2021 Impact

UI Extension, Teton County hosted events and classes such as the statewide Cultivating Success Digging Deeper crop production and Scratching Below the Surface poultry production courses (eight classes). Thirty clients enrolled in the online High-Altitude Victory Garden course. Two hands-on small farm and horticulture workshops on drip irrigation and assessing soil resources were held.

Educator Jennifer Werlin organized and served as the lead facilitator of a four-part statewide webinar series, Starting a Specialty Food Business in Idaho, with 90 registrants throughout the state. Werlin continues to facilitate the Teton Food and Farm Coalition meetings, with increased attendance at meetings during the pandemic while meeting on Zoom. For the fifth year, Werlin helped the farmers market gather economic sales data. Despite less vendors to allow for social distancing, the overall market sales increased by an astounding 27% from 2020 ($98,081 increase in sales).

The impact of UI Extension programs is far reaching as illustrated by the broad partnerships and notable extramural grant funding awarded for adult and youth agriculture education and research.

4-H in Teton County

The UI Extension, Teton County 4-H Youth Development program continues to adapt and grow, reaching a broader audience annually, with over 175 youth participants. There are over 30 4-H clubs led by community volunteers, with a large emphasis on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) subjects. In 2021, an $80,000 Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Community Project Grant was received to expand STEAM offerings to underserved youth in the community. New volunteer trainings were developed and partnerships with community organizations such as the Above and Beyond in the Classroom program in conjunction with the public school system continue. These partnerships are helping 4-H reach more at-risk minority students in the community and ameliorate potential barriers to participation.

Six 4-H Friday STEAM day camps were held in 2021. To accommodate for social distancing and a small teacher-participant ratio, only 11 youth participated. One parent noted about the camps: “As a parent in southeastern Idaho, I appreciated learning about the Teton County STEAM 4-H day camps.” Activities included watershed science, biology, robotics, gardening, pollinators, yoga, art and community service. In September, the first full-time 4-H coordinator, Abby Grundler, was hired for Teton County, giving much needed additional resources for program capacity.

On the Horizon

An additional part-time AmeriCorps volunteer, in partnership with Teton Science Schools, worked remotely to help execute an applied research project started in 2020 which included aggregating agritourism activities and businesses in the Teton foodshed (Jackson Hole and Teton Valley), as well as a community online survey to gauge consumer interest in agritourism and local food (pre-COVID and present). Research is planned to be presented at the International Workshop on Agritourism in Vermont in 2022, after being postponed from 2020. Research findings will also be published on the Teton Food and Farm Coalition website.