



What's Inside?

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- National Volunteer Week
- 4-H Enrollment Deadline is May 1st
- 4-H Market Livestock Weigh-in
- Livestock Nomination Updates
- Horse ID Papers & Coggins Test
- Upcoming Events

Ellis County 4-H Happenings

April 2026

Dear 4-H Families,

I wanted to share a personal update with you. I have accepted a new position closer to home and will be transitioning out of my role with Ellis County in early May.

This was not an easy decision, as it has truly been a privilege to work with such a dedicated group of youth, families, and volunteers. I am especially grateful for the relationships we have built over the past 4 years! The support, encouragement, and commitment you show to 4-H is truly remarkable.

While I had hoped to visit with each of you personally, I know that won't be possible in the time I have remaining. Please know how much I have appreciated the opportunity to work alongside you and be part of so many meaningful experiences.

Over the next few weeks, I will work to ensure a smooth transition and assist where I can before my departure. I have full confidence that this program will continue to thrive because of all of you.

Thank you again for making these past 4 years so meaningful!

Yours in 4-H,

Tamara Robertson



K-STATE
Research and Extension



Meetings Coming Your Way

4-H Council – April 6th @ 6 pm, back meeting room of Ext. Office

Ag Livestock – April 29th @ 8 pm (after small animal weigh-in), Fairgrounds

Ways to Contact Us

- You can reach the Office at (785) 628-9430
- Extension Office fax # is (785) 621-2002
- el@listserv.ksu.edu
- www.cottonwood.ksu.edu

IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO NOTE

April 6 – Registration due for Homeschool STEM Days

April 15 – Insect Art Contest are due

April 17 – Influential Volunteer Notes to Tamara

April 19 – YQCA training and NEW MEMBER livestock sale meeting

April 20 – Last day to order DNA envelopes for Nominated Market Beef

April 29 – Small Animal Weigh-in 6-8 pm

April 30 – K- State Animal Science Leadership Academy App Due

May 1 – Market beef/heifer nominations Due for KS State Fair and KJLS

May 1 – **Last Day to Make Changes to Your 4-H Enrollment for 2026**

May 1 – Registered Breeding Livestock in name of 4-H'er

May 1 – KWA Variety Naming Contest entries due

May 8 – Registration due for Discovery Days

June 1 – [4-H Horse ID Papers](#) Due in Ext. Office

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4-H PROJECT ENROLLMENT

The last chance to make changes in your project enrollments for 2026 is coming up on May 1. Be sure to check in on your 4-H Online account and make sure you are enrolled in the projects that you are planning to work in. **Remember that you must be enrolled in a project in order to exhibit in that project area in the 4-H division of the County Fair.** If you've found a new area you'd like to explore, be sure to get your enrollment updated in 4-H Online before May 1. To learn more about how to do the updates, [click here](#).

Your enrollment is not complete until you have successfully paid the \$15 fee. You must be enrolled in 4-H to participate at any 4-H event or activity.

YQCA TRAINING & SALE MEETING – April 19th, 1:30pm – Ag Research Center

On April 19th, Stacy Campbell will be conducting an in-person YQCA training. **This training is required for all youth planning to participate in the Ellis County 4-H Livestock Auction, exhibit in the Kansas State Fair Grand Drive and/or KJLS.** This is an annual training, so youth need to complete it each year.

For 2026, you have two options to complete the training:

- In-Person Training on April 19th.
 - If you cannot attend this in-person session, you are welcome to attend the training in another county. Please notify the Extension Office that you will be doing this.
- Online Training for \$12 per member.

Important Registration Details: To register, visit <https://yqcaprogram.org/> There, you can:

- Register for the class
- Pay the \$3.00 fee
- Complete the PRE-TEST

Please note that NO payment will be accepted at the door. **You must be enrolled and complete the pre-test before attending the class.**

NEW MEMBER Livestock Sale Meeting: Immediately following the YQCA training, there will be a NEW MEMBER Livestock Sale Meeting. This meeting is essential for any new participants of the Ellis County Fair Livestock Sale, and **there will not be another opportunity to attend. It is important that both youth and a parent are present.**

This is a change from previous years, so 4-H members who have participated in the Fair Livestock Sale last year will not need to attend but should be prepared to talk to potential buyers!

HOMESCHOOL STEM DAYS

NW Kansas 4-H is hosting a hands-on STEM Day just for homeschool youth. It's a fun chance to explore science, creativity, and problem-solving while building real-world skills.

Registration Reminder: All youth and adults must register in advance so we can plan safe, small-group activities. Adults are needed to help guide youth to sessions! Everyone must bring a sack lunch.

