

University of Arizona  
**COCHISE COUNTY  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

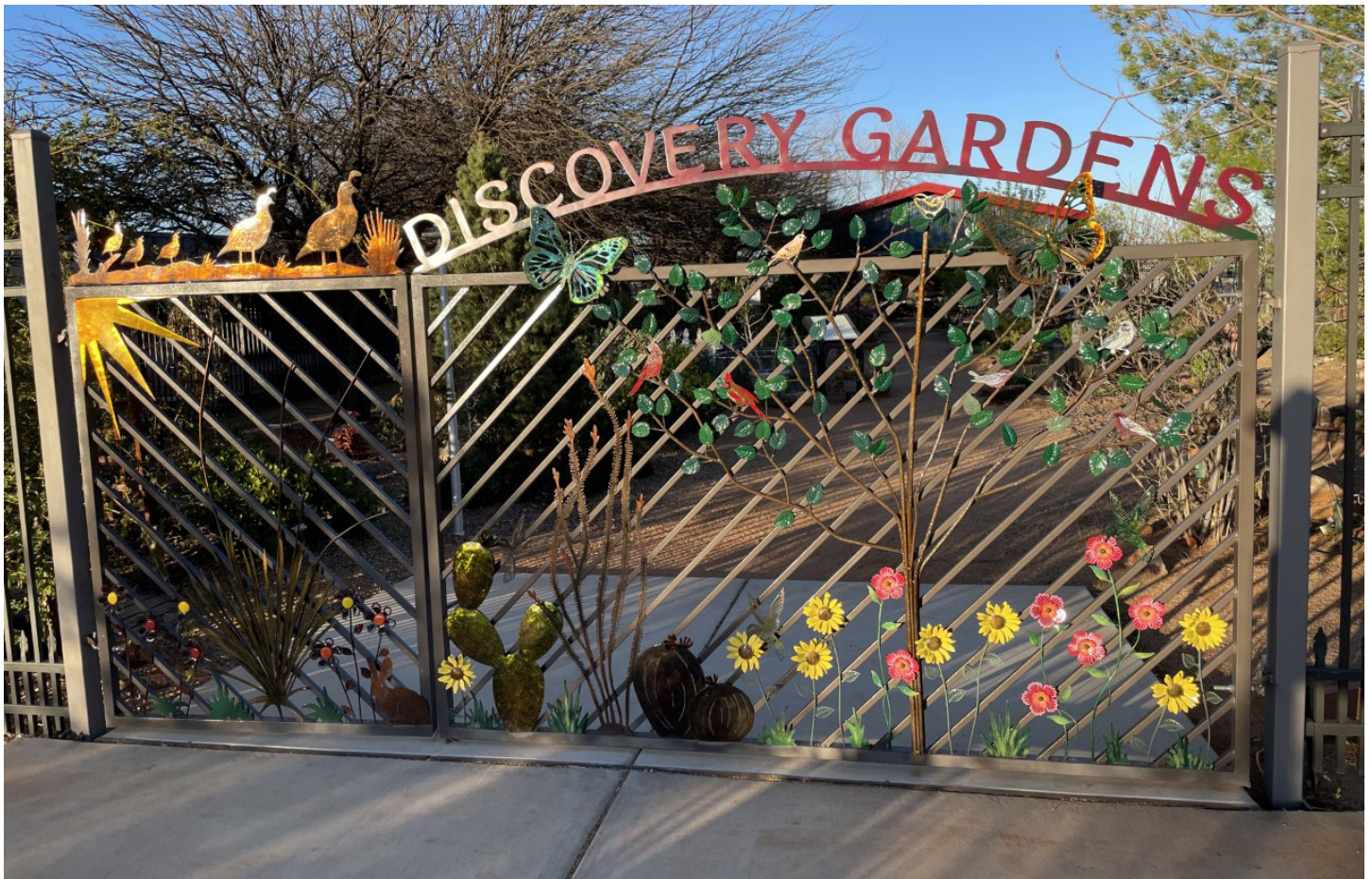
*Improving Lives, Communities, & the Economy*



