



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

Hopefully, we are moving into some temperatures with a little less mood swings and some much-needed moisture. There have been some gorgeous days that I hope everyone has been able to enjoy. We're also approaching the end of the school year. Keep up the hard work, kiddos! You've almost made it through another school year and into Summer break.

March has sure been busy, what with Regional Club Days, Northwest Super Saturday, and the Livestock Clinic. I'm so proud of everyone who represented Barton County 4-H at Regional Club Days! You all did a great job, with some positive feedback from the judges. I challenge you all to return to your clubs and encourage your fellow club members to participate in our local Club Days next year. Let them know how much it has helped you grow and learn.

At Northwest Super Saturday judging, we had 127 youth participate who represented 24 counties! I encourage you all to think about participating next year. It would look great on your Project Record Books. A big round of applause for Kassie Linsner, who participated in the Wildlife contest, and Callie Loesch, who participated in the Livestock Judging and Livestock Skill-A-Thon contest. They both represented Barton County 4-H as NW Regional Agricultural Ambassadors, as well!

Thank you to everyone who brought animals to our Livestock Showmanship Clinic! We had a great turnout, and the afternoon ran smoothly.

Don't forget that small animal tagging will be done by appointment; please contact Alicia at the office by April 15th to set up a time. Be sure to get those appointments made as soon as possible, and not wait until the last minute. The deadline to have animals tagged is May 1st.

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



Upcoming Events



- April 14 Homeschool STEM Day (10 am - 3 pm) - Hays - (p. 11)
- April 16 Homeschool STEM Day (10 am - 3 pm) - Colby - (p. 11)
- April 18 Safe Tractor & Machinery Operation Training - Great Bend - (p. 13)
- April 19-25 Volunteer Appreciation Week!!
- April 20 Jr. Leaders @ 6 pm - 4-H Council at 7:30 pm
- April 26 Post Rock Extension District Meat Goat Clinic - Smith Center (p. 12)
- May 1 Fair T-Shirt Orders due to Extension office (by club)
- May 1 4-H Holding Board Scholarship Due to Extension Office by 5 pm (p. 14-18)
- May 20 YQCA, 5:30 pm @ Extension office
- June 1 Horse ID papers and Vaccination form due to the Extension office
- June 3-5 4-H Discovery Days - Register [HERE](#) -- [Course Catalog](#)
- June 4 Family and Consumer Sciences Experience - Manhattan
- 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 -

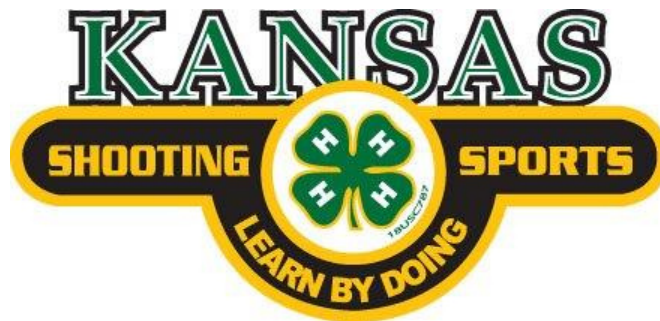
Pawnee County - Team of Madison Gaddis, Kade Fryberger, Kavyn Mercer, and Amber Ochs were 1st place!

Madison had the highest individual score!

Ellsworth and Ellis Counties - Madison Gaddis was the 1st place Senior Individual!

Madison will be representing Barton County 4-H at the State Air Rifle Match on April 18th 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.**



Homeschool STEM Day



The Northwest Region 4-H Agents will be hosting a Homeschool STEM Day on two separate days. April 14th at the Hay Research & Extension Conference Center, and April 16th at the Thomas County Fairgrounds 4-H Building in Colby. There will be 5-6 stations that are 20-25 minutes for the youth to rotate through. The day will run from approximately 10 am - 3 pm. Please watch for registration information that will come out soon, and feel free to share with your networks and anyone you think might be interested in attending. See page 9 of the Newsletter to register.



