

New Record Attendance!
740 Persons Enjoy Land Shrimp at the
28th Annual Montana State University
Bug Buffet

Preceded by 60 pre-school students and their teachers and parents

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By ARINA BILLIS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Herbed chevre with sweet and salty wax worms, orzo cricket salad, larval latkes and chocolate chip wax worm cookies were just a few of the items on the menu Friday at Montana State University.

More than 500 people attended the 28th annual Bug Buffet held in the Strand Union Building's Leigh Lounge, sampling galleria cocktail, galleria quesadilla and mango cricket shake.

"Insects are a normal food and you can easily incorporate them in your diet," said Florence Dunkel, professor in the Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology and one of the event's organizers. "Other countries who have not lost their interest in eating insects need to know that we eat them, too."

Dunkel and her students are also

making a movie for a small village in Africa showing this big event and teaching them how to make cricket flour.

"Without these crickets most of the kids there will have problems with brain function and physical function. Their diet is based mostly on grains, and crickets are a complete protein," said Dunkel.

Insects are high in protein and vitamins. They have twice the protein of beef and 20 percent more iron than spinach. Also, 80 percent of an insect can be used as food versus 40 percent of a cow or 55 percent of a pig, Dunkel said.

"It is important for us to shift to insects," she said.

Ian Towes, Canadian natural science filmmaker, presented a sneak peek of his film "Bugs on the Menu."

"People all over the world have been eating insects, and we here in the West don't really eat them," said Towes. "It has a lot more and better economic prospects than conventional agriculture."

His film, about insect farms, has

been shot at locations around the world and shows how insect-eating culture is slowly coming to the West.

"When sushi places came around 30 years ago, everybody was terrified of sushi. And now everybody eats it," Towes said. "Here is the same thing."

Hundreds of people attended the buffet, including high school students, parents with their children and MSU students.

Elizabeth Manin, a worker at MSU, was at the bug buffet for the first time.

"They are all just fine, because they are part of the dish," she said. "What is shocking is that the bugs they use are from suppliers of edible bugs. There is a market for that."

MSU student Lori Lindgren said the insect dishes were good.

"I wouldn't mind putting them in a dish," she said. "My kids would."

MSU student Michael Martinez took an entomology class this semester and was helping with the event.

"It was really interesting how entomology can help with world's hunger — how little space, water and food insects need," said Martinez.