**Annual Report  
2022**



# Cochise County Cooperative Extension 2022 Annual Report



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# Cooperative Extension

## Cochise County

Cooperative Extension enjoys a rich and proud history in this country. On May 8, 2014, we celebrated our 100th year of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the Agricultural Extension Service, known today as Cooperative Extension. Cooperative Extension is a unique educational partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the nation's land grant universities, and the county governments that extends research-based knowledge through a state-by-state network of extension educators. Working together, we recognize that we achieve much more than we can alone. While the authors of the enabling legislation for Cooperative Extension could not foresee the future, the mandates implicit within the legislation is as applicable today as in 1914:

- **Serve Agriculture and the Public** - The Smith-Lever Act gave Extension a very broad clientele base—"the people of the United States"—yet also specified that its programs should be concerned with "agriculture and home economics and subjects relating thereto."
- **Define Agriculture Broadly** - The term "agriculture" was used in a comprehensive sense in the Smith-Lever Act and subsequent legislation to include producing, processing, and marketing farm and forest products, plus those businesses and industries concerned with supplying the resources needed in the production and marketing process.
- **Enhance Human Development** - The underlying mandate is to provide educational programs for individuals and families, which will enhance human development and maximize the individual's contribution to society.
- **Meet Local Problems** - Section 8 of the Smith-Lever Act establishes the need for additional assistance in areas faced with special or unusual hardships and acknowledges Extension's role in working with groups as well as individuals in meeting local problems.

At the heart of Cooperative Extension is the deep-rooted belief that engaging people through applied research and education will improve the quality of their lives, communities, and the economy. This mission is the driving force behind 100 years of Cooperative Extension in Arizona. Our ability to be relevant in the years to come is based on our ability to listen and respond to our "customers"—the people in our communities. We value our partnerships and believe community voices are critical to success.

Today, Cooperative Extension continues its important role, serving communities and families, supporting agriculture, and empowering youth to be leaders. Regardless of the program, Extension expertise meets public needs at the local level through the involvement of volunteers, partners, stakeholders, and advisory committees. Extension would not be what it is today without their dedication and service. We are most grateful for their willingness to be partners in our journey to improve lives, communities, and economies.

We look forward to working with you, as together we create the next chapters of our continuing history!



## Cochise County Cooperative Extension

*Improving Lives, Communities, & the Economy*

The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension represents a unique three-way partnership of federal, state and county government to provide access to the Land Grant University System to local citizens. Partners include the United States Department of Agriculture, the University of Arizona, and Cochise County Government. Regardless of the program, Extension expertise meets public needs at the local level through the involvement of volunteers, stakeholders, and advisory committees. Our roots in communities help us understand local needs and put university expertise and connections where they can make a difference - both in people's lives and in their livelihoods. Increasingly, Extension serves a growing, more diverse constituency with fewer resources, utilizing methods that are timely, relevant, and cost-effective. These Extension driven programs leverage and multiply each dollar of county and state support with additional outside funding. Included in this report are a few highlights of Extension's impact on this county and its people during 2022.

### Cochise County Cooperative Extension

#### Faculty



**Randy Norton**

Interim Regional Extension Director  
Cochise and Graham



**Kim McReynolds**

Greenlee County Extension  
Director and Area Agent,  
Natural Resources



**Joshua Sherman**

Associate Area Agent,  
Commercial Horticulture



**Evelyn Whitmer**

Area Agent, Family  
and Consumer Health  
Sciences



**Ashley Wright**

Area Agent, Livestock



## Cochise County Cooperative Extension Staff

### Program Staff

- Luis Aguilar Chavez**, Extension Assistant II, 4-H Youth Development
- Cynthia Aspengren**, Community Outreach Manager I, Nutrition Education
- Andrea Bernal**, Community Outreach Assistant II, Nutrition Education
- Rhegan Derfus**, Community Outreach Manager I, Nutrition Education
- Felicia Ferguson**, Extension Assistant Professional, Rangeland Monitoring
- Jan Groth**, Assistant in Extension, Community Horticulture
- Alex Kosmider**, Community Outreach Professional I, Water Wise
- Trevor Lauber**, Community Outreach Professional I, Water Wise
- Maria Molina**, Community Outreach Assistant II, Nutrition Education
- Liza Quinones**, Community Outreach Professional II, Building Healthy Communities
- Jody Sharp-Webb**, Extension Assistant II, Horticulture
- Mekenna Smith**, Extension Assistant II, 4-H Youth Development
- Elisabeth Tyndall**, Community Outreach Assistant II, Nutrition Education