Livestock Showmanship Clinic



The 4-H Livestock Committee had a great turnout at its Showmanship Clinic on March 29th! A special thank you to the Edgerton, Debes, and Loesch families for bringing animals that kids could work with! Are you looking for some additional support and guidance from someone local? Reach out to Ben, and he can help you connect with one of our livestock families.



Volunteer Appreciation Week



Volunteer Appreciation Week for 2026 is April 19-25! On behalf of the Cottonwood Extension District team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful volunteers during National Volunteer Week! Without their support, experience, and guidance, it would be impossible to provide the programming for Kansas residents, and especially 4-H youth, that we do. Data shows that volunteers donate an average of nine hours per month, or an estimated 695,736 hours annually to the Kansas 4-H youth program. Findings also indicate that the value of one volunteer hour in the United States is \$29.95. That would add up to an annual contribution of \$20.8 million to the Kansas 4-H program. K-State Extension has reported that volunteers, across all programming areas, gave 309,345 hours of their time to programs carried out across the state. The equivalent value of that time is more than \$8.8 million across the state and programs. These statistics can help us show the impact volunteers have on the 4-H program, but can never truly grasp the passion these volunteers have for donating their time and helping to develop our leaders of tomorrow. Volunteers give their time, talents, and energy to the 4-H program and serve as primary ambassadors to our program, doing work such as talking about the importance of 4-H, recruiting new youth and volunteers, and growing community partnerships. Most importantly, volunteers help youth gain learning and leadership skills as they prepare for careers and engage in communities.

Not only are volunteers important for our youth, but they also impact the communities where they live and work. Their value goes beyond the scope of the program and leads to changes in community conditions. Volunteers impact communities in four main ways: by making communities stronger, by connecting communities, by improving the health of communities, and by increasing civic involvement. Research also shows that volunteers personally benefit from their involvement in the 4-H program. Volunteers come into the 4-H program hoping to support youth and make a difference, but they also gain skills in teaching, leadership, and communication. These skills transfer to other environments in which volunteers work and live.

If you know of anyone who would make a great volunteer, or might be interested in volunteering, I would be happy to talk with them!



Northwest 4-H Agricultural Ambassadors



Congratulations to **Kassie Linsner** and **Callie Loesch** for being selected to serve as Northwest 4-H Agricultural Ambassadors! This program is a leadership opportunity for teens, 13 and older, who are passionate about agriculture and educating others. NW 4-H Ag Ambassadors focus on connecting with their local agriculture industries, exploring the richness and diversity of Kansas opportunities, developing ag advocacy skills and fostering educational mindsets, and increasing access to career and post-secondary experiences within the agriscience industry.

We are proud to have them representing the Cottonwood Extension District Barton County 4-H program! This is going to be a great opportunity for them to grow and learn. Are you interested in having Callie or Kassie speak with your 4-H Club about the Agriculture Industry? Feel free to reach out, and they would be happy to come and visit!



Turf at the County Fair



We are pleased to announce that turf has been donated to the Barton County Fair Association that 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 Scholarship Recipient



Congratulations to **Jonas Kern**, for being selected as a Kansas 4-H Scholarship recipient! He was awarded the J. Clifton and Helen E. Ramsey Scholarship in the amount of \$1,600. Great job, Jonas! Receiving this scholarship is a prime example of how hard work and involvement with the 4-H program can reward you in the future!

Kansas 4-H Scholarships are applied for with one application, which automatically enters you for all available scholarships. The 4-H program is designed to provide experiences that help youth build and stack their skills through each experience, culminating in a well-rounded young adult who is prepared to be a leader for the future. Jonas currently serves as one of our Barton County 4-H Ambassadors and Cottonwood District Water Ambassadors. I'm sure he would be happy to come speak with your 4-H Club about his experiences and how your 4-H experiences can help '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!

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	April 20 th	6 pm
4-H Council	April 20 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 February meeting, the Council voted on county fair t-shirt designs, presented ideas for Expo II awards, and voted to make a financial contribution to the 4-H Holding Board for needed repairs at the 4-H Educational Buildings. They also heard from delegates who attended Citizenship in Action and those who competed at the National Western Roundup in Denver.

Jr. Leaders will host a day camp in August, and they tabled discussion on what the theme will be.

