

Newsletter

June 2025



Up next, 7 students are headed to National Convention in Indianapolis, IN, October 29th-November 2th!



WSU EXTENSION
Garfield County

Welcome to the WSU Garfield County Extension Newsletter!

This is an electronic newsletter highlighting events and topics of interest to residents of Garfield County and the surrounding area. This newsletter can also be viewed on our website: <https://extension.wsu.edu/Garfield/>

Do you have an event or subject you would like added to our newsletter or website? Would you like to be removed from our Extension Newsletter email list?

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**Office of the Washington State
Veterinarian
May 30, 2025**

What Washington Pig Growers Need to Know about PRRS Virus

Recently there have been positive pig detections of Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome Virus (PRRS) and circovirus in Washington.

Where did the virus come from?

Historically, Washington has enjoyed a low prevalence of PRRS virus in its pig population but it is unclear what the true burden of disease is in our swine industry today. Recent detections may highlight an increase in risk for this disease compared to the past. There are no requirements for PRRS testing for pigs moving from one state to another as long as the pigs appear healthy at the time of inspection.

What exactly is the PRRS virus and what does it do to pigs?

PRRS stands for porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome. It is a virus that has been around at least since the 1980s when it was known as Mystery Pig Disease since the cause of illness produced by the virus was unknown. In the early 1990s the virus was identified as the cause of Mystery Pig Disease and renamed PRRS.

PRRS infections cause a variety of problems in pigs ranging from mild to severe. In herds without immunity to the virus sows may suffer from a depressed appetite and fever and pregnant sows may abort in late pregnancy or give birth to the premature litters. Weaners and growers are usually most severely affected but even these pigs may not show any signs at all. Those that become sick will generally go off feed and become “fuzzed up”. They may have a cough, and especially if they become infected with other disease-causing organisms, may develop severe pneumonia and die or waste away over a course of several weeks.

How is PRRS virus spread?

The major way virus is spread is by direct contact between infected and uninfected pigs. The more intensive the swine operation the more likely the virus is to spread between pigs. The sow is the reservoir animal for PRRS and can pass the virus to her unborn piglets who in turn pass the virus to other pigs after weaning. Actually, although PRRS is

infectious, meaning it is caused by a disease-causing virus, it is not highly contagious. There are instances where infected pigs are penned with uninfected pigs and the uninfected pigs remain free of the virus despite close association with infected pigs known to be shedding virus.

There are other ways the virus is spread. It can be carried on trucks and trailers that have become contaminated with virus from infected pigs. The virus can even be carried on a worker's hands, boots, or clothing for a short (less than an hour) period of time. Virus can be transferred from one pig to another by using instrument (castration, detailing, milk teeth cutters, and needles) on an infected pig followed by use on an uninfected pig.

If a pig is infected with PRRS virus how long can it be a risk for infecting other pigs?

Although many pigs remain infected with the virus for life they actually only shed the virus for a short period of time. Younger animals tend to shed virus longer than older animals. Generally, shedding occurs for only 30-60 days after initial infection but in rare cases can continue for up to 5 months. Boars can also shed virus in their semen but usually only do so for a few weeks but there have been boars that have shed virus in their semen for up to 6 months. All semen used for AI should be periodically tested for PRRS virus.

How is PRRS virus diagnosed?

In order to confirm a diagnosis of PRRS laboratory testing must be done. Many diseases can resemble PRRS and often PRRS viral infections co-exist with other infections. It is very difficult to obtain the appropriate specimens for testing from live animals. Therefore, suspect pigs are often sacrificed in order to make a diagnosis. Blood testing can only indicate the presence of antibodies against the virus. If the pig's dam or the pig itself was previously vaccinated or infected with PRRS it will blood test positive. A blood test cannot tell if a pig is currently infected or shedding the virus.

*Note that a vaccine for PRRS virus is available and may complicate diagnostic interpretation

Can this virus harm other livestock or people?

No! With the exception of mallard ducks, PRRS virus only infects swine. It

poses no threat to humans or other animals and in no way makes eating pork a threat to human health.

What can I do to protect my herd from becoming infected with PRRS virus?

If you buy pigs, insist that they originate from a source known to be negative for PRRS. Physical separation of potentially infected and uninfected pig enterprises is probably the most effective control measure and producer can take.

What other biosecurity measures can I take to protect my pigs from PRRS?