### Administrative Staff

- Sharon Buono**, Business Manager
- Tricia Dunham**, Administrative Assistant
- Connie Forsyth**, Administrative Operations Professional II
- Berlynda Schaaf**, Administrative Assistant

### On-Call Staff

- Susan Albright**, Extension Assistant I, Horticulture, on-call
- Sahil Arora**, Technical Expert, Dentist, on-call
- Greg Gazda**, Extension Assistant I, Horticulture, on-call
- Marlene Townsend**, Extension Assistant I, Horticulture, on-call

## Cochise County Cooperative Extension Office Locations



**Willcox Office**  
450 S Haskell Ave, Ste A  
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520-384-3594



**Sierra Vista Office**  
1140 N Colombo  
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**Bisbee Office**  
*(By Appointment Only)*  
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Bisbee, AZ 85603  
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## Cochise County Cooperative Extension Advisory Board Members 2022-2023

**Nathan Watkins**, Chair  
**Moiria White**, Vice Chair  
**Aaron Cardona**  
**Barbara Clark**

**Dennis Moroney**  
**Daniella Reidmiller**  
**Alan Seitz**

### *Extension Advisory Board Alternates*

**Gwen Calhoun**  
**Tyler Curry**  
**Julia Johnson**

**Paul Sebesta**  
**James Stewart**  
**Jason Zibart**

## Cochise County Board of Supervisors

**Ann English**, Chair  
**Peggy Judd**, Vice-Chair  
**Tom Crosby**

# 4-H Youth Development

**Randy Norton**  
Interim Regional Director -  
Cochise and Graham Counties  
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Cochise County 4-H Youth Development believes that every child has valuable strengths and has the influence to improve the world around us. In 4-H programming, youth complete hands-on projects in areas such as health, science, agriculture, and civic engagement where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles.

4-H programming empowers youth members to become community leaders with confidence, they gain the knowledge to work with others cooperatively, learn to endure challenges, and persevere to make great things happen.

Through engaging, hands-on experiences, young people develop specific skills that are important for jobs and careers such as leadership skills, the ability to organize and lead meetings, set and achieve goals, financial awareness, and social skills. These skills lead to greater physical and emotional wellbeing, and educational and occupational success.

We rely heavily on volunteers to reach more youth, lead educational programs, coordinate activities, and manage clubs and groups.



### 4-H Youth Development Staff:

Luis Aguilar-Chavez: [laguilar@arizona.edu](mailto:laguilar@arizona.edu)  
Mekenna Smith: [mekennasmith@arizona.edu](mailto:mekennasmith@arizona.edu)

## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ More than **21** adults served as volunteers for the 4-H Youth Development Programs in Cochise County.
- ▶ **160** Youth enrolled in the 4-H Youth Development Program
- ▶ Youth Participated in **26** 4-H Projects in Cochise County





# Building Healthy Communities

**Evelyn Whitmer**

Area Agent, Family, Consumer, and Health Sciences  
emarkee@arizona.edu

**B**uilding Healthy Communities (BHC) In 2018, the Legacy Foundation of Southeast Arizona awarded Strategic Grant funding to a community collaborative of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Cochise County Health and Social Services, Cochise County Superintendent of Schools, and the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona to expand and support county-wide health efforts with a focus on healthy foods access, nutrition, and active living. The Family and Consumer Sciences Agent in Cochise County, Evelyn Whitmer, was selected to be the Primary Investigator on the grant and Dr. Michele Walsh was selected to lead the evaluation on this grant. The resulting 3-year (funded for an additional 2 years) Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative has had three major goals:

- Increase the community capacity for healthy change through leadership and collaboration
- Increase the capacity of and access to the food system to reduce disparities in food security and nutrition in the county
- Support the health and wellness of community youth through expanded school health initiatives

These goals were approached from within a collective impact framework.

<https://collectiveimpactforum.org/rum.org/>



## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ **8** school food pantries are supported in the rural areas permanently providing food outlets in these remote areas.
- ▶ There have been **6** Cochise Leadership cohorts (over **100** participants) who have developed community projects throughout the county.
- ▶ **11** Healthy Community Committees made over **125** community engagements with Policy, Systems, or Environmental changes with their committee and in their community.
- ▶ Cochise County sustained food distribution with our partnership of the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona.

