



# UI Extension Education Trends 2002-03:

## 4-H and Youth Development

### Teaching the four Rs: Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic and Reality

**Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU)** projects that Americans between the ages of 12 and 19 spent \$172 billion in 2001, an average of \$104 per week per young adult.

With that kind of discretionary income, young people, like the rest of us, need to learn how to exercise discretion. UI extension educators are meeting that need with a program titled, "Welcome to the Real World." The course teaches young adults not only the realities of budgeting while they're in high school, but also how to budget when they're out of school.

Fremont County Extension Educator Janice Stimpson has students (literally) pulling jobs out of a hat, and budgeting based on their occupation's income. Students learn to deduct taxes, set aside savings, write checks for rent, car expenses, insurance, utilities, and groceries, and try to work with what's left over to buy clothes, entertain themselves, and cover unplanned expenses.

Extension Educator Lorie Dees has spread the program throughout Jefferson County. Marsha Hawkins, Extension educator, presents the program throughout Jerome County, and believes it is a fun way for kids to learn important lessons. "A lot of them decide that education and a higher paying career could have real value for them," she said.

Through the program, initiated in 1998, more than 2,000 students have learned how to live within their means. Establishing a savings account was identified by participants as the most important change they made as a result of the course.



#### 4-H Mentoring:

In space and on the ground

**Joe Eckroat**, an 11-year-old astronaut from Middleton, is old enough to realize the value of the 4-H mentoring relationship, at least as he sees it at the Ada County "Aerospace Exploration 4-H Day Camp."

"You don't get to do this very often, to have someone who's done something for a long time do it with you," said Eckroat, who participated in the camp last summer.

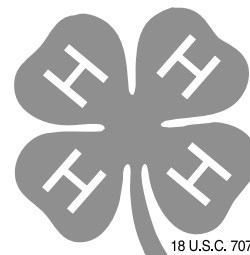
"They're learning something new through something fun," said Aerospace Exploration Camp Volunteer Instructor Brian Luckey, a model rocket builder since his own days in 4-H. "They're learning to think in ways that they don't learn in school."

The mentoring relationship fuels the Ada County Aerospace Camp and the several thousand other 4-H programs in place throughout Idaho.

<b>Residence of 4-H members:</b>	17%	Farms
	62%	Rural (less than 10,000)
	11%	Towns and small cities
	1%	Suburbs (of cities over 50,000)
	9%	Cities (50,000 or more)

*"4-H isn't just about winning or being a champion, but about being a helper and working together to make a difference. Community service plays a big role. For example, bundling up to go rake leaves for a sweet little old lady who bakes you cookies when your fingers are about to fall off. You may be cold from the weather, but you feel warm helping others. To me, it's all about having fun, learning something new, and making a difference."*

-Mariah Woodbury



# Ultrasound insights: New technology guides Idaho 4-Hers

In Idaho, ultrasound technology has moved out of the hospital and into the barn.

“There is no other state in the country that utilizes ultrasound technology to evaluate 4-H project animals to the extent that Idaho does,” said Jeff Goodwin, University of Idaho 4-H & Youth specialist. “Idaho is definitely on the cutting edge in the use of this technology in youth livestock projects.”

Goodwin recently conducted a survey of county Extension programs throughout the state, and discovered that 62% of county 4-H programs in Idaho use ultrasound technology in the educational process that culminates in marketable livestock competitions at county fairs and elsewhere.

County fair livestock judges themselves are also likely to have access to this technology, the research shows. Judges who have that information often use it to instruct the audience on how to use the ultrasound to correctly evaluate animals. Ultrasound measures meat and fat content and ratio, which determine just how marketable an animal is.

Extension workshops held throughout Idaho have helped 4-H students, teachers, and judges understand what the ultrasound measurements mean, and how they apply to animal industry standards.