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. April’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

This month, we are going to highlight a message from Ambassador Callie Loesch.

"Hi, everyone! This is my 7th year in 4H. This is also my first year as an ambassador. Being in 4-H has helped me become a better leader and come out of my comfort zone in public speaking and meeting new people. Being in the beef project all these years has helped me decide my career path. Someday, as an adult, I would like to be involved in 4-H as a project leader or in some other volunteer role." ~Callie Loesh





Leader's Corner



Spring into Volunteering- The Association of Kansas 4-H Volunteers hosts this event and will be at the K-State Salina Campus on Saturday, April 25. Registration will begin at 9 am, and the day will conclude at 3 pm. This is for anyone serving as a 4-H Volunteer or considering it. The goal is for volunteers to go home recharged, excited, and ready to try new things in their volunteer roles. A flyer and registration is on page 19.

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 - Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the March 17th meeting. Going forward, these meetings will be on the first Tuesday of every other month, with the next meeting being 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 two meetings will be on April 14th and 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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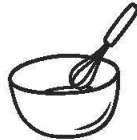
Homeschool STEM Day



**Beyond
Ready**



**Natural
Fabric
Dyeing**



**Baking
Science**



**Blender
Bicycle**



**The
Incredible
Water
Journey**

And More



K-State Agricultural Research Center
1232 240th Ave. Hays, KS 67601

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
April 14, 2026



Thomas County Fairgrounds
S Range Ave., Colby, KS 67701

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
April 16, 2026

Registration due **April 6th.**

Hays, KS

April 14, 2026



bit.ly/STEM-Hays

**Bring your own
sack lunch!**



Colby, KS

April 16, 2026



bit.ly/STEM-Colby

This institution is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Language access requests and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, and American Sign Language), may be requested by contacting the event contact (Chandra Plate four weeks prior to the start of the event at 620-388-7157. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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Register [HERE](#)



Meat Goat Showmanship Clinic



Date: April 26, 2026

Time: 3:30p.m. - 5:30p.m.

Deadline to Sign-Up: Location: Smith County Fair Grounds
April 17, 2026 (101 Armory Road, Smith Center, KS)

Sign-Up



LEADING THE CLINIC



Bring your own goat for a hands-on experience; or prepare to be an observer. Goats will not be provided.

Addison and Allison Vavricek

Top Individuals in Livestock Judging at National level.

Nationally known, State Fair Champions and Nationals Top Individuals Goat Showmen.

Jennifer Dix

Smith County Goat Superintendent and well-versed in the goat industry.

Billy Thayer

Knowledge and experience in fitting National Competing Goats.

- Nutrition and Basic Care Information
- Hands-On Showmanship Class
- Hands-On Fitting Demonstration
- Tips on Identifying High-Quality Goats



Contact Post Rock District 4-H Coordinator, Emma Anderson, at emmaand2026@ksu.edu or call 785-282-6823 with questions.

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Register [HERE](#)

Safe Tractor & Machinery Operation Training

This program is a collaboration with K-State Research and Extension Districts: Post Rock, Midway, Cottonwood, and Central Kansas District.

The National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program (NSTMOP) is designed for 14- and 15-year-olds seeking employment in production agriculture.

Core content areas include:

- Safety basics, Agricultural hazards, Tractors, Connecting and using implements, Materials handling, and more.

Students are certified after successfully passing a 50-question test at the training and doing both an operating skills test and a driving test administered by the employer.

2026 Course Dates, Locations, & Contact Info

April 18th – Great Bend, KS
KanEquip

Alicia Boor: aboor@ksu.edu or 620-793-1910

April 25th – Beloit, KS
Carrico Implement

Blaire Todd: blairet@ksu.edu or
785-738-3597

May 28th – Solomon, KS
KanEquip, Inc.

Justine Johns: jwh04@ksu.edu or
785-392-2147

Scan to register!



SIGN UP: Visit
<https://bit.ly/tractorsafety2026>, scan QR
code, or call an agent listed below!

MANUAL COST: \$15 – Pick up at your
local Extension Office

BRING: Your course manual and
enrollment form. Pay and pick up your
course manual at your local Extension
Office. Please pick up your manual at
least 5 days PRIOR to the course.