# Commercial Horticulture

**Joshua Sherman**

Area Agent, Commercial Horticulture

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**T**ree nuts, fruit trees, and vines contribute over \$200 million to Arizona's economy on an annual basis. More than 48,000 acres are planted in tree nuts and vines. To date, less than half of the acreage in pecan and pistachio is in the fruit-bearing age. Therefore, the future economic impact is expected to rise. Cochise County supports the majority of pecan, pistachio, and wine produced in the state of Arizona. In all these perennial crops, fungal or bacterial pathogens, mineral nutrition deficiencies, and salinity toxicity can significantly impact mortality, quality, and yield. The Commercial Horticulture program has collaborated with plant pathology specialists, both nationally and internationally, with multi-state level approaches to research these biotic agents' development and lifecycles, mineral nutrition treatments, rootstock performance, and best treatment options.



There are three American Viticulture Areas (AVA) that are federally recognized in the state of Arizona. The designated AVA's include Sonoita/Elgin, Willcox, and now Verde Valley. This program is directly responsible for the annual UArizona Viticulture Symposium. More than 78% of the state's total grape production is in Cochise County; therefore, this program seeks grant funding, organizes education, and evaluates the grape producers' viticulture needs annually.



The demand for learning about horticulture and farm business planning has grown in Cochise County, with a specific interest in developing their produce, fruits, and nuts on small acreage farms, focusing on sustainable agriculture, and improving soil health the priority. This program is designed to support and protect Cochise County food producers and their investments, large and small alike.

## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ **164** producers attended the 27th Annual Arizona Pecan Growers conference where **15** local and national experts presented on critical topics on the cultivation of pecan.
- ▶ **21** people attended the Beginning Farmer/Rancher Education course that covered weed control, food safety, marketing beef, horses, cover crops, and pecans/pistachios.
- ▶ **57** producers attended the International Pepper Conference featuring **27** national and international experts presented on topics related to the pepper industry.

## Commercial Livestock

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Area Agent, Livestock

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 @UALivestockExtensionSoutheasternAZ

**C**ommercial beef extension programs equip cattle producers to make informed decisions regarding herd health and management, cattle nutrition, genetics, and stock selection, food and product safety, the economics of profitability, sustainability, and the well-being of animals, and public perception of the beef industry as a whole. Commercial beef production in Cochise County is primarily composed of cow-calf operations (ranches) that utilize a variety of federal, state, and private lands for grazing cattle, several feed yards, and a livestock auction yard. There are approximately 335 cattle operations in the county raising 57,000 head of cattle. As a whole, the Cochise County beef industry contributes \$34.5 million in sales to the economy. In addition to the economic contributions, ranches maintain working landscapes and healthy rangelands that also benefit wildlife and public recreation.



### *Because of the Cochise County Commercial Livestock Program...*

- *Ranchers are better equipped to make decisions that improve herd health, develop cattle that match their forage resources, increase pounds of healthy calves produced, and enhance the value of their livestock..*
- *Properly managed livestock grazing supports healthy rangelands and wildlife habitat.*
- *More operations utilizing and benefit from implementing low-stress animal handling and other consumer-driven guidelines from the Beef Quality Assurance program.*

## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ Southeastern Arizona Farm and Ranch Trade Show included a livestock education component alongside the trade show. Topics covered included rangeland plant ID/Toxic plants, mineral programs for grazing cattle, and adding value to your herd.
- ▶ **39** producers attended The Range Livestock Nutrition Workshop which included hands on breakout sessions on emergency care and animal husbandry skills.
- ▶ **3** workshops targeting Beginning Farmers and Ranchers were held in the spring/summer (in conjunction with commercial horticulture programs).
- ▶ **12** beef producers attended The 2nd annual Southeastern Arizona Artificial Insemination Clinic that was held in Green Valley. This three-day workshop taught producers how to take advantage of AI on their operations.
- ▶ **10** articles were published in the Arizona Cattlelog, official publication of the ACGA
- ▶ **4** issues of "Arizona Range and Livestock News" were distributed to **464** readers per issue across Southeastern Arizona.