When judged using ultrasound technology, animals are scanned and competitors can receive the data gathered by the scan immediately. 4-Hers are rewarded for raising animals that meet industry standards. Youth leaders can use the information as a barometer of the effectiveness of different selection, care, and feeding methods.

“It’s very interesting to see that not all of the bigger animals necessarily have the most fat or the biggest loin,” said Neil Simon, a Caribou County 4-H member. “I’m able to use the information that is given to help me determine what I can do next year with my hog. Am I feeding too much? Not exercising enough? Or do I need to check out the feed quality?”

A separate but highly compatible new approach to evaluating the quality of meat animals has also taken hold in Idaho. The “Systems Approach to Livestock Evaluation” has been developed over the last 20 years by UI Extension educators around the state.

The system uses a scorecard to calculate how an animal measures up to industry standards, focusing on average daily gain, quality and yield grade, as well as the structure of the animal. With the use of the Systems Approach and ultrasound technology, industry standards guide the placing of animals, rather than the personal preferences of a judge. Like ultrasound, the Systems Approach to Livestock Evaluation also helps youth leaders, and the youth they lead, to evaluate an entire project, and each step leading up to show day.

4-H kids and young adults are not intimidated by the new technology. It is one more useful tool in their arsenal. Goodwin’s sur-

vey found that 85% of all the counties in Idaho use at least one of these educational methods.

Ultrasound and the Systems Approach to Livestock Evaluation quantify animal quality and take some of the guesswork out of achieving blue ribbon animals.

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## Hi-tech teens: It’s all about connecting, on and offline

**Technology** savvy teens are taking it to the streets of their communities – their hi-tech knowledge, that is.

The Idaho Technology Leadership Team is a group of teen and adult volunteers who offer innovative technological experiences to citizens in their communities. Through an electronic community, the team plans, coordinates, and shares their work and ideas.

The three major goals of the program are to implement and encourage the use of technology through 4-H in local communities; to provide leadership for statewide education in computer technology through community involvement; and to support local communities in developing technology skills.

To meet those goals, the Tech Team provides a variety of leadership, training, and technical assistance for community agencies, schools, and 4-H programs. Some team members are technicians at their local schools. Others work at summer day camps with children 5 to 12 teaching technology classes, or developing web sites for 4-H teen conference and their local communities. They teach a variety of topics ranging from basic computer skills, hardware, and robotics, to effective digital camera use, GPS technology, and how to navigate a Palm Pilot™.

Through the Tech Team, Idaho 4-H is reaching 4-H club programs, after-school programs, other youth organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, senior citizens, and other community groups. Adults facilitate and partner with teens to ensure success in their projects.

Tech teens also mentor younger children in the after-school programs at the Owyhee County Marsing Resource Center (MRC). The MRC houses the “Power Up” computer lab and the Tachyon satellite system, which provide a high speed internet connection, AOL accounts, and an amazing learning experience for Owyhee County kids.

The Technology Leadership Team is a busy group. “These teens also serve as mentors and instructors for children’s technology summer camps,” notes Carol Benesh, state-wide 4-H Technology Director. “In 2001, the Notus Summer Camp in Canyon County reached 55 children, aged 5 to 14. In 2002 the camp grew to 75. The growth shows us that at all ages, kids love to learn new technologies.” At Notus camps, children are



33,338  
4-H Youth  
Participants\*

\*includes duplicate program enrollment

taught science and technology, including computer software, robotics and aerospace activities.

To reach their peers statewide, the Tech Team conducted the Technology Forum "Get Wired Up" at Teen Conference 2001 on the University of Idaho campus, providing over 15 workshops on topics ranging from web pages to robotics. During Teen Conference 2002, the Tech Team designed and created the first web site for the conference. Within three days the site was up and running.

The 4-H National Technology Leadership Program has selected four Idaho Tech Team members to join their ranks over the last five years. Russell Sample,

Jacob Goodwin, and Kenny Seneff each served as 4-H National Tech Team representatives for one year. Idaho's Joey Peters was selected as the newest National Representative for 2003. All of these Idaho teens have participated in Teen Conference and the National Technology Leadership Conference, and continue to share their knowledge locally.

