John Kringler,
Chair & Cropping Systems

- The North Dakota Agricultural Association, Northern Ag Expo was held at the FargoDome.
- Several presentations were made by the Extension staff. There is concern that lower commodity prices will greatly impact the agricultural industry. Producers are looking at their crop mix to be planted in 2016. That will influence the inputs needed by producers as they will try to conserve on the cost of inputs, hoping to help their bottom line.
- The Red River Valley Sugar Beet Growers had a good crop and at the annual meeting they were optimistic for the 2016 production year. Sugar prices have rebounded and are projected to remain strong.
- Distributed 2016 Crop Budgets to producers, so they could do projections and planning for the 2016 crop year.

Kelcey Hoffmann
Agriculture

- Forty area producers attended the “Beef Cattle Update Meeting” in Buffalo, ND in the month of December. During the meeting, producers learned a wide variety of information. These topics include vaccination handling, biosecurity measures that need to be taken into account on their operation, analyzing budgets and inputs, feeding with net wrap bales and by-products, how to utilize EPD’s, incorporating cover crops into their operation, the veterinary feed directive that will affect many producers in the next year, and an update on beef research from NDSU Extension Service. Producers were excited that we were able to offer them a meeting in our area and left lots of ideas for future meetings. This meeting was partially sponsored by the North Dakota Corn Council as producers were also able to take in a tour of the Ethanol Plant in Casselton, ND.

Rita Ussatis, Food and Nutrition

- This past month, one series of the Diabetes Prevention Program concluded the year-long session. One participant wrote “this past year, I lost 33 inches. This class is a great learning experience and a way to open your eyes to what being healthy really meant. Everything is one step at a time so there isn’t so much pressure to lose it fast or fail. It definitely changed my way of thinking about food”. Another class group finished its initial 16 weekly sessions and will now meet monthly for 6 months.
- Work continues with monthly meeting of the Food Systems Initiative steering committee. Blue prints are being developed to address community gardens, urban bees and chickens. Bi-monthly meetings of the Cass Clay Food System Advisory Commission are held.
- I was the recipient of the AGSCO Excellence in Extension award at the annual NDSU College of Agriculture awards program.

Maxine J. Nordick, 4-H Youth Development

- 4-H Outdoor Skills Committee Meeting was held this month to review plans for the 2016 March Archery and Air Rifle Invitational Shoots being hosted by Cass County 4-H. Archery and .22 Rifle youth classes were scheduled with the volunteer instructors to be held in April and May.
- I met with three volunteers to start a new 4-H club called The Wolf Pack that will be based in the Casselton area.
- I am a member of the Statewide 4-H Policy Advisement Committee that met this month to review a revised 4-H Policy Handbook.
Michelle Strang,
EFNEP/FNP Adult Nutrition Program

- In December I traveled to Des Moines, IA to participate in the North Central Regional taskforce discussion on First Generation 4-H Youth and Families. While there, eleven states met to share best practices and discuss specific barriers preventing first generation 4-H youth and families from engaging and staying engaged with the 4-H program. This discussion led to the identification of team initiatives which will move the work of the larger taskforce forward. Cass, Sioux, and McKenzie counties will select and pilot First Generation programs in 2016, while also participating in the team initiative addressing the elimination of enrollment and access barriers. The Cass county 4-H Science Club model was shared as a best practice for engaging youth who have been traditionally underrepresented in our county 4-H program.

Todd Weinmann,
Horticulture

- SARE Advisory Board Meeting. Taught Master Gardeners (state wide) through interactive television about container gardens and square foot gardening. NDAAEA Board of Directors meeting. End of ELT Internship. LEAN Office Training. Work on Pollinator grant with NDSU Specialists.

- Cass County Soil conservation district meeting. The Online Tree Store is now open for the 2016 Season. http://cassscd.org/Store/

Nikki Johnson
EFNEP/FNP Youth Nutrition Program

- The Kids, Compost, Crops and Consumption team was accepted to participate in the i-Three Issue Corps for 2016! Our goal is to increase youth involvement in the food cycle by presenting teaching students the basics of livestock, where manure comes from, how to turn manure into compost, using compost as a fertilizer for growing plants, how plants become food on the kitchen table, and how to make nutritious food choices. We kicked off our first series of lessons with nearly one hundred 3rd and 4th graders from Jefferson Elementary in Fargo, ND. Team members include: Mary Berg, Alicia Harstad, Kelcey Hoffmann, Nikki Johnson, and Todd Weinmann

Sue Quamme,
Parenting Resources

- In December I traveled to Des Moines, IA to participate in the North Central Regional taskforce discussion on First Generation 4-H Youth and Families. While there, eleven states met to share best practices and discuss specific barriers preventing first generation 4-H youth and families from engaging and staying engaged with the 4-H program. This discussion led to the identification of team initiatives which will move the work of the larger taskforce forward. Cass, Sioux, and McKenzie counties will select and pilot First Generation programs in 2016, while also participating in the team initiative addressing the elimination of enrollment and access barriers. The Cass county 4-H Science Club model was shared as a best practice for engaging youth who have been traditionally underrepresented in our county 4-H program.

- Parent Resource Center wrapped up a 4 week Community Nurturing Parent class at a local homeless shelter.

- The PRC newsletter promoting classes for the winter and spring was created and sent to over 3000 homes by mail and email.

- New Parents Forever curriculum was piloted in Cass County.

- Lessons were presented to teen parents at Woodrow Wilson High School and at JOBS at Job Service.

- Meetings were held with representatives from Dakota Medical Foundation and the Perry Center for potential collaboration efforts.