THOMAS COUNTY
EXTENSION NEWSLETTER

November 2026

4-H Enrollment: Ready to Join for the 2026-2027 Year!

Enrollment for the new 4-H year is now open! With projects ranging from livestock and horses to photography, foods, sewing, STEM, shooting sports, public speaking, and so much more, there's a place for everyone! Contact the Extension Office to learn more about getting your child involved in 4-H!

4-H Photography Challenge: Thankful Through My Lens

November is all about being thankful! This month, 4-H members can submit a photo that captures something they are thankful for! A winning photo will receive a themed prize pack, and photos may be featured in future 4-H publications, workshops, or on our website.

Grab your camera and get snapping!

Submit photos by November 23rd to the 4-H Photography Band page.



4-H NEWS & INFORMATION

Give Your Child The Gift of 4-H

Kansas youth are growing up in a fast-changing world with big choices, real pressure, and endless possibilities. 4-H meets them where they are, offering hands-on experiences, leadership opportunities, and trusted spaces to explore interests, build confidence, and turn goals into real plans. This isn't just about being prepared for what's next—it's about helping Kansas youth find direction, belonging, and the power to lead their own futures.

Research and evaluation show that Kansas 4-H youth feel connected, engaged, and supported as they explore their sparks and prepare for life after high school. For families, this means every project and leadership opportunity is intentional—helping youth become confident, resilient, and excited about their future.

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 Thomas County 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.

Scan Here to Enroll Your Child in 4-H This Year:

https://v2.4honline.com/#/user/sign-in

Goal Setting for the New 4-H Year

Adapted from Judy Parsons & Kristin Penner by Ashley Trout

It is important for 4-H members to plan out what they would like to learn and accomplish in the new 4-H year. Members should ask themselves: "What new skills would I like to gain and who is going to help you along the way?"

Setting measurable goals will help guide you through project learning experiences. A goal is simply a specific plan of where you want to go and how you are going to get there. It takes creating a timeline, making sure the goals are reachable, measurable and within our control. Your goals should have three parts that will allow you to measure and check your progress.

The three parts of a good goal, include:
1. ACTION — What are you going to do?
2. RESULT — What will the outcome look like?
3. TIMETABLE — When are you going to do it?

The more specific these goals can be, the better! Try starting with phrases like, "I want to learn... I want to make... I want to help...."

Remember to set goals for your learning, achievement, leadership, and citizenship! Setting goals at the beginning of the year will guide your project learning and help with completing your record book!

4-H Project Goal Setting Worksheet:

https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/setting-4-h-project-goals_4H1100

AGRICULTURE UPDATE

Making fall pasture evaluations

As the growing season comes to an end, Kansas livestock producers have an opportunity to evaluate their pastures and make management decisions that could improve forage production and grazing conditions next year.

Kansas State University rangeland management specialist Molly Reichenborn and range scientist Keith Harmoney say fall is an important time to assess remaining forage, identify areas of overgrazing and monitor unwanted plant species.

"Now that we're getting into (late) October, especially if we're talking about warm season rangeland, we're really getting towards the end of the production curve," Reichenborn said.

"Now's a really good time to take inventory of your forage resources," Reichenborn said.

Harmoney, who works at K-State's Agricultural Research Center in Hays, said producers should pay close attention to the amount of vegetation remaining after grazing.

Differing grass species require different amounts of residual leaf material to maintain healthy growth and recover the following spring.

For short grasses, including buffalograss and blue grama, Harmoney recommends leaving approximately 2 to 4 inches of vegetation.

Midgrasses, such as sideoats grama and little bluestem, should have 4 to 6 inches remaining.

"Not enough residual is always a concern because that means that our forage demand and our forage supply probably was not balanced during the year," Harmoney said.

When pastures are grazed too heavily, plants may enter winter with fewer energy reserves, potentially limiting their ability to recover when growing conditions improve.

"When we have more leaf removal than what we desire, those plants are going to be lower in energy going into the winter and potentially could start off next spring slower," Harmoney said.

Along with measuring residual vegetation, producers should evaluate how evenly livestock utilized available forage throughout the pasture.

Harmoney said identifying underutilized areas can help producers make changes to improve grazing distribution during the next growing season.

"This time of year is a great time to scout pastures and look for underutilized areas that receive less grazing and have a lot of residual growth," he said.

Placing salt, mineral or protein supplements in underutilized areas may encourage cattle to graze locations they previously avoided. Other management options include prescribed burning, adjusting fencing and improving water access.

For areas experiencing excessive grazing pressure, Harmoney recommends allowing additional recovery time before livestock return.

"You want them to have an adequate amount of leaf material produced in their recovery in order for them to get back to photosynthesis," Harmoney said.

Read More Here:

https://extension.k-state.edu/news-and-publications/news/stories/2026/10/pasture-evaluation.html

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE TIPS

Stress and the Family System

Adapted from McKenzie Zimmermann and Elaine Johannes by Ashley Trout

Family stress is an interference in the normal functioning of the everyday family system. Family stress can manifest in different ways - both positive & negative. Examples include financial troubles, a wedding, a divorce, or the birth of a child. Learning how to handle stress is an important skill for all members of a family system to learn.

Here are five tips on how to handle family stress:

1. Take a second. It is important to first process the stressor event by yourself to gauge where you are on the situation and allow yourself to embrace your feelings about the stressor.
2. Pinpoint where the stress is coming from. Being able to identify what is causing the disruption can help you to find solutions.
3. Identify your support system. Who will you go to when you need to talk? Who will help you and your family during this time?
4. Do some damage control. Check in on the people who the stressor directly affected.
5. Make sure to take care of your mental and physical health. Get enough sleep, drink water, and eat nutritious foods.

Depending on the stressor event(s), seek professional help. Some family stress is too much for the system to handle and may require the guidance of a professional.

Read More Here:

https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/stress-and-the-family-system-fact-sheet_MF3486

More Plants on the Plate

Adapted from Donna Krug by Ashley Trout

Crispy, crunchy, colorful, and curiously delicious — all are words that describe a wide variety of vegetable, fruit, and whole grain dishes. The body's nutritional requirements can be adequately met by consuming plant-based foods. Most plant-based foods are naturally low in calories and fat. Couple that fact with the high amount of antioxidants and fiber found in plants and a strong case is made for putting more plants on your plate. There are many benefits from consuming more plants including weight control, high dietary fiber, and strengthened immune systems.

A wide variety of plant-based foods provide protein. Most people would benefit from eating more legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds, and eating fewer protein-rich foods containing saturated fats or added fats. A common misconception about dietary protein is the belief that large amounts of it are needed for good health. The DRI (Dietary Reference Intake) is 0.36 grams of protein per pound of body weight. This amounts to 56 grams per day for the average sedentary man and 46 grams per day for the average sedentary woman.

Many people simply live to eat. For improved health, now is the time to eat to live. Consider including generous portions of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and lean protein choices at each meal.

Read More Here:

https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/more-plants-on-the-plate-fact-sheet_MF2977.pdf

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

CONTACT US:

Thomas County Office Complex
350 South Range Ave. Suite 16
Colby, Kansas 67701

(785) 460-4582

Follow us on Facebook with this QR Code:

K-State Extension - Thomas County

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

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

Helen Giefer
Ag & Natural Resources
hpgiefer@ksu.edu

Ashley Trout
4-H Youth Development
achandler@ksu.edu

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