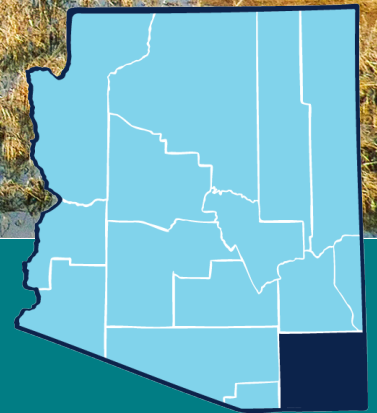
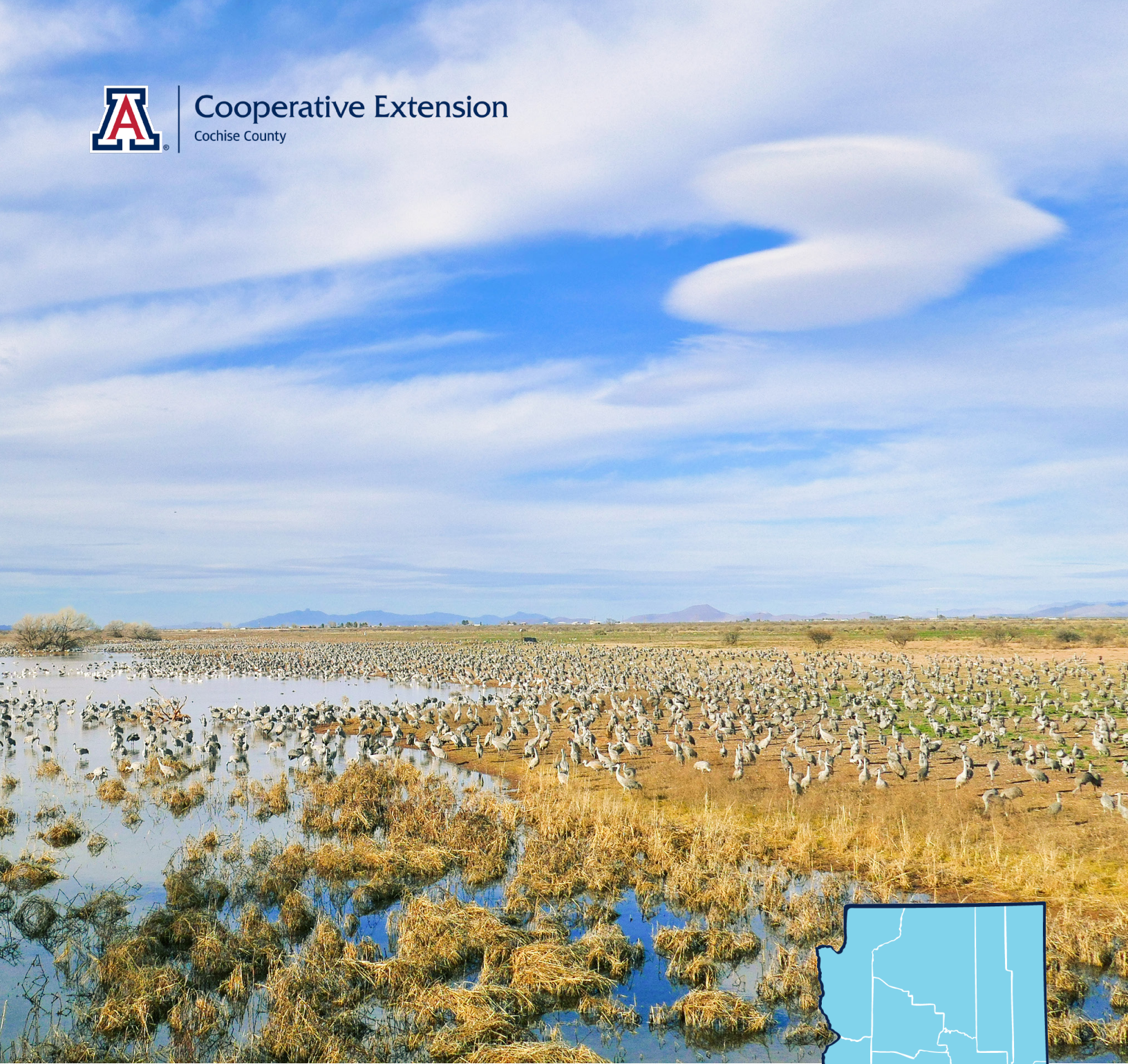




Cooperative Extension  
Cochise County



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

# Cochise County Cooperative Extension

*Engaging with people through applied research and education to improve lives, families, communities, the environment and economies in Arizona and beyond.*



