



## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

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### **NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

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The 4-H program is one of several major educational programs offered by the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service. In fact, 4-H is a flagship program of the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service and national data has shown that 4-H youth are four times more likely to make contributions to their communities, two times more likely to participate in STEM programs, half as likely to participate in risky behaviors, and 4.9 times more likely to graduate from college. The overall goal of the 4-H program is to provide youth opportunities to learn life skills, gain knowledge while having fun, and make contributions in environmental education, community service, and current youth issues.

The 4-H program under the direction of the Bernalillo County Extension Service (BCES) of New Mexico State University currently serves 308 traditional 4-H youth and 2568 youth through the non-traditional program. The youth enrolled in the traditional program are members of one of the eleven clubs within the county. As members of the traditional program, individual 4-H members are enrolled in one or more projects related to agriculture, home economics, engineering, creative arts, personal growth, consumer education or natural science. The youth in these clubs are also encouraged to develop their leadership skills by becoming club officers, county council officers or running for a position on the State 4-H leadership team.

Citizenship is also an important part of their involvement in which the 4-H youth have the opportunity to give back to their community. Some of these efforts have included service oriented events such as food drives, volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House and the Roadrunner Food Bank, assisting with parades, and fundraising for the Roadrunner Food Bank.

The youth enrolled through the non-traditional program participate in special interest and school enrichment programs such as Kids and Kows and More, Egg-to-Chick, River Xchange, KidsCAN program, community gardening and the Seeds program. Because many of the youth live in the urban areas of the county, their interests are focused around topics like robotics, rocketry, nutrition and archery.

Currently the Bernalillo County Extension Service has eight extension agents that work tirelessly to make sure the educational needs of the citizen within the county are being met. Three of the eight agents have sole responsibility to ensure that educational needs of the 4-H youth are met. This big undertaking could not happen without the support of the 336 volunteers who assist in the various roles, including serving as organizational leaders, project leaders and instructors, activity coordinators, judges and chaperones. Therefore, it is critical that the agents provide trainings on an on-going basis for this corps of volunteers in order to keep up with the educational needs of the youth and remain up-to-date with the current research.

The annual accomplishments and impacts through the educational programming of each of the agents are many. Some examples of educational activities in the agriculture and natural resource

program area include Marketing Techniques for Farmers, Good Agricultural Practices, Farm Business Management Practices, Think Trees, Developing Community and School Gardens, and Master Gardener trainings. In the home economics program area educational activities include Food Preservation Training Series, Emergency Preparedness workshop series, Diabetes Education, Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition(a federally funded nutrition education program), and Health Education.

Collaborations with other public agencies and non-governmental organizations are important to the success of some of the activities in each program. Some of the collaborator include: Kirtland Air Force Base Youth Center, New Mexico Army National Guard, farmers' market associations, South Valley Economic Development Center, churches, UNM Health Science Center, County Public Health Office, Environment Department, Roadrunner Food Bank, Farm to Table, La Montanita Food Co-op, Bernalillo County Youth Metro Detention Center, Mid Rio Grande Council of Governments, public and private schools, community centers, Bernalillo County, New Mexico Horse Council, not to mention the organization that are developed by the BCES such as the 4-H Clubs, Master Gardeners, and the Extension Association of New Mexico.

BCES is fortunate to have access to facilities in which the agents can conduct the educational activities or arrange for the clientele to use for such activities. The administration within Bernalillo County is also very supportive of the BCES and continues making accommodations to ensure that there are venues available for the delivery of BCES education activities. The location of each activity is made known through press releases, flyers or public notification pieces every time an educational activity is announced. For those activities that are on-going, BCES sends out notifications on a regular basis via newsletters, emails, and social media so that the participants are always informed of where activities are being held.

In May 2015, the BCES 4-H agents created a survey, which went out to all 4-H families currently enrolled in the traditional 4-H program in Bernalillo County. The 4-H staff plans to use the results of this survey to further shape programing efforts as they move forward. In general, the majority of respondents were satisfied to very satisfied with the Bernalillo County 4-H program.

Respondents of the survey were satisfied to very satisfied at the club and county level with skills that their child/children have learned, with information and knowledge gained, events that their child/children participate in and service projects for the community and community members. The parents recognized events at the county level as being valuable learning experiences for the 4-H youth and themselves. Feedback from the respondents indicates that county contests, county-wide meetings, various 4-H committee business meetings, the annual county fair and other 4-H events are conducted in a timely, organized manner and provide valuable learning experiences for both the youth and the parent/leaders. Furthermore, the respondents felt that their child's involvement in 4-H has helped enhance his/her self-esteem, work independently while using time more constructively, get along well with others including having a positive relationship with an adult, get better grades in school, and becoming a youth leader in their community. Finally, the participating respondents feel that their child/children have developed at least five or more of the following skills: recordkeeping, planning/organizing, goal setting, problem-solving, decision-making, community service volunteering, leadership, job readiness, career planning, public speaking, written communication, conflict resolution, sewing, cooking, caring for their animals/pets, and healthy lifestyle choices.

An area of opportunity on which BCES can improve upon, which was clearly identified through the survey, was communication. The BCES strives to communicate with 4-H families and its entire constituency on a regular basis through newsletters and email. However, occasional last minute changes in venue availability and unforeseen circumstance create confusion which leads to clientele dis-satisfaction. The BCES website is another communication tool the agents have available to use. With the resources available through the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, the agents can modify the website and use it to keep clientele informed with up-to-date information.