"This is a group of exceptionally great kids," says Benesh. "They're not only very knowledgeable in a wide array of technologies, they also really know how to connect with kids, with their peers, and with adults. They have a lot to give to their communities."

## Idaho Junior Master Gardeners: Good seed planted firmly in rich soil

2002 yielded a bumper crop of new Idaho gardeners, including twenty newly certified Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Adult Facilitators and more than 650 gardening kids who are really diggin' the program. Kevin Laughlin, UI Ada County Extension educator and coordinator of Idaho's JMG program expects an even more bountiful harvest in 2003. The Junior Master Gardener program is a new and innovative 4-H youth gardening project developed at Texas A&M University in 1999. It incorporates group and individual activities. Group activities are held in classroom settings, in 4-H and JMG clubs, after-school programs, home school formats, and with other groups of interested young gardeners. Individual activities allow the gardener to pursue self-directed learning at home.

To become a certified Junior Master Gardener, kids must belong to a registered JMG group and complete a total of 44 individual activities, 44 group activities, and eight community/leadership projects from Level One of the JMG curriculum.

About 2400 youth attended the six-day JASON Program in Nampa, at Northwest Nazarene University in winter 2003. Junior

Master Gardener classes were presented as part of the program, Laughlin said. His team of seven teachers worked with 422 youth and 42 adults in those six days. Laughlin and others taught classes like Compost Critters, How Tall is Your Tree, and Sweat Plants.

JMG training was attended by over 20 Idaho teachers in the fall of 2002 at the Idaho Science Teachers' Association meeting in Hailey. The Idaho JMG Team presented a workshop at the Western Regional 4-H Forum in Portland in February 2003. 4-H leaders, teachers, Master Gardeners, UI Extension faculty and staff completed a 16-hour pilot Junior Master Gardener certification short course last spring in Boise. A similar program was completed in Payette in Fall 2002. The twenty course graduates were then certified to lead programs around the state. Participants gained basic knowledge necessary to teach the JMG Youth Gardening and Environmental Awareness Program, and honed their skills in horticulture, youth development, youth recognition, child protection, and service learning.

Idaho's Ada, Canyon, Payette, and Washington counties began a three-year pilot evaluation of the international youth gardening program this year. Toni Kuylman, a UI program manager in Boise who works both with school enrichment and with 4-H, used JMG lessons at a series of "Golden Ray" day camps this past summer to show children that gardeners can get knee deep in fun. "It's Master Gardening for children, and you're creating new gardeners as adults," she said. "From the school point of view, the science alone is something you can't match in any other program."

In nearby Weiser, UI 4-H Program Assistant Becky Settlage led a small group of 4-Hers to JMG certification, just one of the program's many goals. Another goal is to get kids into the dirt, where the lifetime love of gardening and life science can germinate. According to Settlage, hands-on education works. "Kids need to see a lot and do a lot," she said. "You can't be lecturing them. You'll lose them."

Other program goals include developing leadership, personal pride and responsibility, and learning to make a contribution to the community.

Recent surveys have revealed that many young Americans don't know where bread comes from, or what it's made of. Tim Davis, UI Extension educator in Payette County, taught the full seven-



**Age distribution:**

Cloverbuds (5-7)	16%
Junior (8-11)	43%
Intermediate (12-14)	26%
Senior (15-18)	14%
Other	1%

**Curriculum breakdown:**

Citizenship & Civic Education	10%
Communication & Expressive Arts	10%
Consumer & Family Science	4%
Environmental Education & Earth Science	8%
Healthy Lifestyle Education	14%
Personal Development & Leadership	7%
Plants & Animals	39%
Science & Technology	8%

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4-H has taught me perseverance in filling out record books. I have to be persistent.  
-Justin Letsinger

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