

Emma Lewis
Intern Project Report
Summer 2023

Coming into this internship I honestly didn't know what to expect. I knew what extension was and that it existed but I had no idea the extent of work that extension does. One of the biggest things I have seen through my summer in extension is the freedom that 4-Hers are given to learn and grow and be creative in the work that they do. This was also an opportunity given to us interns with our special projects. We were encouraged to do a project on something that we are interested in and have a passion for and make it into whatever we wanted.

When I first heard word that I had been given the opportunity to be an extension intern I immediately began thinking of project ideas. In full disclosure I really struggled to find a project that I was excited about and wanted to implement. Grady County is a large agriculture county, but most of the producers are established and do not need a ton of cattle information. Cattle is my main area of expertise so instead I looked to my second interest and passion, which is meat science. I was excited to work on a meat science project because I felt that it could work into all aspects of extension. I pitched the idea to the office and to Michael Pettijohn, the South Central Research Superintendent and they all loved the idea.

The idea for my project was to host a class that we later turned into a Lunch and Learn lesson teaching about beef selection. More specifically what to look for in the store, how to choose cuts based on your priorities and how to cook your specific cuts. I wanted to give a good range of basic information like cut types and prices but I also wanted to give more advanced meat science information. I gave basic explanations of marbling and meat color and how it affects palatability and quality. I knew that I wanted to not only teach a class but also have something tangible for attendees to take home. This is where the idea to turn my presentation slides into a take home booklet came about.

In my booklet I included sun icons next to the popular summer cuts and a marinade and dry rub recipe at the end to give ways to improve a lower quality cut of meat. A list of ways to cook the different cuts of meat was also included. To create my presentation/booklet I took knowledge that I have already gained from time spent in Dr. Mafi's meat science classes. I also did some online research mainly using the Oklahoma Beef Council's website to back up the information that I already had. My booklet was looked over by all of the office staff to check for correct formatting, grammar, spelling and info. It was also looked at during the Cattlewomen's meeting by Courtney Bir and an OSU meat science graduate. The information in the book was reviewed by the meat science grad and she approved all the information and that it was correct. Both women loved the booklet and the idea!

When planning my class and how it would go, I thought about other workshops and classes that I had been in and knew that I didn't want to just sit and talk at people for an hour straight. I wanted them to have a hands on, real life application of the material that I was teaching. I originally wanted to do a cooking demonstration, but later realized that would not fit into my one hour time frame. I instead went and purchased both sirloin and ribeye steaks from a local, small meat market, 5th Avenue Cattle and from a chain grocery store, Walmart. At each store I purchased cuts of meat that had both low marbling levels and high marbling levels. The sirloins were all pan seared then baked, and the ribeyes were pan seared only and also pan seared and then baked. The meat was unseasoned to give attendees the most accurate tasting experiences of the meat quality on its own.

While I am proud of how my project turned out it was not a quick and easy process. There was quite a bit of research that went into making my presentation, from market websites, old class notes and beef websites. Grady County Extension has also been very busy this summer. Almost every week I have been at the extension office, I have been teaching or helping with 3-4 workshops a day or helping do mock interviews for state record books. With such a busy schedule this summer it was hard to find time to sit down and do a big chunk of my project all at once. I had to challenge myself to manage my time and find the moments where I could sit down and fully focus on my project presentation. There was another bump in the road when trying to print my booklet. We had been having issues with our printers in the office and my booklet was not printing in the correct format or color. Thankfully with the help of our amazing support staff we were able to get my booklet printed in the proper format and color. This is a project that I would teach again that I will be able to bring back with me to school in the fall.

In the end of it all I am happy with how my project turned out. We had around ten people show up to attend the lunch and learn class and about 80% of them thought that the class was useful and most attendees learned something new. The smell of steaks being cooked filled the whole office. Every one that walked in asked what the smell was giving the office staff an opportunity to talk about my program. The smell even wafted up to the front offices and brought the NRCS employees down to see what the smell was. I was able to talk to one of the women about marbling and what it is, which was something that she didn't previously know. The old Grady County Ag Educator, Ally Minor also came to check things out. Everyone who came to the class loved the idea, the information that was presented and especially the steak samples. Between the class, the online advertisement and my radio advertisement I reached a good number of people with this project. If I redid this project again in the future I would make sure that I teach more than one class so that I can make that outreach even greater.

Lunch and Learn

JULY 11TH 12-1PM

GRADY COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE
12-1PM
BRING A LUNCH



BEEF SELECTION AND COOKING METHODS



