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Thomas County

K-State Research and Extension News

*Knowledge
for Life*

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Thomas County Fair - Thank You

We would like to extend our gratitude to all individuals, businesses, volunteers, and families who helped make the Thomas County Fair a safe, welcoming, and fun environment for the entire community. With 1,998 exhibits this year, the Thomas County Fair remains an exciting place for all people to learn and grow!

Kansas State Fair

The Kansas State Fair, annually hosted in Hutchinson, Kansas, is less than one month away! The fair will run from September 11th - 20th with many exhibits from Thomas County on display! From photography, to livestock, with many project talks and demonstrations in between, our exhibitors sincerely appreciate your support!



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 (1) Agriculture, (2) Family and Consumer Sciences, (2) 4-H Youth and Development and (2) Community Vitality. If interested, please contact the Extension Office.

KANSAS STATE
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Thomas County

4-H News and Information

Documenting Achievement Through 4-H Record Books

By: Ashley Trout

4-H is the perfect avenue to pass knowledge from adults to youth in a way that feels relevant and approachable to young people! What better skill to pass on than record keeping, organization, and self-affirming writing.

Record books are about so much more than boring paperwork. It's about following directions, setting goals, reflecting on your progress, and learning to promote yourself - a fantastic way to build confidence in young people.

Local 4-H Record Books contain four parts:

1. Record Check sheet
2. Personal Information Page
3. Kansas 4-H Project Report (s) - (one report per project)
4. Permanent Record

Record books may be handwritten, typed using fillable PDFs, or completed online through ZBooks. 4-H Project Record Books, Officer Notebooks, Club Seal Applications, and Achievement Pin Applications are all due in the Thomas County 4-H Office by 5:00 PM on Thursday, October 1st.

Achievement Pin
Applications:



ZBooks
Resources:



For Basic Record Book
Forms & Information:



For Detailed Record
Book Information:



4-H Enrollment



New and returning 4-H members, may enroll/re-enroll online starting Thursday, October 1, 2026. ALL returning 4-H members need to be enrolled by December 1, 2026 in order to participate with 4-H in the 2026 Fair.

Re-enrollment is the perfect time to double-check all of your contact information for accuracy. There is a \$15 fee per child to enroll.

If you are unable to pay this fee, the Thomas County Extension Office may be able to help. For other questions, please call the Extension office at (785) 460-4582.

Kansas Youth Leadership Forum

Kansas Youth Leadership Forum is an annual state-wide leadership conference that takes place on November 21st - 22nd at Rock Springs 4-H Center in Junction City, Kansas. It is open to youth 14-18 years old (4-H Age).

Program Fee (2025): \$215 and additional optional \$55 for Friday overnight and breakfast.

If your member is interested in participating, please contact the Extension Office for more details on registration and program information.

Scan here for more
information:



<https://www.kansas4-h.org/educational-experiences/project-based-events/conferences-events/kansas-youth-leadership-forum/>

Agriculture News and Information

Oregon scrapie case reminds Kansas producers that animal ID remains critical

By Kelsey Bentley

A recent case of scrapie detected in an Oregon sheep has reset the nation's timeline for eradicating the fatal livestock disease, but a Kansas State University sheep and goat specialist said the discovery also serves as a reminder of the importance of animal identification and biosecurity for sheep and goat producers.

K-State Extension small ruminant specialist Kelsey Bentley said Kansas has not reported a case of scrapie in more than 10 years. Until the discovery in Oregon in late July, the country's last confirmed case of scrapie was in 2021.

"Kansas producers should not be alarmed by this case," Bentley said. "It was found July 31 in Oregon, and we have not had any cases here in Kansas probably within the last 10 years."

Scrapie is a fatal neurological disease affecting sheep and goats. It is caused by a prion, an abnormally folded protein that damages the nervous system. Unlike bovine spongiform encephalopathy, commonly known as mad cow disease, there is no evidence that classical scrapie can infect humans.

Bentley said decades of work by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, along with improved genetic testing and surveillance, have dramatically reduced the disease.

"In the 1950s and '60s, scrapie was wiping out complete flocks," she said. "They were having to do total depopulation of flocks and herds."

Today, producers can use genetic selection to breed animals with greater resistance to classical scrapie, making infections increasingly rare. Even so, Bentley said maintaining traceability remains critical.

"It's still important for us to keep accurate records, maintain good biosecurity and ensure we're using appropriate identification and traceability," she said.

A cornerstone of that effort is the National Scrapie Eradication Program, which requires official identification for sheep and goats moving through commercial channels. Producers can obtain a premises identification number, or premise ID, and order official scrapie ear tags through the USDA.

Bentley said producers with closed flocks technically do not need to tag animals until they leave the farm for breeding sales, auction markets or processing. Still, she recommends tagging lambs and kids shortly after birth.

"I think we should have tagging done at lambing and kidding," Bentley said. "That way we can better track that individual throughout its lifespan."

Early identification also improves recordkeeping, allowing producers to monitor growth, reproductive performance and parasite resistance while strengthening disease traceability.

Read more here:



<https://extension.k-state.edu/news-and-publications/news/stories/2026/08/agriculture-scrapie-animal-identification.html>

K-State food safety expert shares tips for packing school lunches

By: Karen Blakeslee

Keep hot foods hot, and cold foods cold, says Blakeslee

As school resumes, so does packing kids' lunches. Following food safety procedures is essential for parents in helping to prevent foodborne illness, said Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee.

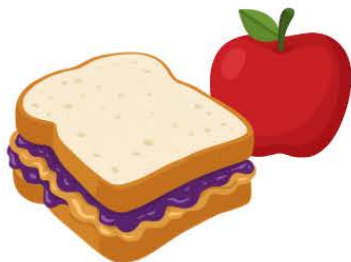
"Start by washing your hands," Blakeslee said. "This can prevent many food safety issues. If taking lunch to school, keep cold food cold, and hot food hot."

Blakeslee said parents should remind their kids to not share their lunches with other kids because of the risk of food allergens. She also suggests packing foods that don't require temperature control to keep them safe.

"Many whole fresh fruits, single serve fruit cups, whole grain crackers, peanut butter or other nut butters, and dried meat sticks are safe to pack," Blakeslee said. "If packing cold or hot food, use ice packs and insulated lunch containers to keep them cold. If taking hot food, use a separate insulated container or bottle to keep that food hot."

Additionally, Blakeslee encourages parents to ask kids to help plan school lunches, and take them grocery shopping.

"If they help choose and prepare the lunch, they will be excited to eat it," she said.



An Attitude of Gratitude - Thank You Notes

By: Ashley Trout



A small note of gratitude can go a very long ways for actions both large and small. It's important to keep a list of people you would like to thank, so you remember everyone when you sit down to write notes.

A good thank you note is prompt, detailed, and personal, letting the person or group know that you appreciate their time, talent, or treasure.

To write a good thank you note:

- Start with a nice, clean card without wrinkles.
- Open with a greeting and use the individual or group's name.
- Write a sentence to explain what you are thanking them for.
- Explicitly say "Thank You" and explain how their actions benefitted you.
- End the note by saying "Thank you again," and sign your name.
- Seal and address your thank-you note. You can then drop it in the mail or hand deliver it!

With your thank-you note, you can also include a small token of appreciation. Many times, people include a small baked good (cookies, bread, pie, etc.) but other options might include a home cooked meal, a small house plant, a cup of coffee, a small handmade craft, or a thoughtful journal. The options are endless!

Thank you notes are a great way to build connects and make sure that the people pouring into your life know that their contributions are sincerely appreciated.

Contact Us:

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Check our our website for up-to-date
educational and informational resources:



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

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