would like to thank all of the donors, sponsors and Families that attended this year and we look forward to collaborating with the Cortez FFA Chapter for the 2020 3rd Annual event!

Speaking of Stakeholders scholarships, this year’s scholarship applications are due in the Extension Office on April 26, 2019 by 4:00pm. No late applications will be accepted. Stakeholders scholarships are open to graduating seniors that have completed 6 years in a Market Livestock project and are selling an animal their senior year. These scholarships are $1000.00 and if funds are available have the opportunity to become a 2 year funding source. The Jan Sennhenn General Project scholarship is funded by the Montezuma County 4-H Council and is open to graduating seniors enrolled in a general project, i.e. foods, scrap booking, woodworking etc. These Scholarships are for $500.00. Members can not apply for both Scholarships. For more information please contact Andrea at 970-565-3123 or email at andrea.jeter@colostate.edu.

4-H SHOOTING SPORTS GRANT

BY ANDREA JETER

Our Shooting Sports Program is a proud recipient of the Friends of the NRA foundation grant totally more than $9000.00. This year’s grant is being used to purchase a cargo container to improve our Archery range, the purchase of 4 .22 rifles for members to use, more 3-D targets and money to send 5 new Shooting Sports leaders to Rifle for a weekend training. The local Friends of the NRA banquet is being held on April 26, 2019 and we will be in attendance to accept our check and publicly thank the organization for the support they provide.
TEACHING BEST PRACTICES
BY ANDREA JETER

As we move into spring, many of our members are acquiring their livestock project animals. 4-H members are required by State policy to attend a MQA (meat quality assurance) training at least twice during their time in 4-H. Once as a junior member and once as a senior member. This MQA training provides members with information to help provide the safest, healthiest and highest quality product they can. The MQA training is based upon the “Best Practices” policies and includes
- #1 VCPR or veterinarian/Client/Patient relationship
- #2 Establishing and implementing a health management plan
- #3 Responsible antibiotic use
- #4 Proper handling of animal health products
- #5 Proper feed processing protocols
- #6 Establishment of effective Animals Identification, medical records and withdrawal times
- #7 Environmental Stewardship
- #8 Workplace safety
- #9 Proper animals handling and care
- #10 Utilize tools for continuous improvement

By facilitating activities based upon these “Best Production Practices” we hope that our members will increase their knowledge of their projects and what it takes to produce a quality product for our consumers in an ethical manner. We will be utilizing the West Slope Meat Quality Trailer to provide these activities and resources to our member on April 27, 2019.

Thank You 4-H Leaders and Volunteers
BY ANDRE JETER

National Volunteer week is April 7-13, 2019. We cannot thank our Volunteers enough! Without them we would not have a program. If you know a 4-H leader, thank them for what they contribute to our youth. Want to become a volunteer? We are still looking for adults knowledgeable in leathercraft and photography specifically and will always have room for other leaders/volunteers. Come by or contact the Extension Office to find out how YOU can become part of our 4-H Family.
BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NOXIOUS WEEDS THIS SPRING

BY BONNIE LOVING
MONTEZUMA COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED DEPARTMENT

HAPPY SPRING my fellow stewards of the land. We are so grateful for all of this moisture, and we hope it keeps coming! We are anticipating a busy noxious weed season! Some noxious weed species we are anticipating that will have higher populations than in previous years are Hoary cress (Whitetop), Downy brome (Cheatgrass), Musk thistle, and Poison hemlock. So prepare yourselves with your shovels and/or backpack sprayers. In addition, keep in mind re-seeding is very important, getting desirable grasses established in areas with Downy brome or Musk thistle will help keep these noxious weeds at bay. However, when you are dealing with a perennial weed such as Hoary cress, you need to control the noxious weeds before you are able to get a desirable species established.

Duff Millipede

We recently had a call about brown spots on a ceiling in someone’s sun room. Thanks to a great video and a couple of pictures we were able to identify the spots as duff millipedes.

