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Thomas County

K-State Research and Extension News

*Knowledge
for Life*

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Thank YOU!

The Thomas County Extension Office Staff and Executive Board would like to say Thank You to each and every individual and business that helped with the 2025 Thomas County Fair. Without sponsors, volunteers, Fair Board and the 4-H Families, we would not be able to have such a successful fair!!!

2025-2026

4-H RE-ENROLLMENT & NEW ENROLLMENT

New 4-H members, as well as returning 4-H members, may enroll/re-enroll online starting **Wednesday, October 1, 2025**. ALL returning 4-H members need to be enrolled by **December 1, 2025** in order to participate with 4-H in the 2026 Fair. At this time, please double-check all contact information for accuracy. Also, there is a \$15 4-H program fee per child to enroll. The Extension Office *highly* recommends using a debit/credit card for payment to expedite the enrollment process. If you have questions regarding the fee, please call the Kansas State 4-H Office at (785) 532-5800. For other questions, please call the Extension office at (785) 460-4582.

4-H Project Record Books, Officer Notebooks, Club Seal Forms & Achievement Pin Forms

Due – Monday, October 13th!!! Club notebooks for Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter and Historian are to be turned in with Project Record Books. We want the entire 4-H year to be included in these books when they are judged.

Seeking Candidates for Extension Program Development Committees

Interested in making Thomas County a better place to live, work and farm? Want to develop your personal leadership skills? We're looking for you! Candidates are needed annually for positions on the Thomas County Extension Council. Each year, multiple residents age 18 or older are elected to a 2-year term on one of the four Extension program development committees. Opportunities available (2) Family and Consumer Sciences and (1) 4-H Youth and Development. If interested, please contact the Extension office.

Fair Premium Checks are available for pick-up at the Extension Office

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Upcoming Events

September

1st - Labor Day: Office Closed

5th -14th: Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson

6th - First Friday e-Call: Global Exporting- Discovering New Markets
[Register here!](#)

13th-- Parkinson's "Moving to Live" Fall Conference- 9am-2:30pm at City Limits Convention Center



To find out more, [click here!](#)

20th - High Plains Horseman's Day

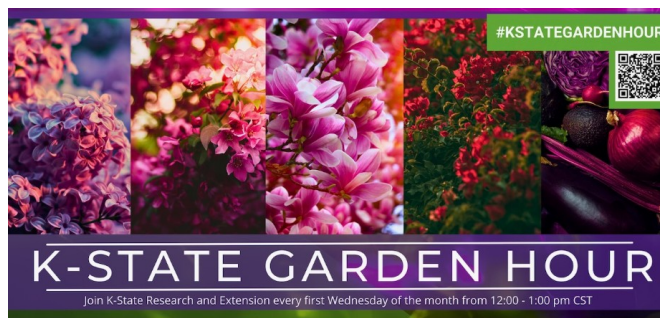
25th-- Beef Stocker Field Day- 9:30am-5pm at the KSU Beef Stocker Unit in Manhattan

[Click here for a schedule and to register.](#)

October

1st - K-State Garden Hour: Keys to Successful Community Garden Spaces

Noon-1pm via Zoom [Click here to register and see past presentations!](#)



3rd - First Friday e-Call: Sustainable practices to benefit people, profit, and the planet. [Click here for more information!](#)

3rd - 5th: KJLS [Click here for more information!](#)

5th - 11th : National 4-H Week - Beyond Ready



11th & 12th - 48 Hours of 4-H Service Challenge [To find out more, click here!](#)

Forage and Feed Sampling & Testing: A Practical Guide

Testing your forage and feed is one of the most valuable steps you can take to make sure your cattle are meeting their nutritional needs. By collecting good samples, choosing the right tests, and understanding the results, you can save money, improve animal performance, and avoid unexpected problems.

