



**Cottonwood Extension District
Barton County 4-H Newsletter
December 2025**

Time sure does fly when you're having fun! We are already moving into December, with Christmas and the New Year right around the corner. During the holidays, hopefully we can find some time to relax, enjoy the company of friends and family, eat some delicious food, and be thankful for everything around us. Some days it can feel hard to be thankful, but ultimately, we are the ones that decide how we react to our surroundings. I choose to see the bright side, and be thankful for my family, friends, and the Barton County 4-H program!

One way we can enjoy the holidays is to participate in some fun holiday activities with those around us. Maybe this could be your family, a close group of friends, or your 4-H Club. It's a great way to include those who may feel left out or are nervous about participating. I challenge you to make everyone feel welcome and appreciated. Here is a link to a [4-H Holiday Activity Guide](#)!

4-H Club Day and Regional Club Day are fast approaching. Winter break is a great time to brainstorm ideas for how you want to participate at club days. Maybe a demonstration on how to prepare your favorite snack, or how to properly pack a show box. Maybe you can read an excerpt from your favorite book or a poem that means a lot to you. Even if you aren't ready to participate just yet, I encourage you to attend to watch, learn, and support other 4-Hers.

Have you thought about your goals for the year and what project exhibit you want to work on for the Barton County Fair? December may be a great time to reflect on what path you want your projects to take, as well.

Although the county fair is a celebrated and traditional part of our yearly 4-H journeys, there is so much more to do throughout the year. Club community service projects, project meetings, regional and state contests, Citizenship in Action, Discovery Days, and numerous other regional events are all opportunities to learn and grow!

Do you need help thinking of some ideas? Feel free to reach out at any time, as I'm always happy to help!

Every day is an opportunity for a new adventure!

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



- Dec 2 Golden Belt Community Foundation Giving Tuesday
- Dec 6 Ag & STEM Youth Day Camp - Wheatland High School, Grainfield
- Dec 16 Junior Leaders & 4-H Council Meeting
- Dec 24-26 Extension Office Closed
- Dec 29 - Jan 2 Extension Office Closed
- Jan 5 [Kansas 4-H Scholarship Applications due](#)
- Jan 10 4-H Leadership Day - Cimaron
- Jan 13 NW Record Book Judging - Sr. Qualifying books due to office Jan 6 at 5 pm.
- Jan 16 Deadline for 4-H Club Day entries - by 11:59 pm
- Jan 23 State 4-H Horse Judging, Topeka - register [HERE](#)
- Feb 1 4-H Club Day, Ellinwood High School
- Feb 15-16 [4-H Citizenship in Action](#), Topeka
- Feb 28 Beef Weigh-In (9-10 AM)
- March 13 4-H Regional Club Day, Great Bend High School
- Feb 21-22 [4-H Horse Panorama](#), Rock Springs Ranch
- March 7 Junior Beef Producer Day
- March 21 NW Super Saturday Judging Contest, Hays
- April 11 Junior Sheep Producer Day
- June 24-28 Barton County Fair

Interested in testing your evaluation skills with a day of fun and learning?

Join 4-H youth on March 21 for Super Saturday at FHSU! This event alternates sites with Colby Community College, and the morning involves multiple judging contests such as Life Skills, Entomology, Crop ID, and Photography. In the afternoon, you can test your livestock judging skills or participate in one of several project-related activities, such as Engineering & Technology or Visual Arts.

Watch for more information to come out!

Kansas Youth Leadership Forum Report

On November 22-23, Cottonwood District 4-Her's joined members from across the state as delegates at the Kansas Youth Leadership Forum! KYLF is an opportunity for 4-H youth to build their leadership skills and potential through workshops, consulting groups, inspirational speakers, and much more. Our 4-H'ers also get to vote for State 4-H Youth Council representatives from the Northwest region that will represent them and help plan next year's state 4-H events. KYLF is held at Rock Springs 4-H Ranch for youth 4-H age 14-18.

Does this sound like something you would be interested in attending next year? Then please don't hesitate to reach out to 4-H Agent Ben Sims for more information.

2025 Delegates were: Callie Loesch, DJ Wyant, Russell Kern, Melody Braddy, Aliza Straub, and Willow Braddy. They would be happy to chat with you about their experience and why you should consider attending next year!

