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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 11, 2010

**4-H SHOOTING SPORTS PROJECT PROMOTES RESPONSIBLE
AND SAFE USAGE**

By Lacey Mann, CSU 4-H Extension Agent, Bent & Prowers Counties

Southeast Area—The United States was founded on a number of principles and rights. The second amendment declares the right of the people to keep and bear arms. Since its evolution, it's had its opponents and critics.

The Southeast Area 4-H Shooting Sports (SS) program supports the right to use and enjoy firearms in a safe, controlled environment. The main principle that the state-wide shooting sports program and Southeast Area program shares with its members is the safety aspect of using a firearm. Recreation is also a strong component of the program.

People typically think that someone using a firearm, whether it be a gun or a bow, uses their equipment to hunt. That is not the case with the SS program. Hunting is encouraged if the member enjoys the hunting experience and uses the meat. However, most of the 4-H members participate for the competitiveness and marksmanship of the sport.

According to the National Rifle Association (NRA), the number of privately owned guns in the U.S. is at an all-time high, and rises by about 4.5 million per year. However, with programs in place like the Southeast Area 4-H shooting sports, which specializes in teaching firearm safety, the firearm accident death rate is at an all-time annual low, 0.2 per 100,000 population,



Southeast Area
Extension

**County Extension
Offices**

Baca County
772 Colorado St.
Springfield, CO 81073
719-523-6971

Bent County
1499 Amb. Thompson Blvd.
Las Animas, CO 81054
719-456-0764

Cheyenne County
425 S. 7th W.
P. O. Box 395
Cheyenne Wells, CO 80810
719-767-5716

Crowley County
603 North Main St.
Courthouse Annex
Ordway, CO 81063
719-267-5243

Kiowa County
1305 Goff
P. O. Box 97
Eads, CO 81036
719-438-5321

Otero County
411 N. 10th
P. O. Box 190
Rocky Ford, CO 81067
719-254-7608

Prowers County
1001 S. Main
Lamar, CO 81052
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down 94 percent since the all-time high in 1904.

Since 1930, the annual number of such accidents has decreased 80 percent, to an all-time low, while the U.S. population has more than doubled and the number of firearms has quintupled. Among children, such accidents have decreased 90 percent since 1975. Today, the odds are more than a million to one, against a child in the U.S. being injured in a firearm accident, said the NRA.

The 4-H shooting sports program includes instruction and events in archery, air rifle, shotgun, .22, muzzle loading, air pistol and period dress competition. The program is also highly supported by the community and state and national organizations. “We have written grants and received money from the Friends of the NRA in both Baca and Prowers Counties,” Lacey Mann, CSU Extension Southeast Area 4-H and Youth Development Agent said. “Baca was awarded in 2009 and both Prowers and Baca were awarded in 2010. The money is used to buy targets, equipment, bows, arrows, rifles and train new leaders in each discipline area. The Friends of the NRA has been a huge asset to growing awareness and safe handling practices for our youth.”

As we begin enrolling for the 2011 year, remember 4-H as an extracurricular activity that lasts the entire year and benefits a lifetime. If your child is interested in joining 4-H or you would like further information on the 4-H program, please contact your local CSU Extension Office; Baca County 719-523-6971, Bent County 719-456-0764, Cheyenne County 719-767-5716, Crowley County 719-267-5243, Kiowa County 719-438-5321, Otero County 719-254-7608, Prowers County 719-336-7734. 4-H is a cooperative effort between CSU Extension and the County.

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