Getting a Good Sample

The first step is making sure your sample represents what the cattle will eat. Always sample by “lot,” meaning hay or forage that comes from the same field and cutting. Never mix bales from different cuttings or pastures into one sample. Also consider timing, sampling right before feeding shows the most accurate nutrient value since it includes any storage losses. Use a hay probe or core sampler when possible and collect at least 20 cores from different bales in a lot. For chopped silage or baleage, take grab samples from several locations and mix them. Once collected, combine samples in a clean bucket, mix thoroughly, and seal in a heavy-duty plastic bag. For high moisture feed, freeze the sample until it’s shipped to the lab.

Labeling and Shipping

Clear records are just as important as a good sample. Label each bag with your name, lot ID, harvest date, and forage type (i.e. “2nd cutting orchardgrass, Field A”). On the lab paperwork, note any details about maturity, legume content, or suspected issues like mold. Ship samples quickly, preferably early in the week. Use ice packs or freeze high moisture feeds like silage to keep it from spoiling.

Choosing a Lab and Tests

When looking for a place to send samples, look for an accredited lab certified by the National Forage Testing Association (NFTA). Most routine analyses are done with Near-Infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy (NIRS), which is fast and affordable, but the “gold standard” for feed analysis is wet chemistry and can be more accurate for some feed types. At minimum, request tests for dry matter (DM), crude protein (CP), acid detergent fiber (ADF), and neutral detergent fiber (NDF). These values allow the lab to also calculate energy, like TDN. Optional tests like nitrates, minerals, or fiber digestibility are worth considering if you suspect specific issues or are feeding high-risk forages like sorghum or drought-stressed hay.

Understanding the Results

Dry Matter (DM): Indicates how much actual feed remains after water is removed. Essential for balancing rations and preventing spoilage.

Crude Protein (CP): Estimates protein content but can include non-protein nitrogen (like nitrates). Heat

-damaged hay may show inflated CP, so some labs also report available CP.

ADF and NDF: Fiber values that affect digestibility and intake. High ADF means lower energy; high NDF limits how much cattle will eat.

Energy (TDN, NE): Energy values calculated from fiber. As ADF increases, energy drops. Meeting cows’ energy needs is often the biggest feeding challenge.

Ash and Minerals: High ash often means dirt contamination, which dilutes feed value. Mineral panels can flag shortages or imbalances that may require supplementation.

Indexes (RFV, RFQ): Useful shorthand for comparing hay quality, though best applied only within similar forage types.

Putting Results to Work

The real value of forage testing comes when you compare lab results to your cattle’s requirements. For example, if a cow needs 1.4 pounds of protein daily but your hay only provides 0.9 pounds, you know to add a protein supplement. Conversely, if your hay is richer than expected, you can save money by cutting back on purchased feed. Matching different forages to the right class of cattle is also smart management. Reserve your highest quality hay for lactating or growing animals, while dry mature cows might be able to get by on lower-quality forage.

Avoiding Common Mistakes

The biggest pitfalls are poor sampling (too few cores or mixing lots), mislabeling bags, and misreading results (confusing “as-fed” with “dry matter” values). Don’t rely only on RFV or CP without considering energy, fiber, and minerals. And always ship samples quickly to avoid spoilage.

The Bottom Line

Good sampling and testing take a little time but can help improve operation efficiency. By knowing exactly what nutrients your forage provides, you can fine-tune rations, avoid toxicity risks, and stretch your feed dollars further. Forage analysis is a simple but powerful tool to boost both cattle performance and your bottom line.

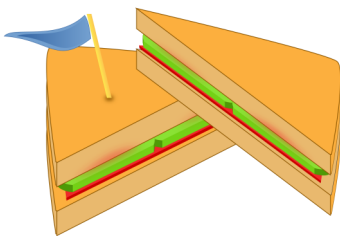


Can Sandwiches be Frozen?

Packing lunches for school or work can be hectic in the morning, so planning ahead can save time and stress. One way to add convenience is by freezing sandwiches. But keep in mind, some sandwich items freeze better than others.

According to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, there are some benefits to freezing sandwiches:

Save money by making your own “fast food” sandwiches for a sack lunch or meal at home.



Save time by making several sandwiches at once.

Utilize “leftovers” or cook extra at a meal for use in tasty and different ways at future meals.

