

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

5th grade students participate in first annual farm and forest discovery day

AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension faculty and staff professionals and the Boundary County Fair Board partnered to host the first annual 5th Grade Farm and Forest Discovery Day.

The Situation

According to various studies conducted in the past five years, approximately 25-40% of youth in the United States do not know where their food comes from. This alarming statistic creates a need for educational programs where youth can learn about the importance of agriculture not only to them, but to the population as a whole.

There is also a need to educate the next generation on the types of employment opportunities available for them to pursue. Boundary County is a rural county with a population totaling close to 14,000. According to the Idaho Department of Labor, approximately 5,900 of these residents make up the total workforce in the county. Almost 300 of these jobs are categorized as relating to natural resources and 500-950 (varies per season) are categorized as relating to agriculture. These numbers demonstrate the need to make sure the youth in Boundary County are aware of these career paths that make up a significant portion of the county's workforce.

Our Response

In 2026, the 4-H coordinator and Extension educator in the Boundary County office met with the Boundary



Local farmer/rancher, Maureen Mai, talks to students about different types of farm equipment used in Boundary County.

County fair secretary to organize an event showcasing the county's agriculture and national resource industries. This meeting led to the development of the first annual 5th Grade Farm and Forest Discovery Day.

This one-day event was held in May at the Boundary County Fairgrounds with every 5th grade classroom in the county participating. Homeschool youth and youth from private schools were also included in this event. The students were assigned to groups of 10-15 and rotated between 12 educational stations in 15-minute increments. The stations included various topics such as tree identification, beef by-products, grinding wheat into flour, farm equipment, insect identification, live farm animals, wildfire demonstrations and more. To help facilitate the groups moving between the stations,

teenage members from Bonners Ferry FFA volunteered as group leaders. Supplies for the various booths and lunch for all youth and volunteers were paid for by Boundary County Farm Bureau, the Boundary County Fair Board and the University of Idaho Extension office in Boundary County.

Program Outcomes

Approximately 100 5th grade students attended the event. An anonymous post-program evaluation was distributed to the teachers for the students to fill out and a total of 86 evaluations were returned.

The program evaluation contained questions about knowledge gained during the event.

- 68 students (79%) stated they now understand more about where their food comes from.
- 64 students (74%) stated they can now explain how agriculture is important in their life.
- 64 students (74%) stated they shared this experience with others (family, friends, etc.).
- 72 students (84%) stated they enjoyed attending farm and forest discovery day.

The evaluations also asked students what something was specific they learned at the farm and forest discovery day. Some comments were:

- “One thing I learned was that we have very little farming land on Earth.”
- “I learned how to grind wheat into flour.”
- “That if we didn’t have farmers then we really wouldn’t have food.”
- “Where different meats come from and what part of the animal it comes from.”
- “I learned how agriculture is important in our life.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The Future

Due to the positive feedback from teachers, students, volunteers, and partner agencies, there is a plan to turn this event into an annual occurrence. UI Extension has already reached out to the school district to get this event on the schedule for 2027.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

- Boundary County Fair Board
- Boundary County Farm Bureau
- Bonner-Boundary Cattle Association
- Idaho Fish and Game
- U.S. Forest Service
- Boundary County School District
- Boundary County Commissioners
- Bonners Ferry FFA Chapter