Cooperative Extension’s Herds and Harvest helps thousands with outreach program

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension was awarded a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development project grant in August 2011 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The program, Herds and Harvest, has become one of Cooperative Extension’s most successful programs.

Scheduled to run until August 2014, the program is designed to help farmers and ranchers develop agricultural entrepreneurship, implement sustainable agricultural marketing strategies and improve profitability through mentoring and outreach. Program emphasis was placed on cultivating long-term relationships with Nevada agriculture producers and building capacity to sustain Nevada agriculture operations.

The program’s success centers on building trust with producers, understanding producer needs and developing educational materials to meet the personal values of producers.

“We have modified and changed the program based on producer needs and wants,” says Staci Emm ’96, Mineral County Extension educator. “Extension, USDA and other Nevada agriculture organizations work diligently to assist producers on several different levels to create and sustain their business.”

Across the state, 32 workshops were offered in-person and via technology, reaching 212 farmers and ranchers. Great Ideas from Growers, a mentoring group, was also created to provide producers from across Nevada the opportunity to learn from each other’s experiences. Twenty-eight producers worked with mentors and experts to create individualized budgets for their agricultural operation.

The Herds and Harvest database now has 2,670 producers. In evaluating the program after its first year, Cooperative Extension found that more than 65 percent of Herds and Harvest participants reported they would make changes in their agricultural business based on what they learned by participating in the program.

Shammy Rodriguez, a cattle producer at the Rhoads Ranch in Elko, Nev., participated in Herds and Harvest in May 2012.

“Herds and Harvest is just one of the many programs I go to,” Rodriguez says. “I always learn a lot from the Extension programs. I don’t think I would have been motivated enough to chase down the information if it weren’t for Extension. In the workshop, they provided many hands-on tools that I can apply at the ranch, and I walked away with all of the questions in my mind answered.”

Currently in year two of the program, the hot topics for upcoming workshops focus on the Wolf Pack Meats certification program, alternative crops and “So You Want to Be a Produce Farmer.” For registration and additional information, contact Jennifer Kintz at the Cooperative Extension, (775) 945-3444.

—Kayla Johnson ’13 (journalism)
Entrepreneurship classes help build a bridge to graduation

Washoe County’s graduation rate is 65 percent overall but only about 50 percent of Hispanic students in our diverse region graduate from high school. Could exploring entrepreneurship motivate young students to stay in school and show them that studying at the University of Nevada, Reno is within reach? Business 104 is a one-credit summer class offered to eighth graders and early high school students in Washoe County. The class, in its third year, is funded by the Thelma B. and Thomas P. Hart Foundation and is coordinated and taught through the Nevada Small Business Development Center in the College of Business. Washoe County School District also partners by identifying students for the class.

The class is part of the University of Nevada, Reno Imagine 2020 Initiative, led by project manager Marcel Fernando Schaerer ’84 (economics), ’89M.S. (economics). In addition to the Thelma B. and Thomas P. Hart Foundation, Imagine 2020 supporters include the Wells Fargo Foundation and AT&T Services, Inc.

Over three weeks, guest speakers discuss entrepreneurship and what is required to take a business idea to market. Students complete hands-on activities to showcase their own unique ideas. The students learn how a business operates and the basic components of a marketing plan. In 2012, the class worked with Port of Subs, an ongoing program partner, on an exercise where groups also presented their own ideas on how to better target the Hispanic population for the sandwich franchisor.

“The goal of this class is to show that learning can be fun as well as profitable,” Schaerer says. “It’s important to show students how to plan and why they should stay in school.”

—Winnie M. Dowling ’85, ’89, ’92MBA is the deputy director of the Nevada Small Business Development Center

The NNIC provides bridge to other cultures

The Northern Nevada International Center (NNIC) hosts delegations invited to the United States under various U.S. Department of State programs. This summer, NNIC will host a group of 70 Fulbright scholars and provide an orientation about their life at an American campus. NNIC organizes these programs with the assistance of faculty in journalism and education as well as community resources.

NNIC is engaged in a wide variety of activities both on campus and in the broader community. Some of NNIC’s accomplishments in the last year included:

• Hosted 500 visitors on nine different programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of State.
• Hosted the “Everything is Global Summit” for 350 Washoe County high school students and community members.
• Completed 424 translation assignments in 34 languages for Washoe County courts, administrative offices, the schools and the business community.
• Hosted the 14th Annual Global Gala for more than 300 members of the community and honored the National Judicial College as the second corporate global citizen.

—Carina Black ’90, ’92M.A., ’97Ph.D. is the executive director of the Northern Nevada International Center

Fulbright Scholars met with members of the Reno City Council during last fall’s Fulbright Enrichment Seminar on the electoral process in the United States.