The virus cannot tolerate heat or drying but can survive up to 11 days in water. It generally survives less than 1 day on plastic or stainless steel surfaces, shavings, feed, and clothing. Cleanliness, dryness, and disinfection with Virkon® S (Antec International) of all surfaces that may have had contact with infected pigs will remove environmental sources of infection. Also, insects such as flies and mosquitos should be controlled.

Critical advice for exhibitors:

- Obtain livestock from low disease risk sources.
- Vaccinate for relevant diseases.
- Prevent contact of your livestock with other livestock.
- Designate clothing and footwear for barn use; clean and disinfect after wearing.
- Only take healthy animals to shows or fairs.
- Quarantine new or returning animals from home herd for 30 days; take temperature twice daily and monitor for signs of illness.
- Perform home herd chores first.
- Use separate equipment, footwear, and clothing for quarantined animals.
- Wash hands after handling each animal.
- Isolate sick animals and contact a veterinarian about them.
- Clean and disinfect equipment.
- Vaccinate for relevant diseases.
- Minimize stress for animals at home or away.
- Always provide excellent nutrition.

More information on swine health requirements and recommendations can be found on our website:

<https://agr.wa.gov/departments/animals-livestock-and-pets/animal-health>

Splash into Food Safety at the Pool this Summer

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog>

Meals at the pool come in many forms – ordered from the snack bar, delivered from local restaurants, packed from home, or carried outside from the kitchen. Follow these food safety steps to keep splashing and playing mermaids all summer long!

Stay in the Splash Zone and Avoid the Danger Zone

The Danger Zone is the temperature range where bacteria multiply rapidly between 40 degrees F and 140 degrees F. To avoid the Danger Zone, cold foods must be kept at 40 degrees F or below by placing them in the refrigerator, insulated coolers with cold sources, or nestled over ice. If not using cold sources, do not leave foods out for more than 2-hours (or 1-hour if food is exposed to temperatures above 90 degrees F). After these timeframes, they are no longer safe and should be discarded.



Cool Pool Snacks

Perishable snacks like deli meats, cut fruit and vegetables, cheese, and yogurt need to follow the 2-hour rule (1-hour when above 90 degrees F), or be kept cold under 40 degrees F. Non-perishable pool snacks like jerky, crackers, chips, popcorn, pretzels, candy, trail mix, and granola bars can withstand the summer heat and remain safe without being kept cold.

~Pool Dinner~

Pool meals are often an assortment of items. No matter what you're eating, keep it safe:

If cooking food: always use a food thermometer to cook to a safe minimum internal temperature.

- **If packing food:** pack into an insulated bag or cooler with enough cold sources to keep below 40 degrees F or follow the 2-hour rule (1-hour when above 90 degrees F).
- **If delivering food:** consume within 2 hours (1-hour when above 90 degrees F). Chill any perishable leftovers below 40 degrees F or discard them if it's been longer than 2 hours (1-hour when above 90 degrees F).

Have questions?

Talk to a food safety specialist and get answers to your questions about food safety.

- **For non-meat food products (cereals, fish, produce, fruit juice, pastas, cheeses, etc.):** Contact the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition's Food and Cosmetic Information Center at 1-888-SAFEFOOD (toll free), Monday through Friday 10 AM to 4 PM ET (except Thursdays from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM ET and Federal holidays).

For meat, poultry and egg products, contact the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) email MPHotline@usda.gov, or chat live at ask.usda.gov from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday in English and Spanish.



INFORMATION FROM WSU GARFIELD COUNTY MASTER GARDENER BARB DEHERRERA

The Science Behind Companion Planting

Companion planting is a gardening technique that involves placing different plants together for a variety of reasons; these strategies can support better growth, deter pests, and contribute to the overall health of the garden. This practice has roots in traditional agricultural practices and folklore, but recent scientific research is shedding light on the mechanisms behind the how and why of these methods. Read on and see if you can find a way to implement these practices in your own garden.

Thousands of years of observation, experimentation and passed down knowledge by Indigenous peoples and traditional farmers learned that certain plants thrive better when grown alongside specific companions. For instance, Native Americans famously practiced the “Three Sisters” method, which involved planting corn, beans, and squash together. This trio benefits from each other: corn provides natural support for beans to climb; beans fix nitrogen in the soil, enriching it for corn; and squash shades the ground, helping to suppress weeds. In modern agricultural practices, maximizing output is the goal and many of these ancient practices have often been overlooked. However, growing concerns about sustainability, pest management, and soil health have renewed interest in companion planting as a viable alternative.

