



**Cottonwood Extension District
Barton County 4-H Newsletter
May 2026**

It's almost County Fair time! It's crazy to think how quickly time is going. A sentiment I'm sure many of you can agree with.

There's still plenty of time to get those projects done, but don't wait too long!

The County Fair is a great time to compete, challenge yourself, and show off all the hard work I'm sure you all have been putting in throughout the 4-H year. However, don't forget that it's also a time to spend with family, friends, and demonstrate to the community what being a 4-H member is all about.

How you act is being watched by not only other 4-H families, but also the community members who visit the fair to support you all. Countless hours and no small amount of resources have been committed to making this a great experience for everyone. That experience would not be possible without the work of the Barton County Fair Association. Please find the time to thank them for building up to, during, and after the fair.

Be sure to watch the County Fair guidelines closely to make sure your projects are ready.

I can't wait to see everyone at the fair and get a good look at all of your exhibits!

If you ever need anything. That's what I'm here for.

Every day is an opportunity for a new adventure!

Benjamin T. Sims

Follow us on Facebook: [Cottonwood Extension District](#) and [Barton County 4-H Members](#)

Website: www.cottonwood.ksu.edu

Office Number: 620-793-1910

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Upcoming Events



- May 12 Livestock Skills meeting @ 5:30 pm in Extension office
- May 15 Approximate open date for county fair entries
- May 20 YQCA, 5:30 pm @ Extension office
- May 23 Hoof Trimming - Expo III Building - Starting at 8:30 am - \$5-\$10 per head
- June 1 Horse ID papers and Vaccination form due to the Extension office
- June 1 4-H Junior Leaders Scholarship due
- June 3-5 4-H Discovery Days - Register [HERE](#) -- [Course Catalog](#)
- June 4 Family and Consumer Sciences Experience - Manhattan
- June 8 COUNTY FAIR ENTRIES DUE TO EXTENSION OFFICE by 5:00 pm
- June 8 YQCA completion by midnight to participate in the premium auction
- June 9 Sign Up Genius links released via email for consultation judging
- June 14 Sign Up Genius links will close at 11:59 pm for consultation judging
- June 24-28 Barton County Fair - 2026 Theme: "Our Fair, Our Heritage"

Itemized Fair Schedule:

- June 19 4-H Dog Show @ 9 am - Expo III
- June 20 4-H Fashion Revue, Fiber Arts, Sewing & Textile, Shopping in Style, Banners
@ 8:30 am - Expo I
- June 22 Set Up Expo Grounds and Buildings
- June 24 8-12 Check in all exhibits, judging begins for Foods, Arts/Crafts,
Cloverbuds, Rabbits/Poultry
American Ag Credit BBQ for 4-H followed by Livestock Mtg. & Youth Rally
- June 25 Business Appreciation Brkfst. - Modeled like a Chamber Coffee
Swine, Horse Halter Classes, Bucket Calves, Judging of Hort., Crops,
Photography, Engineering/Tech and much more
- June 26 Dairy Goats, Meat Goats, Sheep, Beef
- June 27 Horse Riding Classes, Hand Pets, Public Fashion Revue, 4-H Free Stage
for demonstrations
- June 28 Sunrise Service, 4-H Holding Board Breakfast, Small Animal Round Robin,
Large Animal Round Robin, 4-H Awards, Sale of Champions

SignUpGenius links will come out after entries are complete for judging time slots, as well as to sign up for Concession Stand times.

There have been a couple of updates made to the 2026 Barton County Fair book. All updates are red edits that can be found on our district [website](#) under their respective project area.

Barton County 4-H Shooting Sports

Air Rifle/Pistol Contest Results -

Congratulations to Madison on being the 12th-place individual at the State 4-H Air Rifle Match on April 18th, here in Great Bend!!

Archery - Practices started in early February at the 4-H Educational Buildings on Hwy 281. Watch for more information. **4-H Shooting Sports is a great tool for teaching discipline, firearm safety, and accountability. For more information, reach out to John Reh at 620-786-0052 for rifle questions and Dustin Wyant at 620-617-6212 for Archery questions.**



Ignite by 4-H Conference



We wanted to take a moment and share a message from Russell Kern about his time at the Ignite by 4-H Conference on March 25-29 in Washington, D.C.