# Cochise County Cooperative Extension

## 2023 Annual Report



Photo Credit: Savanna McReynolds, AmeriCorps

### Contents

From the Director .....	1	Water Wise .....	10
Cooperative Extension .....	2	4-H Youth Development .....	11-12
Extension Advisory Board .....	3	Family, Consumer & Health Sciences ..	13
Ag & Natural Resources.....	4	Building Healthy Communities .....	14
Rangeland Management.....	5	Financial Literacy.....	15
Commercial Livestock .....	6	Nutrition .....	16
Commercial Production Agriculture.....	7	Parenting.....	17
Consumer Horticulture .....	8	Financial.....	18
Economic Development.....	9	Faculty/Staff List .....	19

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## From the Director



Through investment in the local community, Cooperative Extension touches the lives, directly or indirectly, of all citizens in Cochise County through 4-H youth development, building healthy community programs, horticulture and livestock programs, family and consumer health programs, rangeland management, and natural resource conservation.

Regardless of the program, Extension expertise meets public needs at the local level through the collaboration of volunteers, stakeholders, advisory board, faculty, and staff. Through partnering with agencies at the county, state, and federal levels we serve communities and families, support agriculture, and empower youth to become leaders. Some of our partners include Cochise County Government, the University of Arizona, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Cooperative Extension provides economic impact to Cochise County. For every dollar of State funding invested in Cochise Cooperative Extension, there is a return of **\$2.62** to the economy of Cochise County.

As Arizona's Land Grant University, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension is at the forefront in meeting ever changing needs and still managing to retain the rural, agricultural lifestyle and economy that makes Cochise County a desirable place to live and conduct business.

### **Carol Holden**

Director, Cochise County Cooperative Extension

[carolholden@arizona.edu](mailto:carolholden@arizona.edu)

# Cochise County Cooperative Extension Organization

Cochise County Cooperative Extension (CCCE) is an Extension Unit of the University of Arizona, housed under the Division of Agriculture, Life, and Veterinary Sciences and Cooperative Extension. We have two locations in Cochise County:

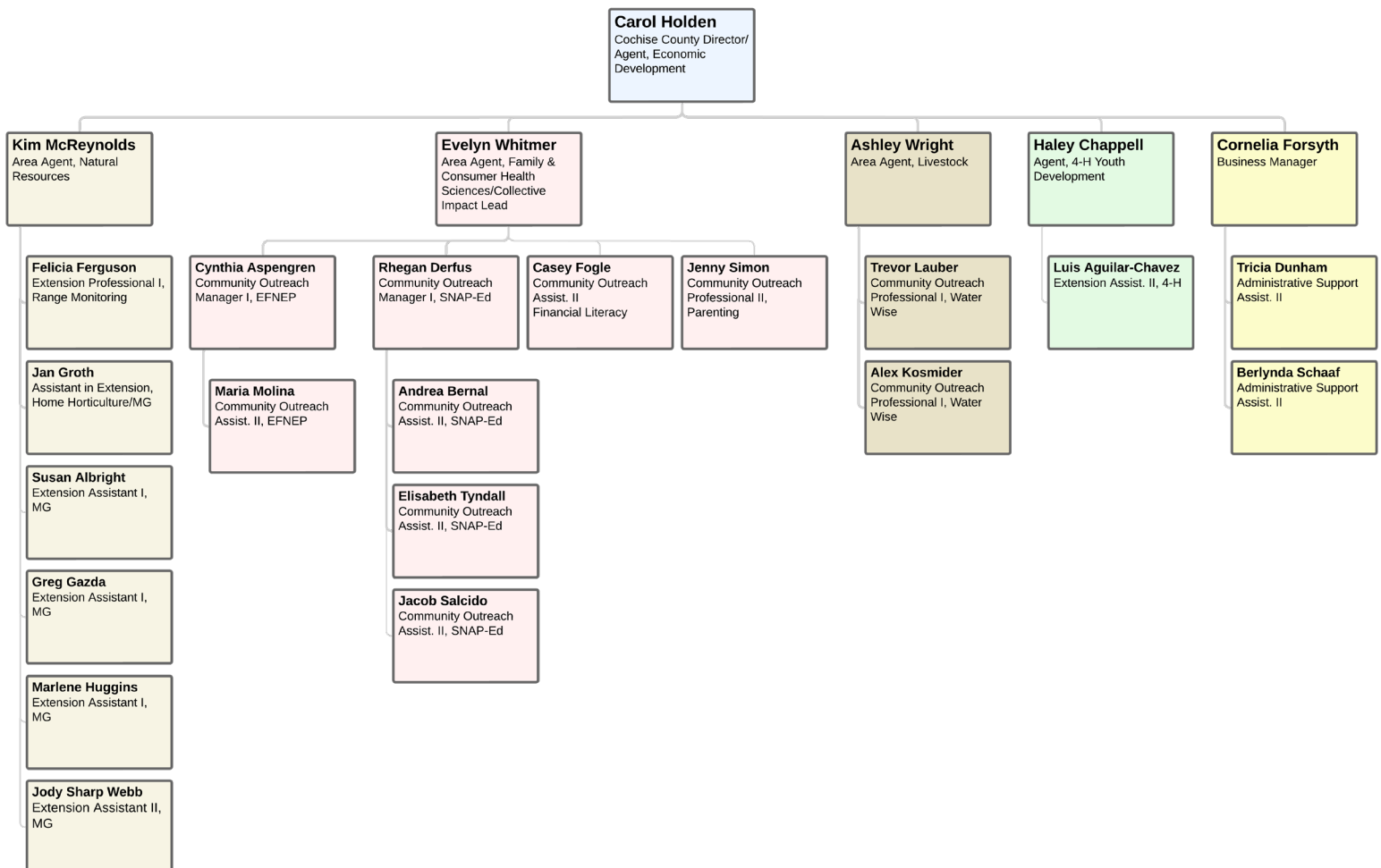


**Willcox Office**  
 450 S Haskell Ave, Ste A  
 Willcox, AZ 85643  
 520-384-3594



**Sierra Vista Office**  
 1140 N Colombo  
 Sierra Vista, AZ 85635  
 520-458-8278 x2

Cochise County Cooperative Extension Organization Chart  
 Current Employees as of December 31, 2023





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# Cochise County Cooperative Extension Advisory Board

Per ARS Title 3, the Cochise County Board of Supervisors appoints our 10-person Cochise County Cooperative Extension Advisory Board. Our Advisory Board meets on a quarterly basis. Agendas are posted on our website at: <https://extension.arizona.edu/cochise>, at our offices, 450 S Haskell Ave, Ste A, Willcox, AZ and 1140 N Colombo, Sierra Vista, AZ. Meetings are held in a hybrid format, with some people attending online and others attending at the meeting location. Our Advisory Boards provide essential input to help us achieve our goals. Per University of Arizona guidance, external advisory boards are not governing bodies, but they do provide direction, build networks and partnerships, and help raise funds.

## Continuing Members

	Term Expires
Nathan Watkins (Chair), Ag & Natural Resources	06/30/2025
Moiria White (Vice-Chair), Ag & Natural Resources/4-H	06/30/2024
Aaron Cardona, Ag & Natural Resources	06/30/2025
Tyler Curry, Ag & Natural Resources	06/30/2024
Julia Johnson, 4-H	06/30/2024
Dennis Moroney, Ag & Natural Resources	06/30/2024
Alan Seitz, Ag & Natural Resources	06/30/2024
Jason Zibart, Family Consumer Health Sciences	06/30/2025

## New Appointments

Ron Bemis, Ag & Natural Resources	06/30/2025
Amber Morin, Ag & Natural Resources	06/30/2025

## Resigned Members

	Resignation Date
Gwen Calhoun, Family Consumer Health Sciences	06/2023
Barbara Clark, Ag & Natural Resources	06/2023
Daniella Reidmiller, Family Consumer Health Sciences	06/2023
Paul Sebesta, Ag & Natural Resources	06/2023
James Stewart, Ag & Natural Resources	06/2023



## **Agriculture and Natural Resources**

Our Agriculture and Natural Resource Agents deliver research-based information to stakeholders and producers in Natural Resources, Rangeland Management, Livestock, and Commercial Horticulture. Complementing their expertise, University-trained Master Gardener volunteers impart best practices tailored for gardening in our arid desert environment, while Water Wise provides water conservation education.







Rangeland Monitoring on the NI Ranch

## Rangeland Management and Natural Resources Program

Rangelands 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 Resource 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.

In 2023, **70 sites on 20 USFS allotments were monitored**, along with an **additional 7 sites on 2 private/state ranches**. Monitoring reports were prepared for each allotment and given to agencies and ranchers.

An additional **\$83,000 was obtained in grant support** for the monitoring program.

Presented or participated in **4 workshops/meetings** focusing on brush management, range monitoring, forage nutrition, livestock poisoning plants, and how to check your well registration.

**2 field responses to sudden livestock deaths.**

Participated in **16 Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Partnership meetings**, planning sessions, workgroups, and a project tour. Co-chair of the Restoration Partnership and Chair of the Grasslands/Rangeland working group.

**Area Agent, Kim McReynolds** has been serving Cochise, Graham, and Greenlee Counties since 1995 and also serves as Extension Director in Greenlee County. In the summer of 2022, **Felicia Ferguson** joined CCCE as an Extension Professional I, Range Monitoring.