According CSU Extension fact sheet “Millipedes, Centipedes and Sowbugs” by W.S. Cranshaw, “The duff millipede is an unusual species found in some foothills areas. It reaches only 1/8 inch. It is covered with fine bristles and has a tuft of hairs protruding from the hind end. Superficially, it resembles tiny carpet beetle larvae. Close inspection shows it has far more legs than carpet beetles. Invasions can involve hundreds of individuals, which crawl over walls, floors and counters. Often they are concentrated near areas of high moisture, such as bathrooms, around kitchen sinks, and near outdoor hot tubs and faucets. Although sometimes a significant nuisance, they do not reproduce or survive long in a home. Instead, they develop outdoors on decaying plant matter, fungi and algae. Prevent invasions by sealing the structure. No effective insecticides have been identified to reduce invasions of duff millipedes. It is suggested to keep the area around foundations clean of cover and sources of moisture.” The full fact sheet can be found at: https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/insect/05552.pdf

We also have funding for a Russian olive project. We will be hiring a two person seasonal crew dedicated to managing Russian olive and Salt cedar on private properties at the low cost of $60/hour. This fee includes labor for both crewmembers and includes cost of herbicide. Normal contractors for this type of work would charge $150 / hour for two-crew members’ labor not including herbicide. Therefore, landowners will be saving at least $100/hour by taking advantage of our Russian olive crew. Contact the Montezuma County Noxious Weed Department, 970-565-0580, for more information.

Hoary cress. Photo by Bonnie Loving

NOXIOUS WEEDS, GRASSES AND BUGS OH MY!
ID WORKSHOPS COMING TO FOZZIE’S FARM
19560 Rd W Lewis, Colorado 81327
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
JUNE 8TH, WEED ID
JUNE 12TH, GRASS ID
SOUTHWEST SEED AND SOUTHWESTERN CSU RESEARCH CENTER
JUNE 29TH, BUG ID
MONTEZUMA COUNTY CSU EXTENSION

If you are interested in insect, noxious weed or native grasses come out to our weekend ID workshops we are planning with the County Noxious Weed Department in June. These workshops will be a combination of presentation and in the field ID. Bring in samples to the Extension office the day before or to Fozzie’s the day of the workshops to be ID’d by the same great professionals presenting the courses. For weed and grass samples; the ideal sample is an entire plant with seed head and roots intact. If this is not possible, bring as many plant parts as possible (i.e. seed head, leaves, roots, seeds, etc.) to increase the chances of an accurate identification. Place fresh specimen in a Ziplock bag and seal it. Do not add wet paper towels or water. The fresher the sample the easier it will be to identify. For insect samples, bring a “bug” (Insects, arachnids, and other creepy, crawling, creatures). Place them in a small container. They can be alive or dead. Please do not smash them (makes ID pretty tough). If you like, they can be frozen (watch out, they may come alive when they thaw out!) or you can kill them by putting a cotton ball with a little rubbing alcohol in their container.
DROUGHT IMPACTS IN THE COUNTY

BY KACEY RIEDEL

Spring has finally arrived and with it some new snow, great news for the drought conditions we were in last summer. Back on April 20, 2018 Montezuma County was placed in a primary D4 exceptional drought. Precipitation including snowpack for 2018 based off precipitation data from the Yellow Jacket CoAgMet station, SNOTEL and HALFFAST stations in the area, and climate data from NOAA Regional Climate Center/SC-ACIS 2018 was about half the average. In addition, last year there were higher than average summer temperatures with 5°F higher than normal maximum temperatures March-August, and almost twice the number of 90°F days June-August. These high temperatures and lack of moisture greatly suppressed growth of forage grasses, particularly cool season grasses, which are prevalent in Montezuma County. Water was turned off early for many irrigated properties and several cattle producers had to haul water to their summer grazing permits all summer. In response to the drought conditions last year the Colorado Drought Mitigation and Response Plan was activated for the agricultural sector May 2, 2018 and remains in effect. More information can be found at the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) website at: http://cwb.state.co.us/water-management/drought/Pages/DroughtResponse.aspx.

Luckily this winter has brought with it significant moisture. According to the March 2019 Drought Update by the CWCB there has been impressive snow pack, currently 150% of normal for all of the southern basins. The moisture and temperatures have led to significant drought improvements for this area. D3 and D4 drought indices have been removed from Colorado as of March 29th. April, May and June are predicted to be wetter-than-average thanks to El Nino conditions. Streamflow forecasts are near to above normal throughout the state. According to the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center, the April-July unregulated inflow forecast for McPhee Reservoir is 163% of average.

Even with these above average moisture levels there are still implications from the drought. Reservoir storage is about 83% statewide. Even though levels are expected to increase as runoff season approaches, according to CWBS “the Southwest basins of the San Miguel, Dolores, Animas & San Juan, and Gunnison remain the lowest in the state at 58 and 63 percent of normal, respectively.”