Barton County 4-H Shooting Sports

Air Rifle/Pistol - The air rifle and air pistol projects are disciplines of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. It is for 4-H members aged 8 to 18 years. In this project, the youth learn firearm safety, parts of and the operation of firearms, three shooting positions (prone, kneeling, and standing) for the rifle portion, shooting range rules and etiquette, and have the opportunity to shoot in a safe, supervised environment. The weekly meetings are held at an indoor range set up specifically for the air rifle/air pistol projects. All rifles, pistols, pellets, targets, and equipment are provided by the Barton County 4-H Air Rifle program. The 1st six weeks are mandatory to complete all the required training needed for the project. There is a \$20 charge per member to cover the costs of pellets and targets. From January through March, there are opportunities to compete in matches with other 4-H members from across the state, with a state match that takes place in April for those who qualify. Practices are held at the Foundry Community Church at 5401 Broadway in Great Bend.

Small Bore Rifle/Pistol - THE 1ST SIX WEEKS OF THE AIR RIFLE/AIR PISTOL PROGRAM ARE MANDATORY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SMALL BORE PROJECT. Those six weeks start on November 11, 2025.

Starting Range Date for Small Bore > The 1st Wednesday in June 2026

The smallbore project is a discipline of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. It is for 4-H members aged 10 to 18. This project extends the knowledge gained in the air rifle/air pistol project. In this project, the youth learn firearm safety, the parts of and operation of small bore (.22 caliber) rifles and/or pistols, three shooting positions (prone, kneeling, and standing) for rifle, how the environment and weather affect rifle performance, shooting range rules and etiquette, and have the opportunity to shoot in a safe, supervised environment. The weekly meetings are held at a local gun club with an area reserved for use by the 4-H small-bore program. In this project, most rifles are provided by the 4-H members (the program does have 3 rifles that can be used if someone needs one), and all pistols must be provided by 4-H members. Any firearms provided by 4-H members must pass inspection by the shooting instructors. Ammunition is provided by the 4-H member and must meet certain specifications. It can be purchased through the 4-H small-bore program. There is a \$10 charge per member to cover the costs of targets. During late summer, mainly August, there are opportunities to compete in matches with other 4-H members from across the state. A state match takes place in October for those who qualify.

Archery - Practices will start 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.**



Regional Project Record Judging



If you had the top Project Record (see below), consider making corrections/updates based on local judging recommendations and submitting it for Regional Project Record judging. The contest is open to Seniors only. We can send one project record from each category.

- 1) Please review the [Guide to Kansas 4-H Project Recognition](#) to assist in preparing your cover letter and project resume.
- 2) Review the rubrics for the Project Report Form and the Cover Letter & Resume Evaluation that can both be found on the above guide.
- 3) Assembling the 4-H Project Award submission:

The following items must be turned in for a complete submission in the following order:

- a) Check Sheet
- b) Personal Information Page
- c) Cover Letter
- d) Resume
- e) Project Report Form

Please do not include:

- 4-H Permanent Records
- Plastic page sleeves

Project Records are due to the Cottonwood-BT Co office by 5 pm on January 6th.

Those that have qualified for Regional Competition are:

Russell Kern - Foods & Nutrition

Samantha Negaard - Performing Arts

Kassie Linsner - Swine



4-H Club Day



What: Exercise communication, presentation skills, and parliamentary procedure knowledge

When: Sunday, February 1, 2026

Where: Ellinwood High School

Why: 4-H Club Day is an opportunity to present a project talk, demonstration or illustrated talk, a musical selection, or to work together as a club to present a skit or model meeting. Cloverbuds and 1st or 2nd year 4-H members can present a Show and Share while our 13+ 4-H members can participate in Public Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, or Application, Resume, Interview (ARI).

Register by January 16th at 11:59 pm via the following link:

[Barton County 4-H Club Day](#)

If a section runs out of available slots, please let Ben know, and he can add more.

Plan to come and watch others present! It is a great way to learn and support your club members.

Guidelines can be found [HERE](#)

We will offer a Livestock Skillathon and Photography judging from 1:30 - 2:15

Regional 4-H Club Day will be on Friday, March 13, in Great Bend.



4-H Enrollment for 2025-2026



Why enroll in October-December?

The goal of 4-H is project learning throughout the year, not just to produce a fair entry!

The sooner your family is enrolled, the sooner you are added to email lists for communication about upcoming 4-H events, activities, and project-related correspondence.

Clubs should not elect officers from non-enrolled 4-H members. I realize that may be hard to do so early in the 4-H year. Be sure to get enrolled ASAP if you were elected to a club office.

You also need to be enrolled to take part in certain projects, like livestock and shooting sports. You should be enrolled by the respective livestock weigh-in and tagging dates, and before attending any 4-H Shooting Sports meetings/practices.