Kim McReynolds



Felicia Ferguson



## Commercial Livestock Program

Commercial beef extension programs equip cattle producers to make informed decisions regarding herd health and management, cattle nutrition, genetics, stock selection, food and product safety, the economics of profitability, sustainability, 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 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 utilize and benefit from implementing low-stress animal handling and other consumer-driven guidelines from the Beef Quality Assurance program.

The Southeastern Arizona Farm and Ranch Trade Show included a livestock education component alongside the trade show. Topics covered included understanding EPDs, Heat Stress, Herd Health for Reproduction, and a Trich Testing demonstration. **39 Producers attended** the Range Livestock Nutrition Workshop which included hands on breakout sessions on emergency care and animal husbandry skills.

**Over 200 producers** were reached at local bull sales with important updates on prescription only antibiotics, FMD, and Protein/Mineral Supplementation.

**66 Producers** attended the 2023 Range Livestock Nutrition workshop to learn about toxic plants, vaccination protocols, nutrition, record-keeping, and virtual fencing.

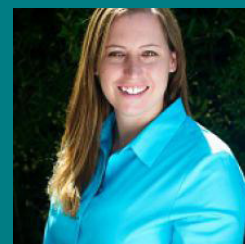
**27 Producers** were certified in Beef Quality Assurance.

**12 Beef producers** attended the 3rd annual Southeastern Arizona Artificial Insemination Clinic. This three-day workshop taught producers how to take advantage of AI on their operations.

**12 Articles** were published in local, regional, and national newsletters addressing emerging issues in Arizona's beef industry.

**4 Issues** of the "Arizona Range and Livestock News" were distributed to **464 readers** per issue across Southeastern Arizona.

**Area Livestock Agent, Ashley Wright** has been with CCCE since May of 2016 and oversees the Commercial Livestock Program in Cochise, Pima, and Santa Cruz Counties. Programs focus on Beef Cattle production, primarily with Cow-Calf producers, with a small amount of work in other livestock species such as equine, small ruminant, and backyard poultry.







## Commercial Production Agriculture Program

Field crop production in Cochise County is very diverse including corn (silage and grain), small grains (wheat and barley), alfalfa, dry beans (pinto and other types), cotton, grain sorghum, potatoes, etc. Rising production costs associated with seed, fertilizer, water, and energy are making it difficult for growers to remain profitable at current commodity price levels.

Technological advances such as transgenics, innovative pest control chemistries, improved varieties and hybrids, and site specific management technologies have the potential to help growers remain competitive in a global production marketplace. Implementation of these new technological advances can be daunting for growers. Our responsibility in Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station is to develop recommendations through research and demonstration of how best to implement these new advances in an economically and agronomically sustainable fashion.

In 2023, several research projects were conducted to continue to refine recommendations and to evaluate new technologies and their application to production systems in Cochise County. These projects involved evaluating corn hybrids with novel genetic traits aimed at controlling corn earworm, assessing available cotton cultivars with new ThryvOn transgenic traits (from Bayer CropScience) for managing early-season insect pests and mid-season lygus control, and examining herbicide tolerance traits.

Our research program assumed responsibility for a USDA grant funded project “Trees of the Future” which is a collaborative effort among several Universities to examine topics related to pecan production in the US. We will capture data related to the phenological

stages of pecan growth and development and conduct surveys of the occurrence of pathogens affecting pecans in Arizona.

In 2023, we continued the evaluation of over **20 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 nearly **20% decrease** in the amount of supplemental irrigation water needed to produce a crop.

Results from these projects, along with summaries of previous years’ work were presented at grower field days and meetings. These meetings included a crops and cotton specific field day (July 2023 and October 2023 respectively), along with numerous individual farm visits to clientele across the southeast region of Arizona.

**20 Individual field trials** were conducted in Cochise and Graham counties focusing on local production agricultural needs including variety and hybrid testing, management of soil pathogens including rootknot nematode and Texas root rot, nitrogen fertility enhancement.

**Over 30 field site visits** were conducted with local producers to identify and evaluate issues and solutions to agricultural production problems

**Over \$200,000 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.

**Commercial Production Agriculture Area Agent, Dr. Randy Norton** has been with Arizona Cooperative Extension since 1991 serving Cochise and Graham Counties. He also serves as Director of both Graham County Cooperative Extension and the Safford Agricultural Experiment Station.





## Consumer Horticulture Program

Master Gardeners (MG) are a vital part of consumer horticulture education and programming provided to our community by Cooperative Extension. The program was conceived at Washington State University in 1973 and arrived in Arizona in 1983. The Master Gardeners are a group of trained volunteers who complete a 16-week class series followed by 50 community volunteer hours to receive certification. They support Cooperative Extension and the community with educational outreach by providing science-based education on environmentally responsible gardening and landscaping practices, land stewardship, and wise use of water. Community education is provided by: Monthly public workshops, Farmers' Market presence, Seed Library to give free seeds and advice, phone & email questions from the public answered, Spring & Fall Plant Sales with educational pre-sale plant talks, our School Field Trip Program, "on-the-road" public talks, and above all, **Discovery Gardens, Cochise County's first educational botanical garden**. Today, the need for MG volunteers continues to grow due to the increasing number of new residents, the uniqueness of our High Desert native and desert-adapted plants, increased interest in home gardening, and the demand for gardening-related advice.

