To get from farm to fork, food in the United States travels an average of 1300 miles, changes hands half a dozen times, and consumes 10 calories of fossil-fuel energy to produce a single calorie of modern supermarket food (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson and Stevenson, 1996, Pollan, 2008).

Producing food locally greatly reduces the greenhouse gas emissions related to transportation of food. With that said, it was once again another fabulous year for the Deer Lodge Community Garden in which we saw more growth, more vegetables and more community involvement. The project was started in 2012 and has proved its sustainability. Extension Agent Jodi Pauley feels this is one of the most positive community development projects that Deer Lodge has embraced. Volunteers spent over 400 hours of service for the garden this year. This included building new boxes, filling the boxes with soil, upkeep of the grounds, hosting a garden tour and a pick-your-own farmers’ market. This year the garden grew from 41 outside plots to 45 plots and the greenhouse is now at capacity with 24 boxes.

Volunteers ran the Community Garden Farmers’ Market for seven weeks during August and September. Volunteers planted garlic, onions, tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, green beans and lettuce in 10 of the boxes at the garden. The market is designed to be pick-your-own and for a donation. This generated $500 for the community garden and this money is used for insurance and maintenance of the greenhouse, boxes and grounds around the garden. The garden donated more than two gallons of tomatoes for the fifth grade harvest day, which were made into soup for the class.

Several educational events were held at the greenhouse. MSU Extension Agent Jodi Pauley and the community garden board held an open house in late May. Twenty-six participants learned the benefits of raised bed gardening, how to take a soil sample, and how to plant seedlings. Montana guides were provided on vegetable gardening, herbs and short season gardening. Gardeners gave tips on their square foot gardening techniques.

Fourth grade students toured the garden and planted all of the flower boxes. Informal education happened at the garden between gardeners, this included watering tips, planting care and how to install row covers on their boxes. The Greenhouse is a great incubator of community garden education! The garden averaged about 72 pounds of produce per 4x8 box and over 50 pounds of tomatoes in the 4x4 boxes in the greenhouse. Several folks benefited from the garden as families rent boxes, the elderly who are living on a fixed income, young individuals who do not have a space for a garden and many who have the desire for fresh local grown produce.

Extension looks forward to many more years of great community gardening.
Show Camp

Show camp was again a great success for 4-H members from western Montana. This camp, held locally by Extension Agent Jodi Pauley, older 4-H members and local mentors has been a great way for 4-H animal project members to enhance their showing and fitting skills. One of the participant’s mothers said her daughter came home with the confidence to clip and fit her steer on her own. That is exactly why this camp was developed. The first night of camp all the members worked on their showmanship skills and every participant showed all species of animals. This gave members a new confidence to think about taking other animals in 4-H besides the species they are currently showing.

The second day of camp was spent fitting the animals for the show. Each member had to bathe their animal and then learn how to handle combs and clippers to make their animal shine.

One 4-H member set up a show camp “Amazing Race.” Participants took clues and did different projects, all related to the items they learned at show camp. Stations included setting up a fitting chute, calculating a corn ration, finding by-products from their animals and much more. It was a great team building exercise among the older and younger members of 4-H.

Harvesting the Garden

Powell County Extension Agent Jodi Pauley and Master Gardener Sheila Gill again embraced youth development spending six weeks teaching the fourth grade students of Deer Lodge elementary fundamentals of gardening. Students spent time learning about soils, seed growth, planting, eating pea plants, onion and garlic tops and several types of herbs, and visiting the community garden.

Studies show that children who are familiar with growing their own food tend to eat more fruits and vegetables and are more inclined to continue healthy eating habits through adulthood. Utilizing this research, Master Gardener Sheila Gill expanded the program and included a harvest day in September that all the fourth graders who were now fifth graders could fully understand the components of garden harvesting.

This year the students harvested strawberries, kohlrabi, carrots, beans, tomatoes, herbs, potatoes and squash. They had lunch from the garden with fresh tomato soup, fresh squash soup, and carrot cake. Sheila volunteered more than 30 hours toward this educational project by providing her expertise in horticulture to MSU Extension through youth development.
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant

MSU Extension in Powell County and Dry Cottonwood Creek Ranch are investigating the effects of split-season water leases on hay crops in the Deer Lodge Valley. The purpose of this study is to analyze the agronomic and economic benefits and impacts of split-season water leases on forage crops over several years under various growing season conditions. Two AM400 soil moisture recorders were purchased in 2013 to monitor soil moisture. These probes are put at 30 inch and 12 inch depths, placed strategically under the irrigation systems that are being monitored to gather soil moisture data. Jodi Pauley, MSU Extension agent, also worked with producers completing soil testing, hay sampling and clipping to determine yields that are in the study. Some of the factors that have affected the study have been older stands of alfalfa, weather, cheat grass, dandelion and Kentucky bluegrass encroachment and also the vastly different soil types. The primary benefits shown have been labor savings, reduced equipment and power costs, and studying soil moisture more closely to determine proper timing of irrigation. This project will be wrapping up in January 2017 with a final educational report with an educational tour planned next spring for producers to get out in the field to discuss the ramifications.

