

impact

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

Using Zoom to fulfill 4-H project requirements during pandemic constraints

AT A GLANCE

UI Extension teaches animal science lessons online and retained 4-H families and volunteers and showed youth interest in science.

The Situation

As the pandemic took hold of the United States beginning in January 2020, lives started to quickly change and by March 2020 most of the schools in Idaho had started crisis homeschooling to control the spread of COVID-19. When the schools in Adams County shut-down, the University of Idaho Extension, Adams County office reached out to every volunteer leader and parent in the 4-H program by phone and had an important conversation with them.

To reduce the family's stress and burden as they were dealing with new challenges, and to keep the current involved in 4-H, the families and volunteer leaders needed help meeting the requirements of the program as well as learning the new software that was required to be used. One state requirement for all 4-H members enrolled in animal projects was completing pre-determined animal science lessons.

Our Response

With that in mind, Adams County UI Extension educator, Tyanne Roland, began a schedule of Zoom classes that had a few animal science lessons per class so that it would fit all age groups in the county 4-H program. Some Zoom sessions also taught the participants how



Tyanne Roland, Extension educator in Adams County teaching beef breeds on Zoom as one of the animal science lessons.

to use the new required software. In the spring of 2020 eight online classes were taught and replaced lessons that typically fell on the shoulders of the currently overburdened 4-H volunteers.

In the fall of 2020, a survey was conducted asking if the online classes fulfilled the county 4-H family's needs during the pandemic shutdown, and most of the families found the lessons and changes were helpful in retaining them in 4-H that year.

In 2021, more online Zoom classes were taught that fulfilled the same needs as in 2020. Another year of classes were prepared due to the unknown of what 2021 could do to change programming again. These online lessons were also advertised beyond the county borders and participants that were not in the Adams

County 4-H program were welcome to attend. Youth from approximately five counties and three other states participated.

In 2021, a survey was created and the 4-H members were asked to complete the survey if they attended an online class. Instead of the survey focusing on the needs and worries of Adams County 4-H families like the 2020 survey, the 2021 survey focused on 4-H Common Measures survey questions. These questions are nationally acceptable to ask when teaching 4-H content.

Program Outcomes

In the fall of 2020, a county-wide survey sent out to all Adams County 4-H families showed that 89% of the families confirmed the changes made to the 4-H program for the year fit their needs. The majority of the families that participated found the online lessons to be helpful in completing their 4-H project.

In the spring and summer of 2021, the survey was left open so all participants could complete it every time they participated in one of the six online classes offered that focused on two to three animal science lessons in each session. The classes were also recorded and up-loaded to YouTube so that kids could watch the lessons on their own time. By the end of the classes, if a 4-H child participated in at least three Zoom sessions they would fulfill the state requirement for their animal projects. By July 2021, 76 responses to the survey were recorded.

When the participants were asked their interest level in animal science, 58% responded with a positive

response. When asked how much they like science, 73% stated they “somewhat liked” or “liked a great deal.” When asked if they would like a job in science, 40% responded with a positive response and the largest amount (41%) stated they may like a job in science. Ninety-three percent of participants stated they learned something new about science in 4-H and 58% stated they would share what they learned with peers.

Participants were also asked if they would make changes to their animal project based on what was learned in the session. Over half stated they learned there were changes they needed to make. Over one quarter of the respondents stated they would make changes to the care of their animal project immediately. A few examples of changes they planned to implement were “check for injuries and symptoms of sickness in my animals more often,” “take parasites seriously,” “give my steers salts and minerals,” “learn how to take my pig’s temperature,” “check water and clean water tub more frequently” and “look at what is in my animal’s feed.”

The Future

Since Covid-19 is not likely disappearing soon, crisis homeschooling, and more social distancing methods could begin again at any time. Keeping that in mind, more animal science zoom lessons will be starting again in the winter and spring of 2022 and still be an optional method for 4-H kids to complete both their club participation and their animal science requirements in Adams County and other counties throughout Idaho that approve this method.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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