

EXTENSION TRENDS: **CUSTER COUNTY**

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2024 By the Numbers

- **4,733** direct contacts
- **114** youth participants
- **38** volunteers
- **\$9,600** extramural funding

Our Advisory Council

Special thanks to our volunteers who help shape programming and inform the work we do for UI Extension in Custer County.

UI Extension Educator



Sarah Baker
208-879-2344
sdbaker@uidaho.edu

2024 Impact

Educator Sarah Baker presented information on the benefits of the Innovative Agriculture and Marketing Partnership (IAMP) grant to local landowners and producers. She facilitated local water district meetings to help producers navigate water laws, irrigation techniques and ways to increase the productivity of their crops (pasture and hay). She addressed numerous calls and conducted office and field visits on beef related issues to local beef producers, including soil and hay testing consultations, fertilizer recommendations, nitrate testing of annual forages, and pest and weed management.

Baker conducted meat cutting demonstrations to educate clientele about the importance of end-product quality locally and regionally, and trained beef producers how to improve consumer perceptions and increase their marketing opportunities through the Beef Quality Assurance program by serving as the state co-coordinator and a certified trainer. She provided agriculture education programming during National Agriculture Week at local elementary and junior high schools to teach youth where their food comes and about the importance of agriculture to the local and state economies. She also partnered with the local soil conservation district and other natural resource groups to educate youth about water, range, soils, and public and private lands during the annual Natural Resource Day and 5th Grade Conservation Tour.

4-H in Custer County

The UI Extension, Custer County office held 4-H recruitment events at the local elementary schools to increase awareness about 4-H projects and recruited non-traditional members to increase non-livestock projects throughout the county. 4-H members planted flower barrels at local businesses around town to raise money for professional development activities.

Five new certified volunteer leaders joined a group of veteran leaders to provide hands-on learning opportunities and empowered youth to become responsible, productive citizens through the rural 4-H program. A new market poultry club was created, and members sold the first ever market bird projects through the Market Animal Sale at the local county fair.

On the Horizon

A new project in 2025 will be focused on working with local ranchers and landowners to address noxious weed challenges on private property, including helping educate absentee landowners in the county about the problems weeds create when not managed properly.

The UI Extension, Custer County office is in the process of hiring administrative and 4-H staff to continue offering research-based education and more 4-H programming to the residents of Custer County in 2025.