“There was a lot to offer at the Ignite conference in Washington DC. I went with the state Health and Wellness Team, and part of the conference is to come up with an idea that can change our community to present at a showcase later that week. Our presentation was called Live Well Lead Well. We have been working on this project for a few years, and what we do is go to different places and do fun activities over the four H’s of 4-H. For example, for Head we do breathing exercises and meditation for well-being. For Heart, we show them fun ways to exercise their heart and a demonstration showing how a healthy heart works. For this demonstration, you take your non-dominant hand and open and close it as fast as you can for a minute, demonstrating an unhealthy heart. Next, you take your dominant hand and open and close it, saying a three-syllable word, demonstrating a healthy heart. For hands, we do community service projects like making dog toys out of used T-shirts, eliminating clothes waste, and donating the toys to shelters. And health is overall health, such as healthy eating and drinking habits, or an activity showing how much sugar and caffeine are in popular drinks.

There were many classes to attend at the conference that focused on many things. One class I took was a two-part class, meaning it went on for two hours. We were taught basic video design principles and taught how to edit with CapCut. Then we got into teams and made a one-minute video about any 4-H related topic we wanted to. I thought it was very interesting collaborating with others. In another class I took, I learned about food waste and some easy ways to repurpose food that might otherwise go to waste. We got to try different preserved foods like frozen strawberries, freeze-dried mangos, pickled watermelon rind, which was my personal favorite, and some jelly. Another highlight of the trip was the monument tour, where we had three hours to explore the monuments as a group, and we took many good pictures. Overall, the National Ignite by 4-H conference was really fun, and I'd recommend others to attend.”

The 4-H Youth Development program has so much to offer all of you! Opportunities like this, and many others, where you get to network, learn, and build on the ‘sparks’ you have identified here at home. There’s no limit to what 4-H can offer you!



Ignite by 4-H Photos!



Turf at the County Fair



We are pleased to announce that turf has been donated to the Barton County Fair Association, which will be utilized at this year's county fair! The entire show arena will be turf, like that of a soccer or football field. The cattle stalls will be lined with this turf, as well. Eliminating the need for bedding there. However, swine, sheep, and goat pens will still need bedding. Please feel free to reach out with questions.



Kansas 4-H Vanier Family Scholarship



I am pleased to announce that Jonas Kern is a recipient of the 2026 Vanier Family Scholarship! There were over 100 applications this year, with the top 10 having advanced to the interview stage. Jonas receiving this scholarship highlights his leadership and perseverance within the 4-H Program and beyond. The Cottonwood Extension District staff is looking forward to witnessing the next chapters of his life, where he will strive 'To Make the Best Better'!





2026 Japanese Exchange Host Opportunities



Kansas 4-H has been participating in the Japanese Exchange since 1977, in collaboration with S4-H Programs. Since then, over 3,500 Japanese youth have traveled to Kansas. Kansas families host Japanese youth and adult chaperones from mid-July to mid-August. In 2026, Kansas 4-H will be hosting about 30 youth and 3 adult chaperones from July 21 - August 16. Host family recruitment is open. The goal is to have all host families found by June 1, 2026.

This is a great opportunity that I strongly encourage our 4-H families to consider. Here is a [video](#) that was created to provide some context and inspiration to consider opening your home to a Japanese Exchange youth in 2026. If you have questions, Donna Maskus, a Cottonwood Extension District Board member who has experience with the exchange program, would be happy to chat with you.

You may think your schedule is too busy to support an endeavor like this, but think of all that the Japanese Exchange youth would get to experience while here! **They are still in need of host families to ensure we have spots for all Exchange Students! Please consider this opportunity!**

More information can also be found on the [Kansas 4-H website](#).



2026 Family and Consumer Sciences State Contest



WHAT TO EXPECT: The FCS Experience will include the Family and Consumer Sciences Judging Contest, lunch on campus, workshops, and a campus tour. ***Let Ben know if you are interested in participating.*** **WHEN:** Thursday, June 4, 2026

The FCS Judging Contest includes:

1. Consumer Decision Placing classes and reasons (individual participants)
2. Skill-a-thon identification (individual participants)
3. Group Think – which is a presentation inviting the team's perspective in response to a situation presented on the day of competition. (Team presentation to a judge).

WHO: Open to all youth ages 9-18 (youth can participate as individuals or a team of 3-4 youth in the same age group). Intermediates are ages 9-13; Seniors are ages 14-18. There will not be a limit to the number of participants from a local unit.

HOW MUCH: Fee is \$15 per participant (includes lunch at Kramer Dining Center); \$10 for Discovery Days participants. No refunds (but substitutions will be allowed).