Farmer Fly-In

Due to her work with the SARE program, Jodi Pauley, MSU Extension agent, had the rare opportunity this past March to participate in farmer “fly-ins” not only from the standpoint of administering a grant but also benefitting from the work other SARE projects have provided to her both personally and professionally. Below is the news release on that experience:

This week the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), one of the nation’s leading voices in food and agriculture policy, kicked off a month-long series of “farmer fly-ins” in an effort to raise legislators’ awareness around the importance of funding sustainable agriculture programs and policies in the FY17 budget. During the fly-ins, advocates, farmers, and ranchers, like Jodi Pauley of Montana, will descend upon the capital to speak with their legislators about important food and agriculture issues.

“In our view, there are no better advocates for these critical U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs than the farmers who use and benefit from them,” said NSAC Policy Director, Ferd Hoefner. “Each year, as Congress prepares to develop its annual funding bills, we bring farmers and ranchers from NSAC member organizations to Washington to speak with their congressional delegations about what matters most to them. This year we are honored to host a great group of farmers and program leaders from across the country who can testify first-hand as to the importance of these programs.”

Montana rancher and MSU Extension Agent Jodi Pauley has been working in agriculture her entire life. She and her family raise cattle, sheep, hogs, and hay on their Deer Lodge, MT ranch, and have had the opportunity to work with the USDA’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) and Environmental Quality Incentive (EQIP) programs on multiple occasions.

“SARE has been very beneficial to my work,” says Pauley. “SARE grants are a great opportunity to bring research to producers at a reduced cost, to help them implement new practices and to develop conservation methods. For me, one of the best parts of programs like this is working together with other ranchers, farmers, and producers. We need programs like SARE for the viability and sustainability of agriculture and everyone involved in it.”

SARE is the only USDA competitive grants research program with a clear and consistent focus on sustainability and farmer-driven research. This is the first time in several years that the Administration has requested an increase in funding for SARE, from $24.7 million to $30 million, representing an acknowledgement of the importance of cutting-edge research that is easily accessible, regionally appropriate, and farmer-tested.
Welcome to Powell County

Hi, my name is Jodi Pauley and I am your MSU Extension Agent in Powell County. I am here to provide you, the clientele, research-based knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well being of families, communities, and agriculture enterprises! Extension is an outreach of Montana State University and we are committed to the overall university goals of integrating learning, discovery and engagement. And as always GO CATS!!

Clientele benefit from MSU Extension in Powell County in the areas of agriculture, youth development, horticulture, community development, 4-H and more. The MSU Extension office sits in the county seat in Deer Lodge, housed in the county courthouse. The office provides free publications to the public on a requested basis, provides workshops in several program areas, and works with school children and youth all across the county.

Agriculture is the backbone of Powell County with approximately 263 ranches with the average size being 2,240 acres. The population of the county is around 6800 people. The population of cattle is around 39,000. We are home of the Montana State Prison. One of the larger landowners in the county (38,000 acres) is the Montana Correctional Enterprise where they provide daily training to over 500 inmates in the areas of vocational, agricultural and industry programs. They operate one of the larger dairies in the state and also have over 12 miles of handline gravity fed irrigation lines to grow crops on 2,800 acres of farmland. Powell County is also home of the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management area and provides over 40,000 acres of public access, winter elk range, and wildlife habitat. Fish, Wildlife and Parks continues to work with surrounding landowners and the public on policies and management schemes to ensure the viability of the WMA in Powell County. MSU Extension has been very involved in working with FWP to help develop a wildlife management plan for the Spotted Dog. MSU Extension administers the 4-H program within Powell County with seven clubs, 38 volunteer leaders and 81 youth. MSU Powell County Extension takes pride in working with individuals one-on-one with horticulture issues, insect problems, weed recommendations and estate planning. This year, in collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Stockgrowers and Granite County Extension, a workshop was provided on calving difficulty. It was presented by Dr. Robert Mortimer, Colorado State University. One producer commented that there was something for everyone and he would be implementing some of the techniques in his barn. The MSU Extension office provided newspaper articles locally, reaching over 3000 homes this year with 30 articles of unbiased and research based information for the clientele of Powell County and beyond.