Beneficial Relationships:

Mutualism: This occurs when both species benefit from the relationship. For example, legumes like peas can fix atmospheric

nitrogen into the soil, providing nutrients that neighboring plants need for growth. **Allelopathy:** Some plants release chemicals into the soil that can inhibit the growth of surrounding plants or deter pests. For instance, marigolds release compounds that can repel nematodes and other harmful insects.

Physical Support: Tall plants can provide shade or support to shorter plants. For example, sunflowers can offer a natural trellis for climbing beans.

Attracting Pollinators: Certain flowers attract pollinators which can benefit nearby crops by increasing their yield. Planting flowers like borage or bee balm near fruit-bearing plants can enhance pollination.

Harmful Relationships

Not all plant pairings are beneficial. Some plants can inhibit each other’s growth due to competition for resources or through allelopathic effects that suppress germination or growth. For example, planting onions near peas may stunt pea growth due to the allelopathic properties of onions.

Pest Control

One of the most significant benefits of companion planting is its ability to reduce pest populations naturally. By interspersing specific plants known to repel pests with vulnerable crops, gardeners can minimize crop damage without resorting to chemical pesticides. For example:

- **Basil:** When planted near tomatoes, basil not only enhances their flavor but also repels pests like to-

mato hornworms.

- **Nasturtium:** This flower attracts aphids away from more valuable crops such as cabbage or broccoli.

Planting different varieties of the same plant-such as 2 different varieties of tomatoes can confuse harmful pests who may target one variety over another.

Enhanced Growth

Certain plant combinations promote faster growth and higher yields. As mentioned earlier, legumes enrich the soil with nitrogen, a critical nutrient for many crops. Additionally:

- **Carrots and onions:** Planting these together can lead to healthier carrots since onions help deter carrot flies.

- **Corn and beans:** Corn provides height while beans naturally fix nitrogen in the soil.

Improved Soil Health

Soil health is paramount for sustained agricultural success. Companion planting can contribute positively through:

- **Diversity:** Growing a variety of plants encourages a balanced ecosystem that promotes microbial health in the soil.

- **Organic Matter:** Plants like comfrey have deep roots that bring up nutrients from deeper soil layers; when their leaves are used as mulch or composted, they enrich surface soils.

While many combinations exist in companion planting lore, some pairings are particularly effective based on scientific observation:

The Three Sisters

As previously mentioned, corn, beans, and squash create a

synergistic relationship where each plant fulfills a role essential for others' success:

- **Corn** grows tall to provide support.

- **Beans** fix nitrogen.

Squash spreads out to suppress weeds while retaining moisture in the soil.

Tomatoes and Marigolds

Tomatoes benefit from being planted alongside marigolds as they repel nematodes and other garden pests that can harm tomato crops

while enhancing overall garden biodiversity.

Cucumber and Radishes

Radishes are fast-growing companions to cucumbers that deter cucumber beetles while their quick life cycle allows them to be harvested before they compete for resources with cucumbers.

Companion planting is more than just a whimsical idea; it is grounded in science that reveals the interconnectedness of plant life within our ecosystems. By understanding how different plants inter-

act—whether positively or negatively—gardeners can make informed decisions that optimize growth while minimizing pest issues sustainably.

Here are two Extension articles further exploring these concepts.

https://www.umass.edu/agriculture-food-environment/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/fact-sheets/pdf/companion_planting.pdf

<https://extension.wvu.edu/lawn-gardening-pests/gardening/garden-management/companion-planting>



Plant Friend or Foe?

Plant	Companions	Do NOT plant next to
Asparagus	Tomato, basil, parsley	
Beans	Most vegetables and herbs	Onion, garlic, gladiolus
Cabbage family (Cauliflower, kale, broccoli)	Sage, dill, beets, peppermint, rosemary, corn, onion family, chard, spinach, sunflowers, nasturtiums	Dill, fennel, strawberries, pole beans, tomatoes
Cantaloupe	Corn, sunflowers	Potatoes
Celery	Onion and cabbage families, tomatoes, bush beans, nasturtiums	
Corn	Irish potatoes, beans, English peas, pumpkins, cucumber, squash	Tomatoes
Cucumber	Beans, corn, English peas, sunflowers, radishes, cabbage family	Irish potatoes, aromatic herbs
Eggplant	Beans, marigolds	Potatoes
Lettuce	Carrot, radish, strawberries, cucumber, onions	
Onion family	Beets, carrot, lettuce, cabbage family, tomatoes, strawberries, Summer Savory tomato, asparagus	Beans, English peas
Potato, Irish	Beans, corn, cabbage family, marigolds, horseradish, peas	Pumpkin, squash,
Spinach	Strawberries	
Squash	Nasturtium, corn, radishes, marigolds	
Strawberries	Bush beans, spinach, borage, lettuce (as a boarder)	Cabbage
Tomato	Herbs, such as parsley, dill, and basil	Irish potatoes, fennel, cabbage family



FFA



40 Pomeroy FFA members were a part of the State FFA Convention

FFA Forestry

Pomeroy FFA had a great day at the State Forestry contest April 24th, in Deer Park, bringing home the 8th place state award!