One of the guiding principles of the BCES is to ensure that all agents are working together as a team to accomplish the goals of NMSU, the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service, and meet the educational needs of the citizens of Bernalillo County. Effective communication among the BCES faculty and staff is critical to maximize existing resources and program impacts in Bernalillo County.

In January 2015, all of the BCES agents met for a strategic planning meeting to prioritize future Extension programs and the associated metrics to measure program impacts. The 4-H, agriculture, and home economics agents shared with each other the extent of their programs and both the opportunities and challenges they face. The agents found areas where they could build upon each other's programs, as well as new programmatic areas to expand upon that they hadn't identified previously. An advisory group consisting of community leaders and clientele met with all the BCES agents to share their future educational needs, opportunities, and concerns to ensure the BCES is reaching their diverse and predominantly urban audience. BCES also received input from the advisory group to ensure they continued to meet the needs of the surrounding rural communities and enhance their ability to leverage resources and strengthen traditional Extension programs.

The Advisory Board emphasized the importance of maintaining many of the traditional 4-H, agricultural, nutrition and home economics programs the clientele have become accustomed to in Bernalillo County. However, future efforts also included the need for enhanced STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) education, addressing public health issues, school enrichment and afterschool outreach opportunities for youth, and working closely with the 80+ school gardens throughout the county.

The BCES agents will continue to maintain traditional Extension programs while finding new partners and opportunities to grow Extension programs to meet the increasing diverse urban audience in Bernalillo County. Below are the specific goals identified during the January 15 Strategic Planning Meeting.

***4-H Youth Development:***

- Grow STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) 4-H program by January 2016
  - o Grow math (component of STEM) competencies in youth programs
  - o Increased funding and volunteer support for robotics programs
  - o Recruit 2 more adult volunteers to help with STEM youth programs

- Grow school enrichment, 4-H programs taken into classrooms:
  - o Egg to chick – increase five incubators to a total of 10 incubators in K-3 classrooms by March 2015
  - o Aquaponics – develop five systems in the schools by October 2015
  - o Increase water conservation through irrigation systems education from 26 to 30, 4th-grade classrooms.
  - o Increase from 350 to 450 elementary students in in the Kids, Kows & More program in 2015.
  
- Grow traditional 4-H club based programs:
  - o Increase enrollment by 50 new 4-H youth in the Bernalillo County 4-H Program by May 15, 2015
  - o Start one new 4-H club in the South Valley by May 15, 2015
  - o Start one new club in the East Mountains by May 15, 2015

### ***Agriculture/Horticulture***

- o Provide understandable educational materials and train producers in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point and Good Agricultural Practices by July 1, 2015
- o Assist producers with marketing education and in marketing opportunities by July 1, 2015
- o Co-sponsor a bi-county vegetable workshop by March 15, 2015
- o Offer Backyard Food Production trainings for the general public beginning March 13, 2015
- o Collaborate with Home Economics on Farm to Restaurant educational training
- o Support the local Food Festival in October 2015.

### ***Home Economic***

- o Determine existing resources available to offer Child Development and Parenting classes by August 2015.
- o Asses the needs for education classes in fitness and health as well as for current nutrition programs in fitness by August 1, 2015
- o Offer classes on Strong Women, Strong Bones in January 2016
- o Offer classes in Family Budgeting by October 2015
- o Conduct a conference on Emergency Preparedness for the Home by March 2015

### ***Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition (ICAN)***

- o Conduct a Food Handlers Training (needed for nutrition certification) by May 15, 2015
- o Create a list of low cost resources by May 15, 2015
- o Establish a working relationship with other Extension programs by October 2015

- Raise the visibility of the Cooperative Extension Service through one-time events by September 2015
- Re-instate Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and work with one-time events by October 2015

***Developing Stronger Collaborative Efforts Among All Extension Programs:***

- School Programs: BCES faculty and staff work together to coordinate educational programs across all subject areas by April 1, 2015
- Home Economics, 4H, and ICAN collaborate on nutrition and fitness programs with schools by September 2015
- School Gardens; Develop a series of three You Tube video clips for teachers on how to start a school garden by May 2015
- Collaborate with Home Economics on Farm to Restaurant educational training by July 2015
- Offer support and education to teachers as requested, in school gardening, and nutrition education (the ICAN program) by March 2015
- Extension Service host a teacher gardening workshop in early fall of 2015

Since the focus of the BCES is to work together and use the synergy of all departments, it is difficult to separate the 4-H departmental efforts from other programmatic efforts. For example, the 4-H school enrichment program is working directly with the nutrition and fitness programs (ICAN). The horticulture and agriculture agents, along with the Master Gardener program, have worked closely with 4-H and the school gardening efforts. At the mid-year point, the BCES has been on track with its goals and amending them when necessary.

Given the goals and objectives for the coming year, the BCES is committed to continue to support the traditional 4-H youth enrolled in livestock projects. Attached is a spreadsheet of livestock numbers recorded over the years, which gives a snapshot of how many large and small animals have been shown by 4-H youth in Bernalillo County from 1999 to present. Overall the livestock numbers show consistency in number of 4-H youth who raise and show animals in the county. The number of small animals has increased considerably over the last few years. In 2014, there was more poultry, rabbits and cavy shown in the Bernalillo County 4-H Fair than there was in the New Mexico State fair.

Finally, communication is a key component that must be incorporated into all facets of the entire program. This will be accomplished by keeping the BCES Office website updated regularly (one stop for all updates and events), as well as dissemination of information via emails lists, newsletter and social media. This will be especially critical as other venues continue to be identified by Bernalillo County for Cooperative Extension Service, including 4-H- use during this interim period as the 4-H building issues are being resolved.