### In 2023 the Master Gardener Program:

Had **2,287 Volunteer Hours** that were served by the Master Gardener Program.

**28 Students** completed the 2023 MG Class Series.

**15 In-person MG Workshops** were offered to our community members, all with full attendance.

**2 Educational** pre-plant sale Plant Talks offered, each with **120+ attendees**.

**965 Community members** attended in-person workshops and classes.

**6 Community events** were offered: 3 symphony concerts, 2 Plant Sales featuring 100+ plant varieties, 350+ attended "Cocoa in the Gardens with Santa", our free Holiday Event.

**8 Published articles** were written for local newspaper and NABUR Magazine

Approximately **588 public questions** were answered by email or phone.

**11 Continuing Education** talks were given to active Master Gardeners at monthly meetings.

**125 K-12 students** have come to the Discovery Gardens for our recently re-opened School Field Trip program, a 2-hour visit.

**40-70 people** visit our Farmers' Market informational booth each month, depending on the season.

**50-150 free seed packets** are handed out with gardening advice at our Farmers' Market booth each month.

**Assistant in Extension, Jan Groth** oversees the Cochise County Master Gardener Program. Jan has been with CCCE since 2012. Complementing her efforts are four MG Extension Assistants: Susan Albright, Greg Gazda, Marlene Huggins, and Jody Sharp-Webb.







## Economic Development Program

The Cooperative Extension plays a pivotal role in fortifying local and regional economies through its dedicated efforts in providing communities and organizations with vital programming and resources. Its mission encompasses bolstering existing businesses, fostering an entrepreneurial culture, and enriching the overall quality of life, all while upholding the integrity of the area's natural resources.

In Cochise County, the initiation of Economic Development endeavors in 2023 marked a significant milestone with the hiring of Carol Holden as the Economic Development Agent. Throughout the year, Economic Development took on various facets aimed at catalyzing growth and sustainability.

Programming in Cochise County for 2023 centered on a series of impactful activities. These included engaging small business owners in constructive dialogues to discern their needs, collaborating with executive directors and boards of nonprofits to facilitate grant-seeking initiatives aligned with their missions, and actively participating in scenario planning sessions with a dedicated committee.

This committee focused on preserving Cochise County's rural, agricultural heritage while exploring innovative strategies to conserve water resources.

In particular, the achievements of the Economic Development program in 2023 include:

- Conducted **needs assessment survey with 63 business professionals** to assess the adequacy of resources available for small businesses within the county.
- Engaged with **2 economic development groups** in Cochise County to identify areas where Extension could offer support and bridge resource gaps.
- Provided consultation services to **five nonprofit organizations**, guiding them in refining their financial recordkeeping practices and navigating the intricacies of grant application processes.

These endeavors underscore CCCE's commitment to fostering economic resilience and sustainability in Cochise County, paving the way for continued progress and prosperity in the region.

**Carol Holden** was hired in May of 2023 as the Cochise County Cooperative Extension Director and Economic Development Agent. Her main focus is preserving Cochise County's rural, agricultural heritage and exploring new economic development opportunities.





Trevor Lauber at Water Wise Event

## Water Wise Program

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.

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.

In 2023, Water Wise....

Community Outreach had **2,403 direct adult contacts** through **24 workshops, presentations, tables, events, and consultations.**

**Reached 5,642 people** through social media with information on upcoming events and water conservation in Cochise County.

Water Wise Youth taught **177 water conservation lessons in Cochise County schools, reaching 3,683 students.**

**180 property owners** had their wells tested through the Arizona Department of Health Services

**Area Agent Ashley Wright** manages the Water Wise Program. Community Outreach Professional, **Alex Kosmider** provides youth programming in schools to teach children about the importance of water conservation and **Trevor Lauber** provides community workshops, presentations and consultations.







## 4-H Youth Development

4-H is a youth development organization that aims to empower young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. The name 4-H stands for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, which represent the four values the organization seeks to instill in its members. Cochise County 4-H offers programming in a multitude of areas including agriculture, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), leadership, citizenship, and healthy living.



