Spring 2013

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Frontier Extension District # 11

Calving School

Eighty producers owning more than 3200 head of cows attended a Winter Calving School held in Ottawa. Producers learned about the importance of a cow's body condition score, the importance of using a calving ease bull, especially for use on heifers and first calf cows, and about intervening when a cow has calving problems. Providing assistance when a cow is not making progress in birthing will reduce calf loss and improve the cow's ability to rebreed in a timely fashion. Experts recommended waiting no longer than one hour for heifers and thirty minutes for cows before assisting with birthing problems. In order to improve calf survivability, extension specialists also noted the importance of knowing the fastest ways to warm up a chilled calf that has been born in a snow storm or in a cold rain.

Birthing a live calf is only the first step. Producers were reminded that a new-born calf should stand within 15 minutes to one hour after birth, and that it should nurse within the first two hours. Management of colostrum, a cow's first milk, will prove critical to the health of a calf. Inadequate colostrum intake would mean that the calf would be six times more likely to get sick in the first 28 days, and five times more likely to die prior to weaning. At weaning, those same calves would weigh 35 pounds less than the calves that received adequate colostrum.

Consider the 3200 calves raised by the cattle producers attending the Extension winter calving school. If just twenty percent of the total calf crop weighed 35 pounds less at weaning time due to inadequate colostrum intake, it would equate to 22,400 pounds or about $38,080 less that the producers would receive. Furthermore, this dollar amount would not reflect the reduced gain or the increased risk of sickness that the same calves would have had in the finishing phase of production.

Quality Early Childhood Experiences

Research has shown that the first three years of life are critical in the development of a child’s brain, and that quality child care and education in the preschool years can greatly enhance a child's lifetime potential. Childcare providers have an enormous impact on children's development. Research shows that better trained providers lead to higher quality care, resulting in more positive outcomes for children. A provider's skill level helps determine whether children in childcare are safe and have the early learning experiences they need to succeed in school.

Both Frontier Extension District Family and Consumer Sciences Agents are members of a state Family Development Program Focus Team. Last year, they took the leadership in getting several professional development instructor modules approved for use by Extension Agents in Kansas.
Documentation was submitted to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Bureau of Child Care and Health Facilities, for approval of Penn State Cooperative Extension Service “Better kid Care” modules. Child care providers are required to meet annual in-service training requirements and K-State Research and Extension has a history of providing training opportunities for providers.

This year, providers have the opportunity to participate in five “Better Kid Care” training events sponsored by the Frontier Extension District. As a result of the trainings, 83 percent of the providers have reported that they learned “a great deal” or “a lot.” Child care providers also reported that they plan to make changes as a result of the trainings:

“I plan to spend more one-on-one time so the child feels secure and loved;
“I plan to be more aware of children’s needs;”
“I plan to help make transition (drop-off) at the beginning of the day smoother.”

A Frontier Extension District FCS Agent has also been a member of the Childcare and Youth Training and Technical Assistance Project (CYTTAP). The project is conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension and Penn State Extension, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense. The focus of the three year project has been to provide training and technical assistance to early childhood professionals in thirteen states who care for young children of military families who are off installations. Collaborative work has also been done with Child Care Aware of Kansas to offer a six-hour, Rock Solid Foundations: Promoting Social Emotional Competence of Young Children training in Shawnee County as well as the Frontier Extension District this fall.

Volunteers Impact Lives of 4-H Members

One of the key principles in any 4-H program is the positive relationships youth have with caring adults. These relationships allow for an exchange of knowledge, guidance, respect and wisdom. The Frontier Extension District 4-H program utilizes volunteers in a variety of roles to work with the nearly 500 district 4-H members. Currently more than 250 adult and teen volunteers serve in roles such as 4-H club leaders, 4-H project leaders, trip chaperones, event organizers, judges, presenters, and camp counselors. To become a 4-H volunteer, individuals must complete an application and approval process. In addition, they receive training which includes information about 4-H, and best practices for working with youth.

Aside from their crucial involvement year round, this spring 4-H volunteers helped with 4-H Club Day, one of the district’s largest 4-H activities. At the event, over 200 youth participated in activities such as public speaking, drama, dance, music, model meetings, and gavel games. Volunteers not only helped 4-H members prepare for the day, but also served as room monitors, and served as judges for another county’s Club Day event. Club Day also allowed youth to practice an array of essential life skills such as public speaking, communication, social skills, and decision making skills through the variety of contests.

The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development has discovered that the structured learning, encouragement and adult mentoring that young people receive through their participation in 4-H, plays a vital role in helping them achieve future life successes. Through their relationship with caring adults in the 4-H program, youth:

- Are 2.3 times more likely to exercise and be physically active;
- Are nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college;
- Are 3.4 times more likely to actively contribute to their communities when compared with youth who do not participate in 4-H; and
- Have better grades, higher levels of academic competence, and have an elevated level of engagement at school.

The use of 4-H volunteers capitalizes on the Extension District’s time resources, financial resources, and knowledge. Volunteers are vital as they help the 4-H Youth Development Program provide young people with expanded opportunities for learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service