# Commercial Production Agriculture

Randy Norton

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Production of field crops in the Cochise County area is very diverse including but not limited to corn (silage and grain), small grains (wheat and barley), alfalfa, dry beans (pinto and other assorted types), cotton, and grain sorghum. Rising production costs associated with seed, fertilizer, water, and energy are making it difficult for growers to remain profitable at current commodity price levels. Recent technological advances such as transgenics, innovative pest control chemistries, improved varieties and hybrids, and site specific management technologies, to name a few, have the potential to help growers regain competitiveness in a global production marketplace. Implementation of these new technological advances can be daunting for the grower. Our responsibility in Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station is to develop sound recommendations through research and demonstration of how best to implement these new advances in an economically and agronomically sustainable fashion.



During the calendar year 2022, several research projects were conducted to continue to refine current recommendations and to evaluate new technologies and their application to production systems in Cochise County. These projects included corn hybrid evaluations with several hybrids containing novel genetics providing new options for control of corn earworm, evaluation of currently available cotton cultivars with the new ThryvOn transgenic trait (from Bayer CropScience) for control of early season insect pests and mid-season lygus control, and evaluation of several winter forage varieties of wheat and triticale. The winter forage trial has the potential to find viable replacements for summer forages (particularly corn silage and alfalfa) that can have a dramatic decrease in the amount of supplemental irrigation water needed to produce a crop. Results from 2022 projects along with summaries of previous years' work were presented at several grower field days and meetings during 2022 and early 2023. These meetings included a crops and cotton specific field day (July 2022 and November 2022 respectively), Southeast Arizona Farm and Ranch Trade Show (February 2023) along with numerous individual farm visits to clientele across the southeast region of Arizona.

## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ **6** individual field trials were conducted in Cochise County focusing on local production agricultural needs. Results from these and other trials were disseminated to local stakeholders through a variety of field days and meetings conducted in the southeastern Arizona region. New varieties and hybrids are adopted by local producers based upon results generated from variety and hybrid testing programs.
- ▶ Over **30** field site visits were conducted with local producers to identify and evaluate issues and solutions to agricultural production problems
- ▶ Over **\$150,000** annually in grants and gifts is brought in to support this research and education program. This funding comes from commodity groups, agricultural industry, and from federal agencies.

# Consumer Horticulture

**Joshua Sherman**

Area Agent, Commercial Horticulture  
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**M**aster Gardeners (MG) are a vital part of consumer horticulture programming and education provided to our community by the Cooperative Extension. Initially conceived at Washington State University in 1973, and arriving in Arizona in 1983, the Extension Master Gardeners program attendees are trained volunteers who successfully complete a 16-week class series followed by 50 community volunteer hours to receive certification. They support the UArizona Cooperative Extension by providing science-based information on environmentally responsible gardening and landscaping practices and skills to the public. This is possible due to an educational demonstration garden (Discovery Gardens at UArizona Sierra Vista), monthly workshops (the MG Workshops series), by answering countless questions from the public which are received in the Master Gardener office and at Farmers' Markets Plant Clinics and providing one-on-one consultations or demonstrations. Today, the need for these volunteers continues to grow between the uniqueness of our local desert-adapted plant species, the increasing number of new arrivals, and interest and demand for gardening-related advice.



### *Because of the Cochise County Master Gardener Program...*

- *Improvement of the natural environment through public education which leads to the wise use of natural resources and efficient gardening practices and skills.*
- *Increased residents' access to UA Cooperative Extension through their broad and continuous public presence through workshops offered, public questions answered, and referrals to research-based information.*
- *Hands on education is provided to community members with the latest horticultural information from the University of Arizona, about environmentally friendly landscapes which lead to wise water use, reduced pesticide use, and successful desert landscapes.*

### **Jan Groth, Assistant in Extension**

Master Gardener Instructor & Program Coordinator  
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## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ **1,820** Volunteer Hours were served in the Master Gardener Program
- ▶ **40** new Master Gardener students completed the 2022 MG Class series by Zoom
- ▶ **8** in-person workshops and **5** Zoom classes were offered to our community
- ▶ **424** community members attended Zoom and live, in-person workshops/classes
- ▶ **6** public community events were offered
- ▶ **10** published articles were written for local newspaper and W magazine
- ▶ **390** phone calls returned to community members to answer their questions
- ▶ **12** Continuing Education talks were given to our Master Gardeners once monthly
- ▶ **236** students, K-12, visited the Discovery Gardens on field trips.
- ▶ More than **1,600** packets of Master Gardener packaged seeds were given out free with gardening advice at SV Farmers' Market

