2021 Impact

Educator Reed Findlay has continued his work studying the thrips insect pest in alfalfa crops. This year he extended his research by studying the effects thrips feeding has on alfalfa quality. This will enable him to modify the economic threshold for this pest to include the possible effects on crude protein. He has presented preliminary results of this work at the UI Forage Schools and at the regional Hay Symposium. This study is part of a team of field men, growers, specialists and educators in Blackfoot and Mud Lake.

Findlay is also assisting U of I Agronomist Jared Spackman in studying the effects of liming on cereal crops. He also continues to assist in the study of forage cereal production. This study will investigate use of the various grains such as teff, wheat, barley and oats as forage crops and how best to grow them. Findlay has again partnered with other educators and specialists to determine how teff grass responds to herbicides. This data will eventually be used to develop a herbicide label for the crop.

In the area of horticulture, Findlay has initiated apple grafting research to study the effect of bud placement on graft viability.

The 4-H program continues to have a positive impact on the community with continued growth in all areas of projects.

4-H in Bannock County

The 4-H program in Bannock County continues to do well. 4-H Camp has grown to over 80 youth attending from Bannock, Butte and Teton counties. The partnership through the 21st Century After School program in School District 25 is continuing. 4-H professionals are providing robotics programming to three elementary schools and one middle school. Schools throughout the county are reached through STEM programs like stomp rockets, dissection labs and robotics, and FCS projects such as learning arts and food and nutrition.

On the Horizon

Findlay will continue studying the viability and agronomics of forage crops as well as teff grass in Idaho. Future plans include working with area community gardens and horticultural demonstrations. UI Extension commodity schools such as forage, potato and cereal schools will be a priority as the main vehicle educational efforts directed to agricultural producers. Farm management and succession planning educational activities are also planned for the coming year.

The 4-H program recently completed a teen counselor training at 4-H Alpine Camp with almost 100 youth attending from the Eastern District. This district effort to have a counselor training is to allow teens to network and gain leadership skills useful at camp and in their future. This year Bannock County 4-H was able to attain an AmeriCorps volunteer, which will help extend the programs outreach into the community.