Selecting Projects - Setting Goals

Using the [Setting 4-H Project Goals](#) publication is a great way to start your project year!

Keep in mind that winning Grand Champion or a purple ribbon is not a goal. Goals should be SMART: **Specific** (crochet a scarf), **Measurable** (a complete scarf that fits me appropriately), **Achievable** (I can do this myself or with help from a family member), **Relevant** (I am enrolled in the Fiber Arts project), **Time-bound** (progress every week from Feb/May)

Why start Project Records early in the year?

By having Project Records out in October, you have the opportunity to look ahead for activities and events that provide learning opportunities or where you need to practice at home.

For older youth, you may need to include leadership activities related to the project, and this is much easier to plan over the winter months instead of when the year is nearly complete. Citizenship opportunities may also be hard to find. So, it's a good idea to give yourself time to identify those or come up with ideas.

Many of you utilize the form-fillable PDF Project Report Forms. Have you ever considered using **ZBooks**? Check out the Kansas 4-H website for some great [resources](#) on how to get started! It's a great tool for year-long project record completion on the fly.



Youth Leadership Corner



Junior Leaders	December 15	6 pm
4-H Council	December 15	7:30 pm

Council committees meet before the meeting at 7 pm on meeting nights, or may schedule meetings at other times.

Congratulations to your new 4-H Council Officers!

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

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

SAVE THE DATE
4-H LEADERSHIP DAY:
WITH DUSTIN GALYON
+ BREAKOUT SESSIONS

BREAKOUT SESSIONS:
1) VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS
2) CLASSES FOR TEENS (CAMP COUNSELOR,
AMBASSADORS, RESUMES/COVER LETTERS AND
??????)

JANUARY 10, 2026
10AM-3:30PM
OPEN TO ALL 4-HERS 6TH-12 GRADES

EVENT LOCATION:
GRAY COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, CIMARRON, KS

HOSTED BY GRAY COUNTY 4-H AND
WALNUT CREEK DISTRICT 4-H

MKC *Shared growth.
Shared success.* **NW 4-H ADVISORY**
DANE G. HANSEN
FOUNDATION **ACTION FOR ALEX** **FORD COUNTY 4-H**
FOUNDATION

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDED EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR
PARTICIPATION IN ALL PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND ACTIVITIES. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY BE REQUESTED.



From your 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, Jonas Kern.

"I think that 4-H is one of the most important organizations that I have been involved with. Because of being in 4-H, I have had many learning, leadership, and networking experiences. I have met and worked with peers from all over Kansas and even the United States. The skills that I have learned from 4-H can easily be applied in the future, and have adequately prepared me for the careers ahead of me. Doing the projects in 4-H has also allowed me to do and create what I love and get constructive feedback to better improve my skills. I think that others should join 4-H so that they, too, can accelerate their skills and learn all that they need to be high-quality citizens." ~Jonas Kern

Do you have friends or family members who you think would be interested in being impacted in this way? Well, invite them to join 4-H! You all are our greatest advocates for 4-H recruitment.



Beyond Ready



Leader's Corner



Club Leaders - It is very important that you set up a Volunteer Profile in 4-H Online and verify that you have completed the volunteer training in 4-H Online! This helps us to better manage volunteer certification and status. We also need to make sure that you have completed an initial Certified Background Check. There is no cost to you for this. Please reach out to me, and I can share the link to initiate the screening. Please remember that in order for a 4-H Club to be in good standing, you must have TWO leaders who are current, screened, and approved 4-H Volunteers.

Please visit with your club's 4-H Council Representatives so that they are aware of their role and responsibility to attend 4-H council and fulfill their elected duties. They serve as the conduit of information between the club and the county-wide 4-H program.

How can you help your club members prepare for 4-H Club Day?

- Remind them to sign up via Sign-Up Genius link on page
- Share the resources on the [Kansas 4-H Communications](#) page.
- Encourage them to practice!

Also, a great resource for welcoming new members to your club over the first few months can be found on the [KSRE Bookstore](#) website.

Project Records - Have everyone bring their Goal Setting Sheets and Project Records to your next meeting. Check on updates and share upcoming opportunities. This can be fun and interactive! Maybe have a small prize drawing for those who share updates. [Setting 4-H Project Goals](#)

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.