# Financial Literacy

**Evelyn Whitmer**

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**F**inancial literacy is an area that addresses all social economic status subgroups, age groups (children and adults), differing cultures, and in rural, urban, and tribal settings. The national Financial Capability Study (2022) conducted every three years by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, shows Arizona residents fare worse in comparison to national averages on having an emergency fund (AZ 51%, US 53%), spending more than income (AZ 22%, US 19%), and experiencing difficulty covering expenses (AZ 15%, US 10%). Through a partnership with the Norton school's Take Charge America Institute for Consumer Financial Education and Research, Cochise County provides this financial literacy program as part of a multi-county effort. 586 participants reported specific "spending leaks" over the course of one year averaging \$2,369 annually or \$45 per week.



## *Because of the Cochise County Financial Literacy Program...*

- Participants report increased competencies in financial literacy skills.*
- Learned skills to shop on a budget.*
- Participants increased awareness of personal values and choices pertaining to finances.*
- Increased intentions to make behavioral changes pertaining to personal financial practices.*



## **2022 - By The Numbers**

- ▶ **42%** of participants have started a savings.
- ▶ **27%** developed a spending plan.
- ▶ **23%** reduced spending leaks.
- ▶ **25%** of participants will now concentrate on purchasing only items that are needed.
- ▶ **77%** can explain interest rates and loan terms.
- ▶ **78%** can explain benefits of prepayments to loan principal.
- ▶ **78%** can tell the difference between facts and myths on credit reports.
- ▶ **80%** can think of ways to improve their credit score.
- ▶ **77%** can calculate and compare costs of borrowing money.

