The purpose of the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) is to support Extension Agents who establish Extension education programs on the Indian Reservation and Tribal jurisdictions of Federally-Recognized Tribes. This was enacted in 1990 by the “Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act” known more commonly as the Farm Bill. The mission is to empower individuals and communities to increase economic opportunities and quality of life, improve nutrition and health, and to protect and enhance natural resources and the environment. The FRTEP presence has been with the Poplar-based office since 2000. This is a collaborative effort with the Montana State University-county-based Extension offices, the Fort Peck Community College Tribal Extension Program, and the Fort Peck Tribes. Agriculture, Natural Resources and 4-H Youth Development are what our programs strive to strengthen for our residents. The Fort Peck Reservation Extension Program aims to address the needs for sustenance of traditional Assiniboine and Sioux values and practices. It also works to teach much needed life skills via 4-H programs to Fort Peck Reservation youth and families. This is needed to create healthy communities, schools, and families across the Fort Peck Reservation where poverty, suicide and school drop-out rates continue to plague Native American families. The program strives to address the need for positive leadership across the reservation.

Welcome to the Fort Peck Reservation

The Fort Peck Reservation is located in the extreme northeast corner of Montana, on the north side of the Missouri River. Poplar is the home to the Tribal Council headquarters. The Fort Peck Reservation is home to two separate Indian nations known as the Assiniboine and Sioux. The reservation is isolated from Montana’s populated areas as well as manufacturing centers, but does border the oil and gas developments. The main economic driver is agriculture. The area is made up of farmers and ranchers, both Native American and non-Native American and the land is rich in natural resources and most recently, oil and gas development. Communities included on the Fort Peck Reservation are Fort Kipp, Brockton, Riverside, Poplar, Wolf Point, Oswego, and Frazer.
Fort Peck Youth and Family Development Activities-non traditional 4-H

The Fort Peck Youth and Family Activities Development committee has been continuing efforts in all of the seven communities across the Fort Peck Reservation. Resources are pooled and gathered to make the greatest impact in schools, after school, and in communities. The committee is made up of youth-serving entities that wish to engage in youth development. The activities strive to reach all of the communities, some indoor and some outdoor. Some of the activities included in this year are craft days, safety days, health fairs, in-school teaching, cooking healthy snacks, demonstrations, and family fun days. Part of the 4-Health curriculum is used for healthy recipes and family activities. One of our focus efforts this year was on fire safety. Fort Peck Housing Authority donated much of the curriculum and equipment to use for teaching about fire safety.

Other traditional 4-H activities included giving poultry, rabbit, and market livestock showmanship demonstrations, clipping demonstrations and instruction, ultrasounding market animals for carcass data, and helping to structure the livestock committee in Roosevelt County. These combined efforts lead to healthier youth who are learning life-long skills they can share with their families.

Renovation of the Fort Peck Reservation Extension Tribal Garden

The Fort Peck Tribes had given the Fort Peck Reservation Extension office use of 99 acres for educational purposes located close to where the Poplar River meets the Missouri River. It has been used for various educational purposes over the years. The only problem with the location was that although it is near a water source, it was not close enough and water still had to be transported for the Tribal Extension Garden. This year the tribes gave another plot of land near the Tribal Building. It had been used many years prior as a garden area and was fenced off, there were remnants of tomato cages, berry bushes, and ground stakes. The water source had not been used in years and was non-working. The Community Services Department donated money to have the well and electrical work repaired since most of the food is donated to their program. It took most of the summer to get it fixed up right, but is now in excellent working order for next year and beyond. The Tribal Extension Garden produces food for community members who cannot grow a garden, or their garden has been compromised from weather. It is an agri-tourism education venture for the area Kindergarten class that is a pumpkin patch, and food is taken to the Community Elder program or local food banks. Over 700 pounds of potatoes are grown from the State Seed Lab, and 200 pumpkins were given to the classes, and over 400 pounds of other produce is raised. The Tribal Garden helps connect community members through volunteer work in the garden and distributions of the bounty.
MonDak Pulse Day-
The International Year of the Pulses

Northeast Montana and Northwest North Dakota collaborate to bring about the MonDak Pulse Day. This year it was held in Wolf Point, in the heart of the Fort Peck Reservation and prime growing conditions for pulse crops. Due to the poor prices of other small grains, pulse crops were an attractive product for producers. We had over 170 participants come to the full day of talks, including Native American farmers and those that lease Tribal lands. Speakers discussed pulse diseases, pulse pitfalls for beginners, weed issues, and the economic outlook. We also had a variety update for any new and upcoming varieties for this area, as well as an industry update. The participants ranged from new growers to seasoned pulse producers. Most of the production represented raising yellow peas, green peas, lentils, and chickpeas. There was a significant increase in knowledge learned about weed and disease issues, and over 88% of participants responded that they would incorporate pulse day learning in their operation. There was also a trade show that allowed farmers to interact with other growers and industry sponsors. Additionally, there were many samples of items made from pulse crops to try out at the event.

Crop scouting throughout the Fort Peck Reservation

Many of the calls on the Fort Peck Reservation are to look at a crop that has been damaged by hail, disease, or weed pressure. One of the monitoring projects that the Fort Peck Reservation takes part in is the Orange Wheat Blossom Midge statewide monitoring project. Insect traps are set out in co-operators fields to monitor population. Routinely the number of orange-looking insects are counted and posted on the statewide pestweb website to let others in an area know. During the prime flying time, it has been noted that the OWBM are prevalent on the Fort Peck Reservation, and in variable quantities. Weather-related activities had no effect, as all fields represented had some portion of activity in the traps. The economic threshold was reached to make the decision to do something about the midge, however the unknown factor was whether the natural predator M penetrans, minimized the economic impact. These natural predator insects were collected in sweep nets to determine their counts. Other crop scouting activities were conducted during the summer as well. There are several crops grown on the fort Peck Reservation, therefore, lots of diseases and pests are monitored. Weather also creates problems with crops. Several hail storms have done as much economic damage as other pests. The agent continues to work on monitoring activity and helping producers respond to challenges so they can remain successful.
Progressive Agriculture Safety Day
Becoming safer students and members of the Agriculture community and the Fort Peck Reservation

The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day has served over 1.5 million children and adults in its mission to promote safety in our rural landscape. It is a day for fun combining education with 100% hands-on activities. The Fort Peck Reservation and surrounding area is very rural and students can be as far as three-plus generations removed from agriculture. Programs like this are vital to remind younger generations to play it safe at farm operations. The safety day was held in this year in Froid school. Over 110 students and 16 volunteers participated. The school chose programs on Grain, Chemical, Fire, Pipeline, Food, Water Safety, Sun, PTO, and Bike Safety. A full scale 811 pipeline call was simulated on the school grounds to teach what can be underground. These programs come from the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day Curriculum which also sponsors the t-shirts and insurance to hold a Safety Day. Participants were all given t-shirts to wear, and bags filled with donated safety materials from Tribal departments, local businesses, the Fort Peck Reservation Extension Office, Fort Peck Housing youth activities, and many more. Participants were fitted with bicycle helmets at the end of the day.

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