Control the type of bread (such as choosing a whole grain bread), type of filling and spread (amount, salt, fat and so forth) by being in charge of the ingredients.

Enjoy a wholesome, homemade sandwich as part of an inexpensive, quick meal!

Common sandwich fillings that DO freeze well include:

Peanut butter and other nut butters

Canned tuna and salmon

Cooked roast beef, chicken and turkey (especially tasty when the meat is finely chopped and mixed with a “salad dressing,” to add flavor and moistness.)

Natural or processed hard and semi-hard cheeses, such as Swiss, Cheddar. NOTE: As frozen cheese may crumble more after thawing, you may be more satisfied with the result if you grate it before freezing it in sandwiches.

Common sandwich fillings that DO NOT freeze well include:

Hard-cooked egg whites (freezing toughens them).

Jelly or jam (soaks into bread and makes it soggy).

Tomatoes, lettuce, pickles, onions, etc. become limp when thawed; they can be added to thawed sandwiches just before eating them.

IMPORTANT: “Salad dressings,” such as Miracle Whip, work better as a binder in sandwiches than mayonnaise. Mayonnaise tends to separate on thawing. So, experiment to see how you like the result before making a freezer full of sandwiches.

Learn more about freezing sandwiches, including recipe ideas, from [Freezing Sandwiches – University of Nebraska-Lincoln](#).

Kansas Seasonal Local Food

While many foods are in season year round, there are many others that are available for limited times. Here’s what to expect at your local farmers market, U-pick or other local source.

Kansas Seasonal Local Food

Items are organized based on when they are generally available fresh at your local farmers market, roadside stand, U-pick or CSA program. Local climate and growing practices may alter these seasons and harvesting windows.



Learn more



K-STATE
Research and Extension
LocalFoodSystems

Why buy in season?

Shop locally grown produce, protein, grains, and dairy to support your local farmers and economy. Choosing fresh, seasonal, Kansas-grown food provides high quality nutrition to your diet.

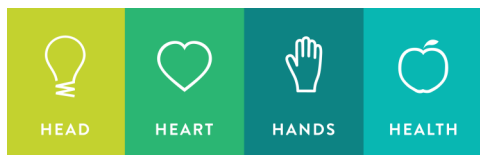
Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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KANSAS



art and design by
T. Fouad T.



Welcome to 4-H

At it's roots, 4-H is a family program. Parents play a crucial role in a successful 4-H program and the youth's experience within the program. Here are some duties of parents outlined in the ["Welcome to 4-H: A New Family's Guide."](#) I would highly recommend that you read through this if you haven't seen it before or just as a refresher!

Parents, How Can You Best Help Your 4-H'er?

1. Counsel your 4-H member in the selection of a suitable project by showing interest. Also check out this [project selection guide](#) for additional help! Make sure the work they start is completed.
2. Encourage your child to attend meetings regularly and attend with them so you'll be able to help the child remember upcoming activities.
3. Become a registered volunteer and share your knowledge, special skills and hobbies as a club.
4. Keep informed of local 4-H information.

Remember: Winning isn't always measured by the results of the ribbon or judging event, but by the character of the 4-H member, parent, and leader.

48 Hours of 4-H

Join us this fall in seeing just how much we can give back to our communities! The weekend following National 4-H Week (October 5-11) is the perfect opportunity to setup a service project and join the **48 Hours of 4-H Service Challenge**, October 11-12, 2025. Register your projects and then follow up with a report so Kansas 4-H will see all the great work that happened across the state, you can find more information about 48 Hours of 4-H [here](#). The theme for National 4-H Week is "Beyond Ready". You can find more resources and information about the theme [here](#).



4-H Re-enrollment



Re-enrollment opens on October 1st for all of our current 4-H members. To re-enroll please visit 4-H Online at v2.4honline.com.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in joining 4-H, contact the Thomas County K-State Research and Extension office at 785-460-4582.

You can also learn more about our different clubs and joining in Thomas County by going to our [website](#). Feel free to contact Club Leaders to get a feel for how you might fit into that club.

You can also Follow us on Facebook @Thomas County Extension/4-H.