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Language access requests and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language), may be requested by contacting the event contact, Justine Johns, four weeks prior to the start of the event at 785-392-2147 or jwh04@ksu.edu. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

Register at <https://bit.ly/tractorsafety2026>

4-H Holding Board Memorial Scholarship

Due May 1 to the Barton County Extension Office

The first 4 pages of this application may be typed but the essay on page 5 must be in the handwriting of the 4-H member.

No additional documents are to be attached (other than required reference letters)

This scholarship is non-renewable and may be won only once.

I. Personal Data:

Please Attach

Name _____

a

Home Address _____

Photograph

City, State, Zip _____

School Address (If applicable) _____

Cell Phone _____

Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Parent or Guardian _____

Parent Address (if different from above) _____

Number in Family: Brothers _____ Sisters _____

II. 4-H Work

How many years have you been a 4-H Member? _____

On average, how many 4-H meetings have you attended each year? _____

What offices have you held in your 4-H Club?

What **leadership** activities have you been involved with in the past 4 years?

Due to Extension Office by May 1

What specific **community service activities** have you been involved with through 4-H?

What recognition have you received in 4-H that you are most proud of?

What younger 4-H member have you helped in the past two years and what did you hope that they learned from you?

III. High School Record:

Name of high school from which you have graduated or will graduate from _____

Date of graduation _____ Number in graduating class _____

Your rank in Class _____ Grade Average _____

Tell briefly of your high school activities:

Due to Extension Office by May 1

IV. College Record:

What college do you plan to attend? _____

What do you plan to major in while in college?

Intended college major: _____ minor: _____

If already attending college: Your letter grade average _____ G.P.A. _____

List college activities:

V. Financial Need

Explain your need for financial assistance to continue your college education for the next year and describe your plans for meeting this financial need.

List anticipated college costs for the next year.

Tuition \$ _____ Room \$ _____ Board \$ _____ Lab Fees \$ _____

Transportation \$ _____ Personal Expenses \$ _____ Books \$ _____

Other \$ _____ TOTAL \$ _____

Will you have any brothers or sisters attending college during the next year?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, explain _____

Due to Extension Office by May 1

Do you plan to work this summer? Yes No

What are your plans for summer employment and how many hours per week will you work?

Do you plan to work this next year? Yes No

If yes, what are your plans for employment and how many hours per week will you work?

Do you currently hold a job? Yes No

Please explain. _____

- VI. List three references. Suggestions are High School Principal, Counselor, Teacher, Employer, Clergyman, 4-H leader, etc.

Name _____

Address _____

Occupation _____

Name _____

Address _____

Occupation _____

Name _____

Address _____

Occupation _____

Contact one of the above references and request a letter of reference. Ask them to return the letter to you in a sealed envelope with your name on the front. Attach the envelope to this application with a paper clip.

Due to Extension Office by May 1

Spring Into Volunteering!



Beyond Ready

Welcome, 4-H Volunteers!

Get ready to *Spring into Volunteering* with the Kansas Association of 4-H Volunteers! Join us for a day of learning, networking, and fun at the Kansas State University Salina Aerospace and Technology Campus.

Event Details:

- **Date:** Saturday, April 25, 2026
- **Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Location:** Kansas State University Salina Aerospace and Technology Campus
- **Registration Deadline:** April 15, 2026
- **Price:** \$25

Featured Sessions

- ✓ Beyond Ready strategies for today's youth
- ✓ Artificial Intelligence tools for 4-H volunteers
- ✓ Engaging older youth and young adult volunteers
- ✓ Grab-and-go engagement ideas you can use right away

Registration Information



Scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/4sgaGeW>

Register by April 15th to secure your spot!

We are excited to welcome you for a day of collaborative learning, skill enhancement, and fun! See you there!

What To Expect

- Networking Opportunities
- Resource Sharing
- Interactive Workshops
- Lunch Provided
- Door Prizes & Giveaways
- Lots of New Ideas

K-State Extension is an opportunity provider and employer.

Register [HERE](#). Due April 15th