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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Cottonwood District

K-State Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

2026 K-STATE JUNIOR BEEF PRODUCER DAY

Program

Join us on March 7, 2026, for the biennial K-State Junior Beef Producer Day! This event is a fun-filled educational day for youth, parents, beef project leaders, ag teachers, and extension agents to expand their knowledge of youth beef projects. Presentations by K-State faculty, staff, K-State livestock judging team members, students, and guest speakers will cover topics that may include selection, nutrition, daily care, meat science, reproduction, health, grooming, and showmanship. An optional YQCA certification class will be offered at the end of the day. A complimentary lunch and t-shirt will also be provided for those who register by the deadline. The registration fee is \$20 per person for those who sign up by February 13. The fee will increase to \$30 per person for those who register after the deadline. Only those who register by February 13 will receive a t-shirt. This is a family event! Anyone attending the event must register, including youth and adults.

Registration

Deadline: February 13

Fee: \$20/person

Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/BeefJrProducer>

Late Registration: \$30/person (after February 13)

*All attendees must register, including youth & adults.

**Late registrants will not receive a t-shirt.



Scan Me!



Tentative Schedule

8:00AM	Check-in
9:00AM	Welcome
9:15AM	Project Selection
10:00AM	Morning Breakout Sessions -Nutrition, Meat Science, Daily Care, Grooming & Fitting
Noon	Lunch
1:00PM	Afternoon Breakout Sessions -Health, Reproduction, Showmanship
3:15PM	Dismissal
3:30PM	Optional YQCA Class

Questions?

Lexie Hayes

☎ 785.532.1264 ✉ adhayes@ksu.edu

Registration Due
February 13



K-State, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. All educational programs and materials available without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

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

2026 K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day



Date

4.11.2026

Manhattan, KS



Scan Me!



Registration

Due: 3.20.2026

Cost: \$20/person

<https://bit.ly/SheepJrProducer>

*All adults & youth must register to attend.

**Only those registered by 3/20/26 will receive a t-shirt.

***Late registration is \$30/person.



Questions

Lexie Hayes



785.532.1264



adhayes@ksu.edu

Program

Join us for the biennial K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day on Saturday, April 11, 2026. Presentations will be provided by featured guests, as well as K-State faculty, staff, and students. This event will be an educational day of activities in which youth, parents, extension agents, ag teachers, and sheep project leaders can increase their knowledge of youth sheep project selection and management. A variety of topics will be shared, including an optional YQCA certification at the end of the day. All ages and skill levels are invited! Lunch and a t-shirt are included. The registration fee is \$20/person for those who sign up by March 20 or \$30/person for those who register after that date. Only those who register by the deadline will receive a t-shirt. This is a family event! Anyone attending, including both youth and adults, must register. There will be an optional tour of the sheep and meat goat center offered on Friday evening and Saturday after jr. day.

Tentative Schedule

Friday, April 10

5:00-7:00PM Optional Tour of Sheep & Goat Center

Saturday, April 11

8:00AM Check-in

9:00AM Welcome

9:15AM Selection

10:00AM Nutrition

10:45AM Morning Breakout Sessions

-facilities & equipment, reproduction, project management purchase to show

NOON Lunch

1:00PM Health

1:45PM Afternoon Breakout Sessions

-wool, showmanship, clipping & grooming

3:45PM Dismissal

4:00PM Optional YQCA Class

4:00-6:00PM Optional Sheep & Goat Center Tour



K-State, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. All educational programs and materials available without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.



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

NW KS 4-H AG AMBASSADORS
PRESENT THE

AG & STEM YOUTH DAY CAMP

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 2025

1 - 4:30 PM

Wheatland High School
2920 K-23
Grainfield, KS 67737

- RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 7-13
- OPEN TO ANY YOUTH!
- FUN GROUP ACTIVITIES
- HANDS-ON, AMBASSADOR-LED STATIONS INCLUDE:
 - BUTTER & DAIRY FUN
 - IN THE LIFE OF A FARMER
 - AGRICULTURAL BYPRODUCTS
 - SOIL HEALTH & EROSION
 - EMBRYOLOGY
- SNACK SERVED!



\$15/YOUTH

Pay at the door.

Register by Dec. 3rd!

Scan me to register,
or visit:
https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a5n40H1bB6ca9kG



For questions, contact:
Twin Creeks Extension District-Graham County
785.421.3411 or jenileem@ksu.edu

K-STATE
Research and Extension



DANE G. HANSEN
FOUNDATION

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. 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 Jenilee Godsey two weeks prior to the start of the event, December 6, 2025 at jenileem@ksu.edu or 785-421-3411. 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 by December 3rd at: https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a5n40H1bB6ca9kG