Youth Leadership Corner



Junior Leaders	August 17 th	6 pm
4-H Council	August 17 th	7:30 pm

Council committees meet before the meeting at 7 pm on meeting nights, or may schedule meetings at other times. At the April meeting, the Council voted to run the County Fair concession stand and hire a person to manage it, help the Dog project purchase agility equipment, and for each club to make two baskets for the Business Breakfast on Thursday morning.

Jr. Leaders will host a day camp on August 7th (tentative), and voted to do their peach fundraiser again. They have also released their scholarship application, which is due June 1st to the Extension office. Jr. Leaders will reimburse any Jr. Leader member who participates in Discovery Days their registration fee.

Please feel free to reach out to your club's representatives or Council officers with questions.

President: *Kassie Linsner* Vice President: *Samantha Negaard*
Secretary: *Callie Loesch* Treasurer: *Kaisha Woydziak*
Reporters: *Kiera Wyant & Jillian Axman* Parliamentarian: *Adessa Prosser*

Meetings are held in person at the 4-H Educational Building (Hwy 281) or via Zoom Conference Call. August's meeting will be held in person.



4-H Ambassadors



Your 4-H Program 2025-2026 Ambassadors are:

Russell Kern, Samantha Negaard, Melody Braddy, Jonas Kern, DJ Wyant, Callie Loesch, and Kiera Wyant

These 4-H'ers are here to offer any support they can to help you succeed in 4-H. They would be happy to answer any questions you have and help out!



**Beyond
Ready**



Leader's Corner



Volunteer hour tracking - I ask that our registered volunteers begin sending me how many youth are at your meetings (project meetings included), and how long you meet for. I'm just looking for "where we met, had 5 kids there, and met for 2 hours". This helps with reporting, and I would also like to start getting a feel for the hours our volunteers are putting in. I don't expect you to report every single hour spent toward 4-H, because I know that number is high, and I don't want to add a ton extra to your already full plates. I have created a form for you to use that can be found on the next page.

Volunteer Meeting - The next meeting is scheduled for May 5th at 5:30 pm here at the Extension Office.

Livestock Judging & Skill-A-Thon - We have started to have meetings for youth interested in learning more about Livestock Judging, Livestock Skill-A-Thon, and Meats. The next meeting will be on May 12th, starting at 5:30 pm here at the Extension office.

4-H Volunteer: Hour and Direct Contact Tracking Form

Name of Volunteer(s): _____

Event (please circle one and state what project):

Community Club Meeting *Project Meeting:* _____

Project Fair *Officer Training*

Other: _____

Number of contacts made: _____

Number of hours: _____

Date: _____ Meeting Location: _____

Thank you for submitting! Tracking the hours of our 4-H Volunteers is helpful to K-State Extension Professionals with their reporting expectations, and in tracking the impact you make in the lives of 4-H Youth.



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Barton County Junior Leaders Scholarship

Due June 1st, 2026

The application for this scholarship should be completed on a PC or typed and double-spaced with 12 pt font. Please return to the Barton County Extension office via email or in paper on or before the deadline. For the application to be complete, you must include ALL of the following:

1. Eligibility Requirements: Must be a current and active member of Barton County 4-H Junior Leaders and a high school senior.
2. You must be in junior leaders 2+ years.
3. You must be in 4-H for 3+ yrs.
4. Name, address, email address.
5. A brief statement about your college and career plans.
6. Provide a list of your significant leadership, community service, participation, and recognition up to and including the current 4-H year both within 4-H and outside including your school, religious, and other community involvement. Please organize the experiences with the most recent first.
7. Answer the following question: How has 4-H impacted you and how do you plan to use the leadership skills you have developed?
8. How many years have you been a junior leader?
9. How many years have you been in 4-H?
10. How has your involvement in 4-H helped shape who you are today?
11. Can you describe a leadership role you held in 4-H and what you learned from it?
12. How have you used what you learned in 4-H to serve your community or help others?
13. Tell us about a challenge you faced in a 4-H project and how you overcame it?
14. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
15. Who is your 4-H role model?
16. Who has helped you the most with your progress this year?
17. Summarize your high-school experience in 4-H in a max of 150 words minimum of 45.
18. What have you done to improve your fair?
19. Provide a letter of recommendation from a non-related 4-H leader or non-related extension agent or program assistant.
20. Provide a resume.

Due to Extension Office by June 1