

Federally-Recognized Tribes Extension Program
2008 HIGHLIGHTS

FRTEP UNIT: Blackfeet Reservation - Montana

PROGRAM AREA Agriculture & Youth Development

PROGRAM TITLE: Junior Agricultural Loan Program

ISSUE(S) ADDRESSED:

There is an increasing decline in the number of youth on the Blackfeet Reservation that are interested in agriculture and carrying on the family ranch and farms. The main three reasons identified are lack of interest, knowledge and money.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Youth between the ages of 9 and 21 receive one on one instruction on beef management, including how to develop a five-year herd and financial plan, complete loan applications and financial and herd production records.. They successfully complete the minimum five hours of instruction and application process and borrow money ranging from \$3,500 to \$8,500 for the purchase of bred cattle. Once loan funds are received, bred cattle are purchased and they proceed with the implementation of their five year cow/calf business plan. Each year youth update their financial statement and production records with the year end reports for their records.

PROGRAM IMPACT:

In 1993, the Jr Ag Loan Program, a youth development program was implemented on the Blackfeet Reservation. Since then \$532,560 has been secured by youth for the purchase of 680 bred cows. This program helped 81 youth start a cow calf operation at a young age and has helped 27 youth offset the cost of college tuition from their calf sale proceeds. Jessie, a Jr Ag Loan Program participant said "This program definitely helped me learn and understand the responsibilities that go along with the cattle business." She also said "I am currently a senior attending school at Montana State University, majoring in Range Management and Ecology. I believe this program helped me set goals and achieve them. Going into college I knew that with my education and my experience with the cattle business I would some day be in a career that I love that will enable me to help other cattle producers become more successful operators."

This is a great example of a successful partnership between agencies: the Blackfeet Reservation Extension Office provides the outreach, education and follow-up and the Montana Department of Agriculture provided the financing. On going educational opportunities are provided in the form of production management training for youth and their parents as well. (Record keeping, body condition scoring, Best Management Practices, and financial management) This program is a great way to teach youth and adults and way to get youth involved in production agriculture at an early age



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