Club Attendance



For the 2025-2026 year, 4-H members wishing to participate in the livestock auction are required to attend 5 club meetings between the months of August 2025 and July 2026 as well as complete the YQCA Training. Members must attend meetings for the club they are enrolled in on 4-H Online. Business must be conducted at the meeting in order for the meeting to qualify for attendance. College students who enroll in 4-H for their final year must still attend 5 meetings either in person or by technology such as Skype or Zoom.

Club members and leaders can check their attendance record by going to the Thomas County 4-H BAND group. Club leaders or a designated club member should send attendance sign-in sheets to the office after each meeting to ensure timely record-keeping. Sign-in sheets can be dropped off at the office or emailed to hpgiefer@ksu.edu.

Achievement Banquet

The Achievement Banquet will be held on Friday, November 21st in the 4-H building at 6:30pm. This event will showcase the winners of the 2025 Fair and the achievements of the 4-H members this past year.



Project Records, Officer Notebooks, Club Seal forms, Achievement Pins



- ⇒ Each record includes sections where the 4-H member can talk about the goals and experiences they had in their project over the past year. They can also include photographs. There are three age divisions- Junior (7-9 yr. olds), Intermediate (10-13 yr. olds), and Senior (14-18 yr. olds). There are also two different forms, depending on which project you want to talk about. One is a general form and the other is for animals, which includes pets, dogs, poultry, rabbits and all livestock projects. A record form should be completed and turned in for each project the 4-H member would like to have judged. These forms are available at the Extension office, or [online](#). If you would like to see a finished product, we have examples of the forms at the Extension Office. **Please, use only the new record book forms from the office or the link above.** Contact the office if you have trouble finding the forms or have questions about completing them.
- ⇒ The Historian, Reporter, Secretary, and Treasurers' notebooks for each club should be turned in to be judged as well.
- ⇒ Club's Annual Financial Review will also be conducted during this time so club leaders and treasurer's need to complete and submit the necessary paperwork by the deadline.
- ⇒ 4-H members should also turn in their application forms for their annual achievement pins. These pins will be awarded at the Achievement Banquet, and the forms can be found in the office or [online](#).
- ⇒ Reminder to leaders that Club Seal and Club Project reports are also due to the office. We would like to highlight the work each club has done this year.

All of the sections listed above are due to the office on Monday, October 13th!

ZBOOKS-Online 4-H Record Keeping

Speaking of record books, this would be a great time to create an account with ZBooks! ZBooks is an online record keeping platform that is extremely user friendly and designed specifically for Kansas 4-H Project Record Books. Features of Zbooks include mobile friendly, internet based, unlimited entries, permanent records that roll over year to year, and more! There is even a section specific for setting goals for the upcoming 4-H year. Visit [here](#) for instructions on registering for an account, creating member profiles, new project reports, etc. There are even step by step video tutorials to assist you!

Record Book Judging

Thomas County record books will be judged in mid-October. If you would like to be a volunteer judge, please let the office know. Parents can judge a project their child has not entered a record book for. This can give valuable insight as to how other 4-H members work on their projects.

4-H Council Elections & Officer Training

New Officers will be elected at the September 22nd 4-H Council meeting. Clubs should each have their council representatives chosen by this time. Members who would like to run for office need to attend this meeting and must be 11 years old or older this coming 4-H year. The meeting will be a joint meeting between the current council members and the future members. Officer Training will be Monday, October 27, 2025 at 6:00 PM in the 4-H Building. We will start off with pizza then break up into groups for the training. Please RSVP to the Extension office with how many slices of pizza you would like (\$2 for each slice – includes drink) by noon on the Friday before training – October 24th. The October 4-H Council meeting will follow Officer Training.





Shooting Sports Projects

4-H members who are enrolling in the various shooting sports disciplines must enroll via 4-H Online in a timely manner so they will receive full educational benefit of the sport. 4-H members must be 8 years old before Jan. 1 of 2026 to participate in shooting sports. The deadline to enroll in the BB, Air Pistol, and Air Rifle projects is coming soon. Stay tuned for more information.