Stronghold 4-H Club Members at the 4-H Large Stock Activity Day Hosted by Maid Rite Feeds





4-H Member Noel Allyn with her Grand Prize Photo



Double Adobe 4-H Club Leaders John Vaughn 30yrs & Ellie Vaughn 25yrs



4-H Member Emma Cosand at the Cochise County Fair

## 4-H Youth Development Program

The 4-H program is focused on positive youth development that provides experiences to enhance the wellbeing and optimal development of youth. The Thriving Model for 4-H Youth Development uses key ingredients that make a positive and high-quality youth development program: facilitation of passion, building relationships, having a sense of belonging, and engagement. Use of this model has shown positive results such as, youth being more academically motivated and successful, less likely to engage in risky behavior, and more likely to make healthy choices.

### In 2023, Cochise County 4-H...

**Engaged 19 dedicated adults as volunteers** for our 4-H Youth Development programs in Cochise County.

**Enrolled 197 youth** into the 4-H Youth Development program, marking an **increase of 37 members** compared to the previous year.

Showcased the talents of **110 youth at the Cochise County Fair** who presented their building projects and exhibited their large and small stock projects.

**Contributed over 230 cans of food** to the November canned food drive as part of our commitment to community service.

Hosted a celebration of accomplishments for our 4-H members on November 17th, with **38 youth and 28 adults** attending the inaugural Cochise County 4-H Awards Banquet.



**Haley Chappel, 4-H Youth Development Agent** joined CCCE in July of 2023. Her main focus is growing the 4-H program in Cochise County, creating fun and engaging Youth Development programming, and recruiting Volunteers to “Make the Best Better”. **Luis Aguilar-Chavez, Extension Assistant II** assisted Haley and facilitated the Juntos program.



Haley Chappel



Luis Aguilar-Chavez





## Family, Consumer and Health Sciences

Cochise County Cooperative Extension's Family, Consumer and Health Sciences programs help build strong families, strong minds, and strong bodies. Parents and caregivers gain tools to enrich children's lives through the SNAP-Ed and EFNEP programs and families benefit from the Parenting and Financial Literacy programs.



Community Outreach Assistant, Andrea Bernal teaching Willcox Middle School about healthy eating



Members of the Benson Community Resource Council

## Building Healthy Communities Program

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 food 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 of this grant. The resulting 3-year (funded for an additional 2 years) Building Healthy Communities initiative has had three major goals:

Increase the community’s 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.

In 2023 Whitmer & Wright secured a three-year USDA NIFA HSI grant to continue working on food access in the county.

### Because of the BHC Project:

There was an increase in food and fresh produce distributed in the county.

Leaders and emergent leaders were trained and provided projects to mitigate the Social Determinants of Health.

Committees met to work on needs in their communities.

These goals were approached from within a collective impact framework. <https://collectiveimpactforum.org/rum.org/>

### In 2023, the BHC Program:

**Distributed 183,104 pounds of fresh produce** through a produce rescue service with the assistance of the Healthy Community Committee (HCC).

**54 Thousand pounds of food** was collected and distributed to food access points throughout the county with the continuation of the HCC partnerships.

**10 Three-hour leadership courses** were conducted for 13 participants over ten weeks delivering community projects.

**11 Healthy Community Committees** made over **75 community engagements** with Policy, Systems, or Environmental changes within their committee and in their community.

One Leadership Summit was conducted with over **100 participants**.

**Evelyn Whitmer, Family and Consumer Health Sciences Area Full Agent** oversees the Building Healthy Communities Program in Cochise County, leads the state Collective Impact, as well as provides oversight for the state Oral Health Programs.







## Financial Literacy Program

The Arizona Cooperative Extension Needs Assessment (2022) shows personal financial planning as a priority area, especially for younger (14 to 39 years of age), low-income respondents who indicated that the topic was “Extremely” (53%) or “Somewhat” (35%) important (N=364). The National Financial Capability Study (2022) conducted every three years by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, shows that 67% of study respondents in Arizona (N=500) have a low financial literacy score, with Arizona ranking 26th out of 50 states. Results of that study also show Arizona respondents indicating that they have a “Very Difficult” time paying bills (15%) as compared with the national average (10%) and are more likely to have taken a hardship withdrawal from their retirement plans (20%) compared with the national average (14%), and fewer have checking (88% compared with 91% nationally) and savings accounts (67% compared with 72% nationally). The Financial Literacy Program in Cochise County gives participants the ability to understand and make use of a variety of financial skills. This program is available through a partnership with the Norton School of Human Ecology’s Take Charge America Institute for Consumer Financial Education and

Research, and our participation in the Arizona Extension Financial Literacy Working Group. Because of the Cochise County Financial Literacy Program...

Participants report increased competencies in financial literacy skills. After participating in the program, they learned skills to shop on a budget, planned to set aside funds for an emergency and better understand a credit reporting system.