A Joint Water Availability & Flood Task Force Meeting will be held on April 25, 2019 at Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Additional information can be found at www.cwb.state.co.us or by contacting Ben Wade at Ben.Wade@state.co.us. In addition, the Extension office is teaming up with the County to host an Agriculture Drought Resiliency workshop. The workshop will be held October 17th, at the County Annex, after this year’s growing season. Topics will include water and drought resources and programs available for risk mitigation. There will also be a growing season report along with climate and precipitation predictions for next year.
RESCHEDULED PROGRAMS

A Lasting Legacy

BY KACEY RIEDEL

Due to adverse weather in February, the Lasting Legacy: Estate and Succession Planning workshop for Farm and Ranch Families at the county fairgrounds was canceled. The workshop has since been rescheduled for May 2nd at the First National Bank of Cortez from 3:00pm-8:00pm. The program will be presented by CSU Agriculture & Business Management Economist Jeffery Tranel and Archuleta County Extension Director Robin Young. Registration cost is $25 per person and dinner will be provided. San Juan Basin Farm Bureau has graciously offered to be a sponsor for the event.

The Lasting Legacy workshop will be a great opportunity to answer questions about estate and succession planning. The workshop is set up to be interactive, fun and educational. It will teach participants about transferring finances and real estate, and help in addressing important end-of-life decisions.

Photo by Kacey Riedel

Home Ignition Zone

BY KACEY RIEDEL

Also do to the winter storms the Home Ignition Zone workshop was canceled. It too has been rescheduled. The new date is April 20th 9:00am-5:00pm at the Mancoes Public Library. The event will be hosted by Wildlife Adaptive Partnership in partnership with Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, Four Corners Board of Realtors, and the Montezuma County CSU Extension Office.

The Workshop will be a great way for community members to learn how to identify a home’s wildfire vulnerabilities. Registration is $30 which includes lunch and handbooks, which can be paid the day of the event. Realtors can even receive 7 CE credits for attending.

Two factors have emerged as the primary determinants of a home’s ability to survive a wildfire: the quality of the defensible space and the structure’s ignitability. Together, these two factors create a concept called the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ). A home can survive a wildfire by removing ignition sources within the HIZ.

Participants will learn how to recognize the many vulnerabilities homes have to radiation and ember showers from wildfires.

Photo by Kacey Riedel

Our Services

Beyond programming we offer a variety of services to the community. One of the services currently provided through the office is pressure canner gauge testing. We also proctor commercial pest applicator license, and Serv-Safe exams. We have equipment that we rent out to farmers and ranchers for soil and hay testing. Also for a small fee we provide field visits upon request. In addition there are Regional STEM Kits available to schools. Visit our website for more details on each of the services available.
COLORADO MASTER GARDENER GRADUATION

BY TOM HOOTEN
The Colorado Master Gardener program in Montezuma County provides 11 weeks of intensive horticultural training to interested residents and industry professionals. Topics include Gardening (of course); Soils, Fertilizers, and Amendments; Tree planting and Tree care; Pruning; Insects; Plant diseases; Vegetables; Turf grass; Weeds; Small fruits; and others.
This April 11, twelve students will have completed the 11 week training. After passing the final exam, they will be certified Colorado Gardeners. Most of the students will continue as Colorado Master Gardener (CMG) volunteers. This will require the completion of 50 hours of educational volunteer work for each student in service to Montezuma County. Most of the projects involve community greening and gardening work such as with: Canyons of the Ancients Visitor and Museum Gardens, Community Connections, Four Corners National Monument, and Fozzie's Farm of the Montezuma Land Conservancy. CMGs will also be helping with the Cortez Farmers’ Market, providing information and answering questions. In addition, two employees of the local Intermountain Farmers Association Country Store on Highway 491 will have completed the training. The training will help increase the knowledge of the employees and help them to better help their customers.

SOIL TESTING

BY TOM HOOTEN
Spring is certainly “in the air” and this is always a good time to get your garden or farm soil tested. Testing materials and instructions are available at the Montezuma Extension Office, 103 N Chestnut in Cortez. We can help you with any questions you may have and also help in interpreting the soil analysis results. Putting in a new garden or farming some land that hasn’t had a soil test in many years? Need to establish a soil analysis “base-line” for the future? Stop by our office today and we can help!

RADON- A RADIOACTIVE HEALTH CONCERN

BY TOM HOOTEN
Radon, the invisible, radioactive gas from natural deposits of uranium and radium in the soil and bedrock, is an important health concern in Colorado and Montezuma and Dolores counties. Radon gas entering and accumulating in homes can damage human lungs and increase the risk of developing lung cancer.
Radon disclosure is required in Colorado Real Estate Transactions. Section N of the Environmental Conditions portion of the Colorado Seller’s Property Disclosure Form specifically lists Radon as a hazard that, if known by the seller to exist or ever have existed, must be disclosed. Even if not disclosed, informed buyers are having Radon tests performed when purchasing a home. If you love the home you are looking at, don’t let elevated Radon levels make you walk away from a deal. Testing and mitigating for Radon is easy and affordable.
A webcast on Radon and the Real Estate Professional will be held at the First National Bank, 2258 E Main, Cortez, on Tuesday, April 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. This free webcast is designed for Real Estate Professionals (who can earn 2 Continuing Education Credits for attending), however, every interested person is welcomed to attend. Call our office to pre-register.
SOUTHWESTERN COLORADO RESEARCH CENTER UPDATE

