

EXTENSION TRENDS: CASSIA COUNTY

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2020 By the Numbers

- **8,699** direct contacts
- **5,155** youth participants
- **85** volunteers
- **2,700** volunteer hours
- **\$6,250** extramural funding

Our Advisory Council

Special thanks to our volunteers who help shape programming and inform the work we do for UI Extension in Cassia County.

UI Extension Educators



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2020 Impact

UI Extension, Cassia County family and consumer science programs included a Zoom into Home Food Preservation workshop with over 20 registrations and five attending all sessions. Educator Grace Wittman also helped conduct a Preserve@Home course with 14 participants and reports indicate that all participants intend to do nine research-based safe food preservation practices. Due to COVID-19, in-person update sessions with the Master Food Safety volunteers were not held, however, they spent their time answering approximately 200 food preservation questions throughout the summer and fall.

4-H programming remained strong despite the pandemic. Focus was put on the Cassia County School District's afterschool program (Spark) and a robotics club. Outreach for all programs continued through traditional and alternative methods.

Agriculture and farm management classes include farm financial management and estate/succession planning in Cassia County and the Magic Valley. The 2020 classes were held prior to the pandemic with one farm management class held in Jerome and two succession/estate planning classes held in Burley and Gooding. Smaller classes with less than 10 operations allow for more work with individuals, including personal visits to help producers complete required tasks. Producers leave the financial management classes with two years of balance sheets, a year-end income statement/financial analysis and a cash flow budget. Succession classes offer time with an estate/succession planning lawyer within a classroom setting where questions and answers flow freely. Farm goals, mission statements and legacy statements are also required to encourage participants to take a strategic look at their respective operations.

Cover crop research helps producers understand the value of maintaining the health of their soils and gives them a greater ability to make decisions on how to use this underutilized practice. The cover crop research team, including Educator Joel Packham, has worked with several producers to help others see the value of using cover crops to build soil health and to provide grazing during the fall and winter.

The cover crop research involves wide, twin row corn (60 & 44 inch spacing) interseeded with cover crops. This research should produce a greater amount of forage for grazing as opposed to interseeding cover crops into regular spaced corn fields. With one year of research completed in 2020, 2021 promises to provide more data to make recommendations to producers for maximum corn and subsequent cover crop forage production while building soil health.

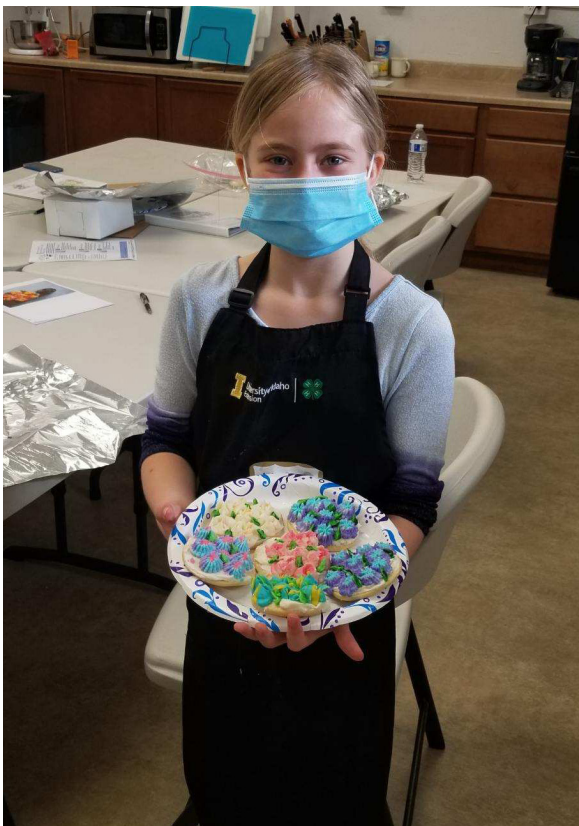
4-H in Cassia County

A multi-county grant was awarded to reach youth in outlying areas via at-home 4-H project kits to complete during virtual club meetings. Short Term Enrollment Projects (STEP) were well received as an alternative to traditional club meetings and record books. Take home science kits were delivered to day cares and the Lunch in the Park program. Partnerships continued with the College of Southern Idaho, Burley Public Library, Cassia County School Districts and the Cassia Regional Hospital.

4-H livestock participation in Cassia County continued to move forward despite the pandemic. There were 344 completed livestock projects in seven different species. The sale of these livestock totaled \$797,894. On average, each youth was able to receive over \$1,600 above the cost of the animal for use in saving for college and the next stage of life.

Wittman focused on developing the Leadership NOW! 4-H advanced leadership program. Nine participants from across Idaho participated in five Zoom classes covering topics such as professionalism, youth/adult partnerships and parliamentary procedure. They also attended six hours of in-person trainings during the 4-H State Teen Association Convention in 2021 and presented results of community service learning projects.

Wittman is also working with co-authors to develop a food science curriculum on the science of sugar to help youth learn more about sugar and chocolate chemistry and how it can be used to produce confections.



On the Horizon

Wittman will conduct in-person home food preservation courses to meet the current interest in community members wishing to learn more about preserving foods. She will also offer the Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth Food Science curriculum during the fall and winter months.

4-H programming will include STEAM projects, including robotics, coding and drones and gardening and FCS programs will be provided at the local alternative high school. STEP will continue to be offered and plans are underway for STEM grants to reach a broader audience. The 4-H program will seek additional partnerships within the schools to deliver 4-H programming during school hours to reach underserved youth.

Packham is part of a new five-year study looking at the value, in terms of soil health, to using cover crops and compost on a yearly basis. This will be studied as it affects corn production with various planting methods and different cover crop mixes. This data will help producers make informed decisions regarding the usage of cover crops.