**52% of Participants** of the Cochise County Financial Literacy program plan to pay off bills.

**68% Plan to start a savings account.**

**42% Plan to purchase a needed item.**

Program participants will do the following differently in the future based on what they learned in the workshop:

**58% Will track expenses and reduce spending leaks.**

**55% Plan to spend on needs before wants.**

**60% Plan to develop a spending/savings plan.**

**Evelyn Whitmer, Family and Consumer Health Sciences Area Full Agent** manages the Financial Literacy program. **Casey Fogle, Community Outreach Assistant II**, joined CCCE in August of 2023 and implements the Financial Literacy Program in Cochise County.



Evelyn Whitmer



Casey Fogle



EFNEP Team Member Andrea Bernal at Willcox Middle School

## Nutrition Program (SNAP-Ed & EFNEP)

Our Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) also known as AZ Health Zone, serves diverse community sites, coalitions, schools, families, and individuals who meet SNAP eligibility. Additionally, the USDA Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) assists limited-resource audiences to acquire essential knowledge and skills 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.

### Impact Highlights from 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.

Gained 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.

### In 2023, the Nutrition Program...

Partnered with local farmers and put approximately **\$8,000 into the local economy** through school food purchases, impacting 895 youth, and 75 adults.

Park enhancements, including a new skate park, walking path, playground equipment, water fountain, bathrooms, and shade, resulted from the Physical Activity Resource Assessment (PARA) tool that positively **impacted the 409 youth and 1,626 residents.**

**6 Early Child Education Centers** enhanced their written nutrition policies to improve child, family, and staff health.

**92% of participants** showed improvement in one or more healthy eating habits to improve overall health outcomes.

**54% of participants** improved one or more physical activity behaviors where they exercised for at least 30 minutes to build and strengthen muscles.

**54% of participants showed** improvement in one or more food safety practices to avoid foodborne illnesses.

**Evelyn Whitmer, Family and Consumer Health Sciences Area Full Agent** manages the Cochise County Nutrition program.

**Cynthia Aspengren, Community Outreach Manager I**, manages the EFNEP program and team member, **Maria Molina**, Community Outreach Assistant.

**Rhegan Derfus, Community Outreach Manager I** manages the SNAP-Ed Team of Community Outreach Assistants: **Andrea Bernal, Jacob Salcido, and Elizabeth Tyndall.**



Cynthia Aspengren



Rhegan Derfus





## Parenting Program

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.

Pew Research has found that a staggering 50 percent of parents surveyed are deeply concerned about their children’s mental health, specifically anxiety and depression. Moreover, they are worried about a range of other issues, including bullying, substance abuse, parental stress, and the complexities of raising children in the digital age. Notably, 44 percent of these parents have expressed a desire to raise their children differently from how they were raised. (Pew Research Center, 2023)

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 rural areas. 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...

Families have dramatically moved to a lower risk for child maltreatment and parents have improved child-rearing attitudes and behaviors.

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

### In 2023...

Parents/Guardians increased their **empathy towards their child’s needs by 18%**

Parents/Guardians **decreased the use of corporal punishment by 14%**

High risk parents for maltreatment **dropped corporal punishment by nearly 50%**.

Parents/Guardians increased the **assigning of age-appropriate roles to children by 11%**

Parents/Caregivers **improved how they respond to their children by 36%**

Parents/Caregivers **increased responding to their child(ren) with kindness and firmness at the same time by 57%**

**Evelyn Whitmer, Family and Consumer Health Sciences Area Full Agent** manages the Parenting program. **Casey Fogle**, Community Outreach Assistant II, and **Jenny Simon**, Community Outreach Professional II provide programming.