As part of the contest, these students had to identify equipment, disorders, tree species, as well as chain-saw parts and troubleshooting. They then had to use a compass to measure the azimuth and calculate distance! For the team activity portion of the contest, they were asked to complete timber cruising to calculate volume of timber in a stand. These students even got to check out the University of Idaho's equipment simulator!

FFA Middle School Environment & Natural Resources

Pomeroy FFA had two teams compete on March 19 in a new contest meant to introduce middle school students to a variety of FFA contests! These students worked to identify tree species, crop and weeds, as well as wildlife species! They then completed two different water quality tests, determined land use from soil samples, and answered questions on legal land descriptions! Pomeroy FFA placed 1st and 4th at the state contest! As a team they placed 1st and 4th, individually, Josiah Ledgerwood placed 3rd, Ladd Baser- 4th, Lincoln Lovgren- 6th, Sidney Wolf- 7th, and Robbie Wolf-8th!

Middle School Food Products and Processing got 3rd place at state with Daphne Waldher 9th individual and Judson Hall 3rd individual. Team- Daphne, Judson, Ladd Baser, Liliana Severson, Josiah Ledgerwood

FFA Agronomy

On March 19, Pomeroy FFA had two teams compete at the State Agronomy contest in Pullman, placing 6th and 10th! This contest had many parts, including a knowledge test, identifying crops and weeds, identifying insects along with their economic impact, determining causal agents of plant disorders, reading soil survey maps, and completing a team activity that asked the students to look at chemical use and crop rotations!

FFA Food Science

Pomeroy FFA placed 2nd at the District FFA Food Science contest on April 15. This qualifies them for the State contest May 8-10 in Pullman! At this contest, students were asked to complete a knowledge test, identify aromas, and calculate food formulations!

Leadership contests

Pomeroy FFA competed in the district FFA contest on March 26 in Asotin. Pomeroy had the following qualify for the state contest May 8-10 in Pullman. Two Parliamentary Procedure teams, one extemporaneous speaker, one prepared public speaker, and one creed speaker.

And specifics of the Leadership Contest results:

Rituals - 1st

CCM - Miller 2nd

Parli - McKeirnan 4th

Creed -- Tatum Jones 4th to go to state & she placed 7th at State

Extemporaneous Speaking -- Kellee Kendrick 3rd

Public Speaking -- Caroline McKeirnan 3rd

More State Results

Pomeroy FFA competed in both Ag Mechanics contest and the Ag tools and materials contest on March 27 in Yakima and placed 6th in the inaugural State Ag Tools/Materials contest.

At State Ag Issues- 1st place in State on to Nationals in October! Team members are: Atalya Mitchell, Caroline McKeirnan, Sadie Klaveano, Carolina Morfin, Kellee Kendrick, Isabella Field, and Olivia Cooper.

At State Parliamentary Procedure- 8th place. Caroline McKeirnan, Isabella Field, Ismael Arteaga, Peyton Cannon, Sadie Klaveano, Atalya Mitchell

At State, Meats- 6th place. Ladd Baser, Jack Baser, Tyler Dixon, Judson Hall, and Nolan Newberg

At State Conduct of Chapter Meeting- 4th place. Kaleb Miller, Tyler Dixon, Morgan Frederick, Reagan McKeirnan, Nolan Newberg, Raelyn Nagle.

Colby Ledgerwood was the proficiency winner in Beef Production Entrepreneurship and was the State Star Farmer and State Degree Recipient Awards.