## Nutrition Education

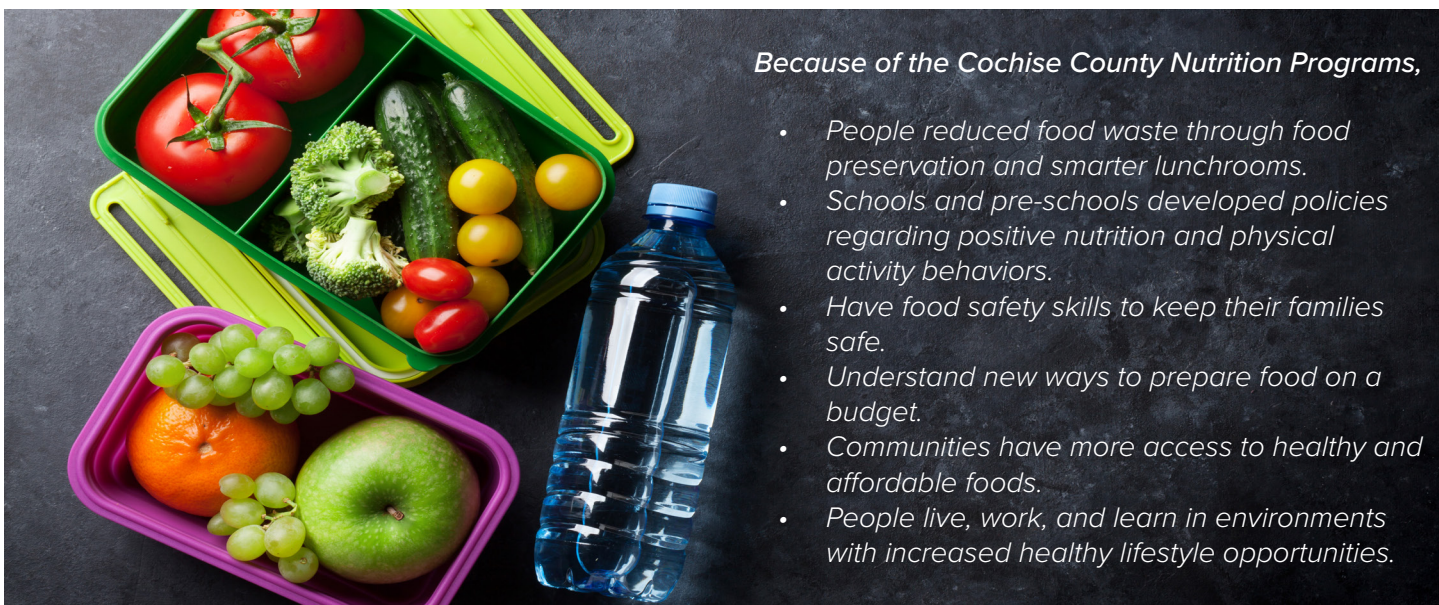
**Evelyn Whitmer**

Area Agent, Family, Consumer, and  
Health Sciences

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Our SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program –Education), or AZ Health Zone, serves community sites, coalitions, schools, families, and individuals that meet SNAP eligibility.

The USDA Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is designed to assist limited-resource audiences to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and to change behaviors necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to participant’s development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being.



*Because of the Cochise County Nutrition Programs,*

- *People reduced food waste through food preservation and smarter lunchrooms.*
- *Schools and pre-schools developed policies regarding positive nutrition and physical activity behaviors.*
- *Have food safety skills to keep their families safe.*
- *Understand new ways to prepare food on a budget.*
- *Communities have more access to healthy and affordable foods.*
- *People live, work, and learn in environments with increased healthy lifestyle opportunities.*

### **Nutrition Education Staff:**

**SNAP-Ed - Rhegan Derfus:** rheganz@arizona.edu

**EFNEP - Cynthia Aspengren:** caspengr@arizona.edu

## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ **100%** of program participants committed to making a policy regarding the physical environment, behavior, or system changes in their classroom or school.
- ▶ **2** elementary school lunchrooms changed their physical environments and systems of food delivery to increase healthy food consumption and reduce food waste through the Smarter Lunchrooms Program impacting **500** school-aged children.
- ▶ **100%** of participants showed improvement in one or more diet quality indicators (eating fruits, vegetables, drinking less regular soda (not diet), drinking less fruit punch, fruit drinks, sweet tea, or sports drinks, and cooking dinner at home.
- ▶ **91%** of participants showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices (cook dinner at home, compare food prices, plan meals before shopping, look in refrigerator or cupboard before shopping)
- ▶ **86%** Children and youth improve their abilities to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Recommendations or gain knowledge.
- ▶ **61%** Children and youth use safe food handling practices more often or gain knowledge.
- ▶ **67%** Children and youth improve their physical activity practices or gain knowledge.

## Parenting

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The Parenting program uses the research-based Positive Parenting curriculum by Jane Nelson designed to teach young people to become responsible, respectful, and resourceful members of their communities. Positive discipline teaches the importance of social and life skills. This program is a multi-county effort and program information is cumulative.

In Cochise County only 66% of families receive prenatal care where 3 out of 10 Latina pregnant people in the border counties receive inadequate or no prenatal care. In Arizona, 13.7% of birthing parents reported having postpartum depression of those 32% were under the age of 19 and 35% lived in the rural areas. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Arizona has increased over the past two years. The highest ACE among children was divorced or separated parents (26%) and children that lacked the basics like food or housing was at 12% (ADHS Health Assessment, 2021). According to John Geldhof, behavioral and health sciences-Oregon University, all parents benefit from evidence-based parenting. Parents who have attended classes and learned effective discipline and parenting techniques report having children with higher grades, fewer behavior problems, less substance abuse issues, better mental health and greater social competence (Geldhof, 2016).



### *Because of the Cochise County Parenting Program...*

- *Parents have improved child rearing attitudes and behaviors.*
- *Parents have improved their parental effectiveness.*
- *Parents are learning skills to be more self-sufficient, mentally stable, healthy and to positively contribute to society.*

## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ There was a **16%** increase in the parental ability to see things from their child's perspective and the child's needs.
- ▶ There has been a **13%** decrease in the use of spanking as a discipline tool.
- ▶ There was a **9%** increase in assigning of age-appropriate roles to children.
- ▶ **42%** of parents have reduced yelling at their child(ren).
- ▶ **57%** have changed their behavior to respond to their child(ren) with kindness and firmness at the same time.
- ▶ **66%** of parents learned new ways to take care of themselves then they are feeling stressed.