STEM Sessions Include:

- Natural Fabric Dyeing
- Baking Science
- Blender Bike
- The Incredible Water Journey
- And more hands-on activities!

Locations, Dates & Times

- Hays, KS- April 14, 10 AM-3 PM
- Colby, KS- April 16, 10 AM-3 PM

Register by April 6th, using the QR code on the flyer at the end of the newsletter or at these links:

Hays: [Hays Homeschool STEM Day](#)

Colby: [Colby Homeschool STEM Day](#)

2026 INSECT ART CONTEST

The K-State Extension Pesticide Safety and IPM Program is hosting its annual insect-themed art contest, open to all ages and skill levels in Kansas. This year's theme is "Metamorphosis Magic." The goal is to explore insects that undergo complete and incomplete metamorphosis, then create artwork that fits the contest theme. **Entries should be postmarked by April 15, 2026.**

We will select a winner from each of the outlined categories and one overall winner will be selected from those entries. Artists that have art selected as 1st - 3rd place winners will receive a certificate and a prize to recognize their achievement. Select artwork may be used to create educational items.

Age categories are as follows:

1. Kindergarten – 2nd grade
2. 3rd grade – 5th grade
3. 6th grade – 8th grade
4. High School
5. Adult

FIBER ARTS PROJECT WORK

Natalie Oborny (Fiber Arts Project Leader) will be at the Extension Office on Thursday, April 23rd, from 5-6:30 PM to help with fiber arts projects. Youth are welcome to see what is available or bring supplies and materials to work on. For more information, join the Fiber Arts GroupMe – QR Code at the end of the newsletter.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 19 – 25



We have a lot of great volunteers in Ellis County 4-H! Thanks to each of you who step forward to give your time and talents to 4-H members! THANK YOU!

4-H Members—I challenge you to send me a short note (1-2 paragraphs) about a volunteer who has been influential or helpful in your 4-H world. Send to tarobertson@ksu.edu **by April 17** so that we can highlight on our Cottonwood Extension District Facebook page. Please indicate how you would like your name listed; by first name/last initial, initials only, full name, or anonymous.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

The Association of Kansas 4-H Volunteers is hosting "Spring Into Volunteering" in Salina on the K-State Polytechnic Campus on Saturday, April 25. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the day will conclude around 3 p.m.

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 some new things in their volunteer roles.

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

Registration for the day is \$25 and includes; materials and lunch! **Online registration is due April 15th** and the fee will be submitted to the Extension Office.

K-STATE ANIMAL SCIENCES LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Applications are now open for the 2026 K-State Animal Science Leadership Academy, held June 10-13, 2026. The goal of this academy will be to further develop young leaders within the livestock industry and prepare them for a successful future in this field.

The four-day session focuses on increasing knowledge of Kansas' diverse livestock industry, as well as building participant's leadership skills. Twenty high school students will be selected to participate based upon educational, community, and agricultural involvement, as reflected through an application process.

Applications are due by April 30th. Transportation to and from the event is the responsibility of the participant, along with a \$50 fee to reserve his or her space. The fee is only due upon acceptance and not at the time of application. More information and the application form are available at: [K-State Animal Science Leadership Academy](#) For questions about the academy, please contact Ashley Hartman, Director, at arhartma@ksu.edu or 785-532-1272.



SMALL LIVESTOCK WEIGH-IN & TAGGING

If you're planning to show Commercial Breeding animals, Feeder/Bucket Calves, Meat Goats, Sheep or Swine at this year's Ellis County Fair, make plans now to attend weigh-in and tagging on **April 29th from 6-8 PM at the Fairgrounds**. **EID tags will NOT be sold before hand**, tagging and weighing will take place at the same place and time. **All animals have the option to weigh their animals.**

Remember, you need to be enrolled in the Market livestock project by May 1.

Families are asked to come into the office and **pay for tags during the week of May 4th-8th**. Any remaining invoices will be emailed out after May 11th. Checks should be made out to **Ellis County 4-H Ag Livestock**.

KANSAS WHEAT ALLIANCE NAMING CONTEST

Kansas Wheat Alliance is inviting everyone to participate in this year's wheat variety naming contest! The prize is \$500 cash and the unique honor of naming a Kansas State wheat variety. Individuals, 4-H clubs, and FFA chapters are all welcome to compete. More information can be found at [KWA Variety Naming Contest 2026](#)

All entries must be emailed to bryson@kswheatalliance.com by 5pm on May 1, 2026.