Creed



Ag Issues



Parli



Agronomy



Meats



Forestry



Colby- State Star Farmer



Middle School Environment & Natural Resources



Ag Tools



Rangeland



Ag Tools



Soils



Ag Science



FFA Districts

Garfield County Spring Jackpot April 5, 2025

Katy Belles Champion Market Steer



Kyle Taylor Reserve Champion Market Steer



Sydney Betes Champion Breeding heifer



Alyssa Williams Reserve Champion Breeding Heifer

**Champion Junior Showman Sydney Betes
Reserve Champion Kanin Koller**



**PeeWee Champion Showman Hallie Kerr
Reserve Champion Holden Lehmitz**



**Champion Intermediate Showman Harper Hicks
Reserve Champion Henry Waliser**



**Champion Senior Showman Kyle Taylor
Rese Champion Senior Showman Alyssa Williams**



Overall Champion Cattle Showman Kyle Taylor

Grand Champion Intermediate Showman



Reserve Champion Junior Showman



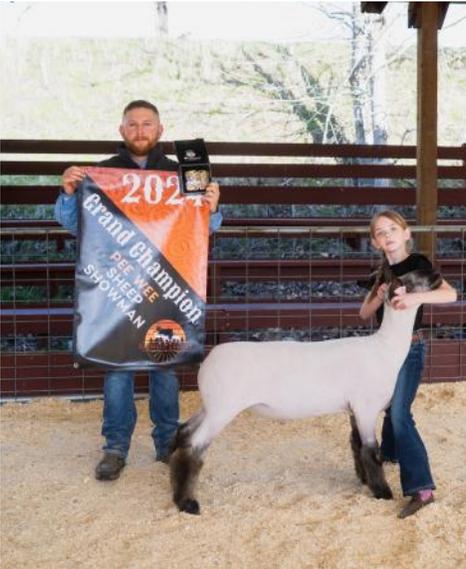
Grand Champion Market Lamb



Grand Champion Breeding Ewe



Grand Champion Pee Wee Showman



Reserve Champion Pee Wee Showman



Grand Champion Intermediate Showman





SPRING FARMING DAYS APRIL 11-13, 2025



The annual Spring Farming Days event was held on April 12th and 13th this year, under cloudy, cool, and windy weather. That did not hamper the spirits of the teamsters that came to play with their animals though. There were 44 horses and mules out working the ground, fertilizing, plowing, and harrowing the 13 acres.

Many spectators came to watch the animals work, see the equipment on display outside, and even watch a wheelwright demonstrate how to put a rim back on a wagon wheel. When they got chilled being outside, browsing around in the 2 museums that are heated was a welcome treat! They even enjoyed a lady in a period type dress sewing on a treadle machine, and a player piano filling one museum with old time music!

The field has now been seeded with Barley to become a hay crop in the summer. We want to invite you to Spring Farming Days on April 11th and 12th, 2026. Come and see all of the new additions!



Other Up Coming Events at the Garfield County Fairgrounds

**Gas Engine Show & Swap Meet
June 28 & 29, 2025**

**Garfield County Fair & Rodeo
September 12-14, 2025**

PUMPKIN KISSES





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Did you know that The MT James Entomological Collection is the largest insect museum in the state of Washington?

About the Insect Museum

Washington State University was founded in 1890 and is part of the land grant university system. The insect collection was started just two years later, in 1892! As the land grant institution for the state of Washington, one of the mandates of Washington State University is to serve and support the agricultural community. The collection was an early documentation of the state's insect fauna. A collection of insects allowed for efficient identifications and was used to help educate generations of students. The collection still contains some of those first specimens; many are labeled "Washington Territory" and were collected in the late 1800s. The Collection has grown significantly over the years and continues to increase in specimen number. Our growth coincides with an increasing number of people realizing the importance of the role of natural history collections to secure a record of the world's biodiversity.

What is now called the M.T. James Entomological Collection at WSU is one of the larger university insect collections in the country. The collection is housed on the first floor of the Food Science and Human Nutrition (FSHN) building in the Department of Entomology on the main Pullman campus. It is representative in all major insect orders and contains over 3 million curated specimens. It is one of the few collections that can provide specimens from the Pacific Northwest, and it serves as an important regional and national resource. It also has extensive and diverse holdings from Guatemala. The insect collection holdings are growing and field collecting and acquisition efforts are ongoing. Since 2000, the WSUC has obtained large donations, including private collections totaling tens of thousands of specimens, the Walla Walla College collection (>85,000 specimens), donations of moths by regional authorities (>18,000), and more. Under the auspices of the US Department of Energy and The Nature Conservancy, in the past decades museum personnel conducted diversity studies of the Hanford Nuclear Site (>94,000 specimens), native Palouse Prairie (>15,000) – all providing information on species richness, diversity, and distribution of many of our native insect taxa.



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