

Agriculture & Small Farms



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY STEVENS COUNTY EXTENSION

Our approach to agricultural development is to move more locally grown products into local and regional markets.

Direct Beef Marketing

Cow/calf operations are the most valuable enterprise in the county. Most calves leave the county to feed lots for finishing in areas with weather more favorable to economic weight gains. Lack of processing infrastructure is a big hindrance to direct marketing efforts. In 2006, we received a Federal Grant of Inspection for a mobile slaughter unit. This unit works in conjunction with Smokey Ridge Meats in Chewelah which is a federally inspected processing plant. This unit opened up new market opportunities for growers interested in taking control of their marketing.

2006: 10 beef and 22 small animals (32)

2007: 95 beef, 125 lambs, 27 pigs and 25 goats (272)

2008: 70 beef, 130 lambs plus smaller amounts of pigs and goats (250)

Expansion in 2009, based on verbal intentions and past history, is expected to see 125 beef, 250 lambs and 125 pigs or about 500 animals.

Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MMPU)

Operating since 2003, the project was designed to educate growers about details of processing, regulations and marketing. It was expected that serious growers would develop their own processing facility on their farm. One farm has put in their own processing facility and raised 2,700 broilers in 2008. One role of Extension is to help people explore new enterprises without huge losses in capital investment. We can help figure out what works, and what doesn't work. Escalating costs of production, feed and fuel especially, caught up with growers this year. Growers figure a minimum of \$3.50 per pound is necessary if they are to realize any value for their time and management and the MMPU is labor intensive. We are hoping to find a convenient location for the unit and promote custom processing for home-raised birds.

Small Farm Marketing and Support

A food community is important to both the producer and the consumer. People who show an interest in farming benefit from our education programs and support. A few examples include: 1) the 13-week Cultivating Success Sustainable Small Acreage course looks at goals and resources, and evaluation of small acreage enterprises; 2) we participated in starting and continue to support the Chewelah Farmer's Market; 3) the Fifth Annual Harvest Dinner Celebration created an elegant atmosphere for people to enjoy locally-produced foods and build a sense of community; 4) our office organizes, produces and distributes the free Farm to Table Buying Guide that promotes buying locally-produced food. It supports the economy and gives you fresh, healthy options; and 5) The WSDA Small Farm Marketing grant will kick into gear this fall to promote the marketing campaign "Our Farmers, Our Food."



WSU Stevens County Extension has been active in procuring over **\$199,500** in agriculture related grants in the past five years:

Current:

WSDA Small Farm Marketing \$10,735

Growers will receive training to develop marketing skills and awareness. We hope to encourage additional farms to take advantage of the infrastructure that has been developed.

Food & Environmental Stewardship \$15,340

Will train high school teachers involved in health and food science programs to evaluate the impact of food choices.

Past:

From Farm-to-Table Education \$56,000

Agriculture educators learned about the benefits of supporting local farmers.

WSDA Agriculture Risk Management \$9,946

Discovered the risks and liabilities of on-farm tourism.

USDA Mobile Meat Processing Unit \$107,500

Created the Mobile Meat Processing Unit.