CLUB FUNDRAISER OPPORTUNITY - Wheat Plot Tour Meal

Each year we hold and conduct a county wheat plot tour/field day in May. After the field day we come into Hays to the Municipal Park, 1st and Main Street for dinner. Any 4-H club in the county can throw their clubs name in the hat to prepare and serve the meal. Stacy will go out and get the donations and the 4-H club will receive the donated money after the event. The meal has generally consisted of grilled hamburgers and brats with the condiments, pickles, onions, chips, baked beans or potato salad, a dessert, water, tea, and lemonade (optional). We are encouraging people to RSVP, so we will give the club an estimated head count closer to the date.

If your club is interested in doing this for a fundraiser, **please let Theresa know by May 1st**. If you have any questions feel free to ask Stacy or Theresa.

LIVESTOCK NOMINATIONS

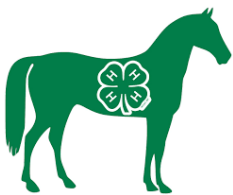
Detailed Information on this process will be posted on the [K-State Youth Livestock webpage](#).

Plan ahead as DNA envelopes will need to be ordered directly through ShoWorks (Old DNA envelopes will not be accepted) and families will enter their animal and exhibitor data online through ShoWorks. DNA envelope orders will close 1 week prior to the nomination deadline for each specie. **(April 20th for market beef and June 5th for small livestock)**.

Nomination Deadlines:

May 1 - Market Beef

June 15 - Small Livestock & Commercial Heifers



4-H HORSE ID PAPERS DUE JUNE 1

Horse ID papers are available at the Extension Office or on line at kansas4-h.org. You have to have these papers completed and on **file with our office by June 1** in order to show at 4-H sanctioned horse shows. Now's the time to get the photos taken and the forms filed with the Extension Office. ***If you have an old form, you will need to transition to the form linked above. It was updated in 2025.***

4-H HORSE COGGINS TEST REQUIRED AT FAIR

All exhibits in the 4-H Horse Show must present proof of negative Coggins test within the last 12 months at check-in. **If you are needing the test completed please reach out to our office** and we will work with a local vet to get it completed.

More information on the Coggin's test can be found on the [K-State Veterinary Health Center website](#).

KANSAS 4-H DISCOVERY DAYS

Put June 3-5, 2026 on your calendar to be in Manhattan on the K-State campus. Discovery Days is open to all youth who are 13 to 18 years old by January 1, 2026.

Registration for Discovery Days is now OPEN and will close on May 8th! Remember, high demand classes tend to fill up quick! To check out the class catalog go to: <http://bit.ly/4ITF2BF> To register, use the QR code below or this link: <https://cvent.me/OyR3dO>

ELLIS COUNTY FAIR 2026 will be July 12 - 17, 2026
The Theme is "Let the Good Times Roll"



ELLIS COUNTY FAIR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Call the office at 785-628-9430 to let us know how you'd like to help. Older 4-H'ers and interested adults are encouraged to join our "team" in getting things ready for this year's Fair. Once again, all clubs will be asked to recruit volunteers to help with a variety of jobs at the Fair, as well. Watch for that listing coming your way soon.

Remember, **DEADLINES are DEADLINES** in **Ellis Co. 4-H**. Please pay attention to and respect those deadlines so that your child doesn't miss out on an opportunity!

FIBER ARTS PROJECT WORK

Ellis County Extension Office
Thursdays, 5-6:30pm
Bring project work and supplies.

February 26
March 26
April 23
May 28
June 25
July 9



For more information, join the Fiber Arts GroupMe.
Leader: Natalie Oborny

INSECT ART CONTEST 2026

Metamorphosis Magic



The K-State Research and Extension Pesticide Safety and IPM Program is hosting its annual insect-themed art contest, open to all ages and skill levels in Kansas. This year, the theme is "Metamorphosis Magic." The goal is to explore insects that go through complete and incomplete metamorphosis, then create artwork that fits the contest theme.

AGE GROUPS

- Kindergarten - 2nd Grade
- 3rd Grade - 5th Grade
- 6th Grade - 8th Grade
- High School
- Adults

CATEGORIES

- Traditional Illustration (drawing or painting)
- Digital Artwork
- 3-D Creation (painting on canvas, collage, sculpture, or other media)

AWARDS

Certificates and prizes will be awarded for each art category in each age group for 1st through 3rd place.

HOW TO ENTER

Submit your entry by April 15, 2026. See full rules and details by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/pesticides-ipm/learning-and-resources.html>



Integrated Pest Management
and Pesticide Safety Education

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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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



Colby, KS
April 16, 2026



bit.ly/STEM-Colby

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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

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