Casey Fogle



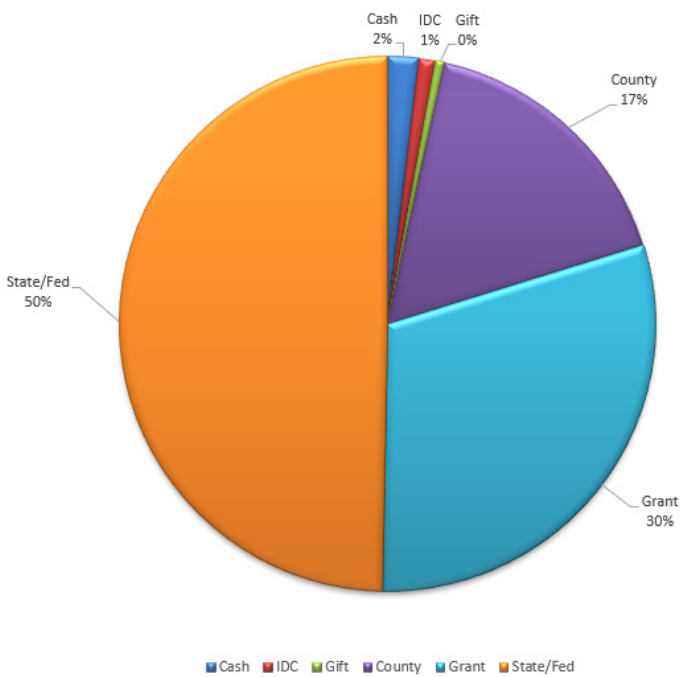
Jenny Simon

# Financial

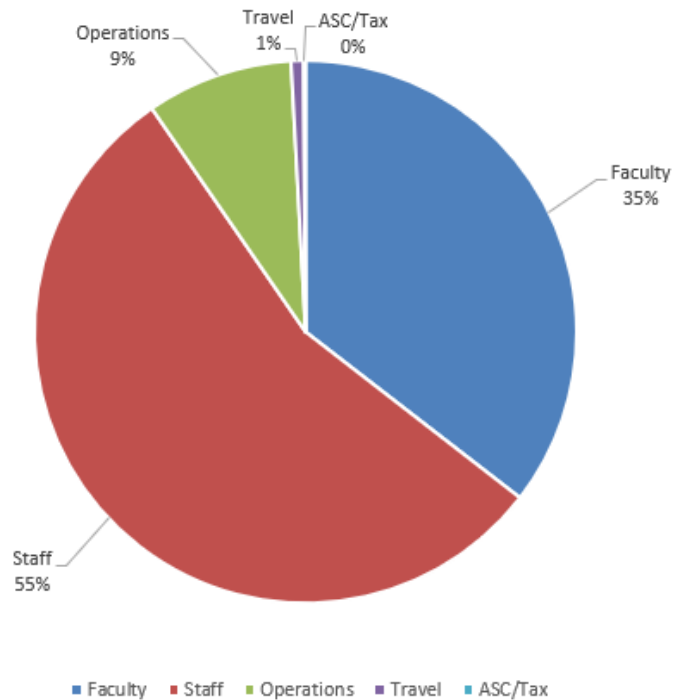
The following is a summary of revenue and expenses for the Cochise County Cooperative Extension. As the State's land grant institution, the University of Arizona administers an expansive effort to bring state, federal, and county funding together to support Cooperative Extension. Staff and programs are further supported by faculty when they are awarded grants, negotiate contracts, or receive donations. County government support includes the provision of reasonable office space for the conduct of Extension work, per State statute ARS Title 3. At Cochise Cooperative Extension, our central office facility is provided by Cochise County, while Sierra Vista offices are leased from the University South Foundation.

In addition to the revenue shown below, some funds reside within UA Foundation accounts where they are earmarked for future program use. In the Expenditure pie chart below, operations and supplies include a wide array of purchases, but most are supplies that are necessary for program delivery such as food for demonstrations or training materials. This category also includes facilities maintenance, utilities, vehicle maintenance, and other standard operating expenses.

**Cochise County Cooperative Extension Revenue 2023**



**Cochise County Cooperative Extension Expenditure 2023**





# Cochise County Cooperative Extension Faculty & Staff List

## Contact Us

Cochise County Cooperative Extension

Website: <https://extension.arizona.edu/cochise>

Willcox Office: 520-384-3594

Sierra Vista Office: 520-458-8278 x2

## Administration:

**Carol Holden**, Cochise Director/Associate Agent, Economic Development

**Connie Forsyth**, Business Manager

**Tricia Dunham**, Administrative Support Assistant II, Willcox

**Berlynda Schaaf**, Administrative Support Assistant II, Sierra Vista

## Faculty

**Haley Chappell**, Assistant Agent, 4-H Youth Development

**Kim McReynolds**, Area Agent, Natural Resources/Greenlee County Director

**Evelyn Whitmer**, Full Area Agent, Family and Consumer Health Sciences

**Ashley Wright**, Area Agent, Livestock

## Program Staff

**Luis Aguilar-Chavez**, Extension Assistant II, 4-H Youth Development

**Cynthia Aspengren**, Community Outreach Manager, EFNEP

**Andrea Bernal**, Community Outreach Assistant II, Nutritional Education

**Rhegan Derfus**, Community Outreach Manager, SNAP-Ed

**Felicia Ferguson**, Extension Assistant Professional, Rangeland Monitoring

**Casey Fogle**, Community Outreach Assistant II, Financial Literacy

**Jan Groth**, Assistant in Extension, Consumer 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

**Jacob Salcido**, Community Outreach Assistant II, Nutrition Education

**Jenny Simon**, Community Outreach Professional II, Parenting

**Mekenna Smith**, Extension Assistant II, 4-H Youth Development

**Elisabeth Tyndall**, Community Outreach Assistant II, Nutrition Education

## 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 Huggins**, Extension Assistant I, Horticulture, On-Call

**Jody Sharp-Webb**, Extension Assistant II, Horticulture, On-Call







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