# Rangeland Management

**Kim McReynolds**

Area Agent, Natural Resources

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**R**angelands are important to society for the goods and services they produce and for the ecological services they provide. There is a need to balance livestock grazing with natural resources. This is especially important as livestock producers have been reducing and managing herds as a result of drought conditions for the last two decades. Applied research is conducted to help answer land management questions that producers are interested in. Workshops are held that teach various subjects relating to rangeland management, monitoring, livestock nutrition, and other identified needs requested by clientele. Work is done collaboratively at both the local and state levels in partnership with ranchers, US Forest Service (USFS), Natural Resources Conservation Service, local Natural Resource Conservation Districts, and the Arizona Land and Water Trust. Ranches are monitored for long-term soil and vegetation trends.

## *Because of the Rangeland Management Program...*

- *Ranchers and land management agency personnel have a better understanding of rangeland management and monitoring.*
- *Long-term rangeland monitoring data is available for USFS permittees and private/state land lessees to use in management decisions, and for federal employees to use in resource analysis.*
- *Healthy rangelands support livestock production, wildlife habitat, and other natural resource benefits for society.*



## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ **73** sites on **25** USFS allotments were monitored. An additional **10** sites on **3** private/state ranches were monitored. Monitoring reports were prepared for each allotment and given to agencies and ranchers.
- ▶ An additional **\$70,000** was obtained in a grant to support the monitoring program.
- ▶ Held or participated as a presenter in **6** workshops/meetings focusing on soil health, range monitoring, forage nutrition, and wildlife habitat.

# Water Wise

**Ashley Wright**

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facebook.com/waterwise

Water availability is one of the most important natural resource and economic issues in Cochise County. Groundwater overdraft threatens to impact the federally protected San Pedro River National Conservation Riparian Area and the headquarters of U.S. Army Intelligence at Fort Huachuca. As the groundwater table lowers, it can impact the San Pedro River (in 2000, ecotourism contributed \$17 to \$28.3 million to the local community) and reduce missions on Ft. Huachuca which contribute an estimated \$2.68 billion to the County (Huachuca 50, 2018). The University of Arizona-Cochise County Cooperative Extension's Water Wise Program is a key educational water conservation program in the county by providing solutions that empower citizens to conserve groundwater and helps communities and the economy remain strong.

### Here's how Water Wise helps:

- With educational events teaching citizens about drip irrigation, rainwater systems, low water landscape plants and design, good watering practices, septic care; and annual Rainwater and Off-the-Grid Tours when in-person events are possible.
- With specialized on-site home and business visits providing specific conservation actions and follow-up.
- By partnering with Master Gardeners, municipalities, businesses, non-profits, citizens, and schools on conservation projects.
- By providing water conservation lessons to youth throughout Cochise County in school classrooms and special presentations for additional youth programs.
- Providing water conservation resources through website <https://waterwise.arizona.edu/> and social media channels.

The Cooperative Extension eased back into some in-person events after two years of pandemic restrictions. The Water Wise Program recognizes the value of both in-person and online programming and after the hiring of a new Water Wise Community Outreach Professional in May of 2022, the program held several different kinds of in-person and recorded online Zoom sessions, which were then lightly edited and uploaded to our YouTube channel.



### Water Wise Staff

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## 2022 - By The Numbers

- ▶ Water Wise Community Outreach had **308** direct adult contacts through **25** workshops, presentations, tables, events, and consultations.
- ▶ **78%** of participants rated workshops/webinars as 'highly valuable'.
- ▶ Water Wise Youth had **2,684** student instructional hours over **128** lessons, including **5** full-school visits where Youth Specialist taught an entire school in one day.
- ▶ **3** videos of talks were uploaded to YouTube, which has seen a **62%** increase in subscribers over the past year. Water Wise Kids' Story Time remains most popular content, with **96.9%** of the total watch time (**3,327** hours).
- ▶ Water Wise Community and Youth collaborated with several entities:
  1. Arizona Department of Health Services to help administer a grant to test for heavy metals in well water
  2. Bisbee Science Lab to develop a Hydrology exhibit for their mobile lab
  3. Land at Home Project to bring sustainable agriculture education to Cochise County Veterans.





**COCHISE COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

[extension.arizona.edu/cochise](http://extension.arizona.edu/cochise)

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