2021 Impact

In 2021, the Fort Hall Reservation was under continued COVID-19 regulations. Many programs could not be conducted, so community and agricultural needs were assessed and addressed using smaller scale outreach techniques. Through creative programming and outreach methods, the UI Extension, Fort Hall Reservation program continued a beef marketing program and conducted three small scale beef marketing workshops for producers who were unable to sell their calves due to COVID-19 market disruptions and the loss of a major cattle buyer. As a result, several affected producers were able to market and sell hundreds of calves at a more competitive price. The producers also gained knowledge and skills regarding how to use online beef marketing tools and have implemented skills learned from this program for two years. Eight (reduced number due to COVID-19) producers were led in the evaluation of 177 bulls. No bulls (0% rejection rate) were rejected which demonstrated significant achievement and improvement in bull quality selection. If bulls are rejected, the producer must replace them. This is the first year out of a 22-year program that a 0% rejection rate has been achieved. Additionally, 56% of bulls graded “A.” This quality improvement and impact results in significant savings for producers as bull purchase prices are $\geq$3,000/bull. The bull grading program collectively saved ranchers approximately $18,000/year in bull purchases.

In the area of horticulture, the UI Extension, Fort Hall Reservation program was part of a tribal cultural committee organized to develop a native plant garden at the Fort Hall Tribal Museum. Collaboration with UI Extension Horticulture Specialist Steve Love led to the selection of the most beneficial native plants for this garden. Cooperation with U of I’s landscape architecture program resulted in the development of incredible garden plans. This project is ongoing with plans to begin garden implementation this summer.

Fort Hall Reservation 4-H

Educator Danielle Gunn collaborated with Tribal 4-H Program Director Nola Cates to provide COVID-19 compliant Tribal Youth in Ag programming. Due to tribal restrictions, regular 4-H programming was not allowed in the small office space. In response, Gunn and Cates traveled to the tribal early childhood development facility where social distancing could be practiced to teach classes. Six scientific lessons and hands-on activities were developed to teach agricultural practices to youth. Additionally, 10 youth livestock projects were completed (seven lamb, two beef and one poultry). Programming also included lamb and beef showmanship classes. All youth showed and sold their projects at the local county fair. Youth also conducted two large successful fundraising activities to offset their livestock production costs. As a result, 100% of these youth stated they had gained invaluable skills in responsibility, finances, leadership and project management.

On the Horizon

A new range spring development program for 2022-23 is being developed which will include formal class training to teach spring development techniques. Formal class training will be followed by hands-on training of developing at least one spring on tribal rangeland. Through this class, producers will learn how to properly develop springs to provide a clean and adequate water source for livestock and wildlife, conserve natural resources and improve water quality.