By Emily Lockard, CSU Southwestern Colorado Research Center Research Assistant

We are busy getting ready for the growing season at the Southwestern Colorado Research Center (SWCRC)! If you aren’t familiar with SWCRC, it is a 158-acre research farm about 15 miles north of Cortez that is a part of Colorado State University’s Agriculture Experiment Station. We conduct dryland and irrigated crop research. Many in the local community know about SWCRC from the three-acre demonstration orchard and annual U-picks. The orchard is maintained by CSU Extension in Dolores and Montezuma County as well as staff at SWCRC.

We have a lot of experiments planned for this year! A few to mention are: a legume trial funded by the Colorado Specialty Crop program looking at fall vs. spring plantings, irrigated vs. dryland and varieties of winter peas, lentils, fava beans, chickpeas and black-eyed peas; the national canola variety trial; spring, winter and spelt wheat trials funded by the Colorado Wheat Research Foundation; a coordinated wheat nitrogen study working with Utah State University on multiple sites in Colorado and Utah; potassium fertilization impacts on alfalfa production; a dry bean study funded by the Colorado Dry Bean Administrative Committee looking at the compatibility of seed inoculants and fungicide application; and a hemp trial using black/white plastic testing CBD levels in relation to irrigation levels.

Our big news this spring is that we have updated our website. It now has crop management resources and links to research reports on a variety of crops that SWCRC has conducted trials on. Our website is https://aes-swcrca.gsci.colostate.edu. We are also on Facebook @SWCOResearchCenter, Instagram @swcoresearchcenter and Twitter @SWCOAgResearch. We hope you find all of these to be an improved way to find information from SWCRC. As always you can also call or visit the Research Center! The number and address for the research Center are 970-562-4255, and 16898 Road Z Yellow Jacket, CO 81335.

Photos provided by the Southwestern Colorado Research Center
Upcoming Programs with CSU Extension
April 1, 2019

Serv-Safe Training
Date(s): Training 3: April Tuesday 9th - Wednesday 10th
Training 4: June Wednesday 19th - Thursday 20th
Time: Day 1 8:30am - 4:00pm
Day 2 9:00am - 3:00pm
Location: Public Health Department 106 W. North St. Cortez
Cost: $120 per person - course book and exam included (Different fees for other options available)
Visit eventbrite.com to register.

Cottage Foods
Date: Thursday May 23rd
Time: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: Public Health Department 106 W. North St. Cortez
Cost: $30 per person
Visit eventbrite.com to register.

Radon and the Real Estate Professional
Date: Tuesday April 9th
9:00 am - 11:00 am
Location: First National Bank of Cortez
2258 E Main St. Cortez
Call our office to Preregister
Cost: FREE

A Lasting Legacy: Estate and Succession Planning for Farm and Ranch Families
Date: May 2nd
Time: 3:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Location: First National Bank of Cortez
2258 E Main St. Cortez
Cost: $25 per person (dinner included)

Home Ignition Zone
Date: Saturday April 20th
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Location: Mancos Public Library
211 1st St. Mancos
Cost: $30 (Lunch and Workbook Included)
For more information call (206)697-2613

Weed, Grass and Bug ID Workshops
Time: 9:00 am - 11:00 pm
Location: Fozzie’s Farm 19760 Rd W, Lewis, Colorado 81327
Noxious Weed ID Date: Saturday June 8th
Grass ID Date: Saturday June 15th
Bug ID Date Saturday June 29th

Let us know if you would like to be emailed about upcoming Extension programs or information in the areas of:
1. Livestock,
2. Ag Economics / Business,
3. Gardening / Horticulture,
4. Pest Management / Water / Natural Resources / Wildfire,
5. Food Safety / Canning / Cooking,
6. 4-H / STEM / Youth Development

For more information on our programs call, email or stop by our office.

103 N. Chestnut St Cortez, CO 81321-3103
Phone: 970-565-3123
E-mail: coopext_montezuma@Mail.Colorstate.edu
Website: montezumacounty.org/web/departments/extension/

If you have a disability for which you seek an accommodation, please notify CSU Extension at least five (5) business days in advance of the event. Colorado State University Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.