KYLF

[Kansas Youth Leadership Forum](#) will be held on November 22-23 at Rock Springs 4-H Center. This event is for youth ages 14-18 before January 1, 2026. It will feature workshops, consulting groups, inspirational speakers, State 4-H Youth Leadership Council Elections, and opportunities to learn and have fun. Registration deadline is Wednesday, October 15th, 2025 by midnight. Scholarships to attend the event are possible through the Bill Draper Fund. Contact the office if you would like more information! Registration link coming soon.

Volunteers

It's that time again and we need your help!! The enrollment date for adult volunteers is the same as that for 4-H members, October 1st. Returning volunteers will need to re-enroll on 4-H Online and verify their information just like returning 4-H members. If you are a new volunteer, please contact the office so we can get the forms and instructions to you. Call the office at (785) 460-4582 or email hpgiefer@ksu.edu.

****If you know someone who would be a great resource for our 4-H members to learn from, (friend, community member, etc.) please contact the office. We are always looking for new project leaders and volunteers.****



Project Leader Training Series

A Kansas 4-H Volunteer Project Leader Training Series is available for individuals looking at becoming a project leader! Topics include: Personal Development: Public Speaking; STEM: Rocketry; FCS: Textile Science; Animal Science: Livestock; Service Learning; Creative Arts—Visual Arts: Barn Quilts; Financial Literacy; and Ag & Natural Resources: Wildlife. For more information go to the 4-H [website](#).

Photography Shutterbugs Events

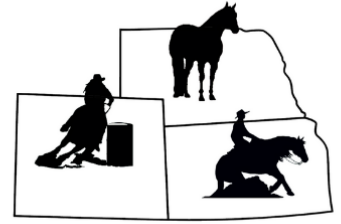


Shutterbug events are photography workshops put on across the state by the Kansas State 4-H Photography Committee. Workshops are typically scheduled as a morning session and concentrate on a variety of aspects of composition. The events typically end around Noon. Examples of sessions include: Portfolio, Camera Features, Panning, Close-ups, Aperture Settings & Kaleidoscopes/Reflections

- Fall 2025—Manhattan
- Fall 2025—Hays

More information coming soon!

High Plains Horseman's Day



Saturday, September 20, 2025
Colby Community College Farm
2002 County Rd 23, Colby, KS 67701
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Join us for this
Free Event!**

**Drawing for
Raffle Prizes!**

Register at: bit.ly/2025HPHD or scan the QR code below

Lunch provided if registered by September 12th

For more information please contact:

Helen Giefer 785-460-4582 or hpgiefer@ksu.edu

Shanda Mattix 785-460-5464 or shanda.mattix@colbycc.edu



Schedule

Pivot Point Equine Rehab, Becky Pearson

1. Horse Health and Wellness

2. Rider Fitness and Wellness

Kansas Horse Council, Justine Staten

Update on Equestrian Center, Mike Woofert

Hosted by:



Sponsored by:



September 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1  Labor Day-Office Closed	2	3	4	5 Kansas State Fair Starts 	6  First Friday e-Call: Global Exporting- Discovering New Markets
7 	8	9	10	11 Fairboard Mtg. @ 8pm 	12	13 Parkinson's Moving to Live Fall Conference 
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 High Plain's Horseman's Day 
21	22  4-H Council Mtg. with Officer Elections 	23	24	25 Beef Stocker Field Day in Manhattan	26	27
28	29 .	30	October 1 Enrollment begins on 4-H Online Ag Lenders Conference in Garden City	October 2 Ag Lenders Conference in Manhattan & via Zoom		
					PP = Pawsome Paws SS = Shooting Sports AH = Abilene Hustlers	BPG = Brewster Prairie Gem Gem = Gem 4-H SV = Solomon Valley



K-STATE

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350 South Range Ave. Suite 16

Colby, Kansas 67701

Bookmark our website for quick reference to educational and informational resources as well as contact information for all of your questions:

<http://www.thomas.k-state.edu>

Check us out on Facebook:

K-State Research and Extension Thomas County 4-H



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 of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact two weeks prior to the start of the event. 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.