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# Thomas County

## K-State Research and Extension News

*Knowledge  
for Life*

April 2026

Volume: 205

### Paid Summer Internship Opportunity

The Thomas County Extension Office is accepting applications for a summer intern! The work will consist of preparing and helping at all summer events and activities. Normal work hours will be from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Applicants must be 18 years old, with a high school diploma or GED equivalent. This internship runs from May 26 through August 1. Please submit an application and resume by April 17th. You can bring documents to the office or you can email it to [th@listserv.ksu.edu](mailto:th@listserv.ksu.edu). To complete the application, [CLICK HERE](#) or pick one up at the office! Thomas County Extension is an equal opportunity employer.

### Small Animal Weigh-In

Saturday, April 18th, 2026

The 4-H small animal weigh-in will be held at the Thomas County Fairgrounds on Saturday, April 18th from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. The weather back-up date will be on Saturday April, 25th. If you want to show your goats, sheep, swine or bucket calves, please remember they must be weighed in at this time. Ear tags will still be \$3.00 each (\$4.00 for an EID). We ask that you bring cash or check that day to pay for tags. If you have an animal you would like to nominate for the State Fair or KJLS, make sure you let us know at weigh-in.

### Walk Kansas is On!

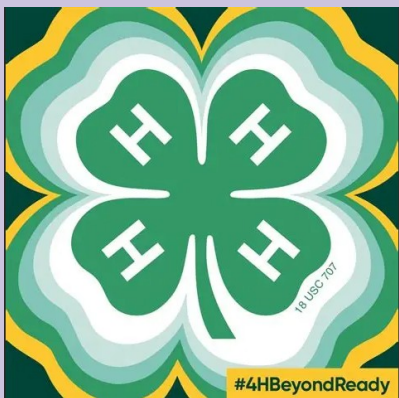
**Walk Kansas kicked off on March 22nd. We have 6 teams and a couple of solo walkers! The program runs from March 22nd through May 16th and would be a great time to create a healthy exercise habit.**

### National Volunteer Week: April 19-25

Be sure to recognize and appreciate those that keep our 4-H program running! Club & project leaders, Shooting Sports Coaches & Coordinators, Superintendents, & volunteers, we couldn't do it without you.

### Club Day Results

Check out page 6 for the results from County Club Day. Great job to all of our 4-H county participants!



Helen Giefer

Ag & Natural Resources

[hpgiefer@ksu.edu](mailto:hpgiefer@ksu.edu)

Tracy Fagan

Office Professional

[tfagan@ksu.edu](mailto:tfagan@ksu.edu)



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Research and Extension

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# Upcoming Events for April 2026



**1st: K-State Garden Hour: April Showers, Rain Garden Flowers** - The month of April brings spring showers to Kansas; however, water availability becomes scarce as the season progresses, making water management especially important. Discover how to use rain most effectively when it arrives, while also saving some for when it disappears. Learn about rain gardens, bioswales, rain barrels, and more to help conserve water this growing season.

[Garden Hour Archive | K-State | Kansas State University](#)



**1st: Field to Fork Webinar: Home Canning**

**8th: Field to Fork Webinar: Natural Insecticides**

**15h: Field to Fork Webinar: Soil Health**

More information here:

[2026 Field to Fork Webinar Series | NDSU Agriculture](#)

*Walk Kansas 2026*  
 March 22 – May 16  
 Registration closes

**JOIN THE WALKING CHALLENGE**

**WALK KANSAS**

AN 8-WEEK HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHALLENGE!



*focused on agronomy topics in northwest and north central Kansas.*

Recordings Here: [CropTalk Webinar Series | K-State | Kansas State University](#)

# 2026 THOMAS COUNTY FAIR DEADLINES



18-Apr	<b>Small Animal Weigh-In</b>
23-Apr	<b>YQCA - Training 1</b>
1-May	<b>Last Chance to Add or Drop a Project</b>
1-May	<b>Horse Papers Due</b>
28-May	<b>YQCA - Training 2</b>
8 & 9-June	<b>Camp Lakeside</b>
1-Jul	<b>YQCA Certificates Deadline</b>
2-Jul	<b>Dog 4-H Entry Deadline</b>

## **Rising Nitrogen Fertilizer Prices: Management Options for Corn and Sorghum**

Nitrogen (N) fertilizer has risen dramatically this spring. A majority of N fertilizers are made from natural gas, traded globally, and subject to disruptions in shipping routes. Thus, the situation in the Strait of Hormuz has tightened the global supply of both natural gas and ammonia. For farmers who are already dealing with tight margins, it's even more important to make the most of N fertilizer applications. Wheat has likely been topdressed, and cool-season forages have received their applications, leaving warm-season crops of corn and sorghum (grain and forage) feeling the brunt of the price rises.

### **Key Strategies to Reduce Costs**

#### **1. Credit All Nitrogen Sources**

Be sure to account for:

- **Residual soil nitrate** through proper soil testing procedures (0 to 24-inch soil samples). This is especially important in areas where soil nitrate is not prone to leaching and in low-yielding or drought-stressed fields from the previous growing season. Grain sorghum is particularly efficient at using residual soil N in the profile. A profile soil nitrate test is a low-cost (\$12-15) way to make the biggest impact on reducing N application.
- **Previous legume crops**
- **Soil organic matter content**
- **Manure applications:** on average across manure types, 50% of the N is available the first year, 30% the second, and the final 20% the third year after application.
- **Irrigation water**

Detailed information on how to adjust N rate recommendations is available in the K-State Extension publication found [here](#).

For more information about soil sampling guidelines and sample submission to [K-State's Soil Testing Laboratory](#).

#### **2. Review and Refine Yield Goals**

Nitrogen fertilizer recommendations should be based on realistic yield expectations, given the weather outlook, current soil water status, crop rotation, soil productivity, and management history. Nitrogen recommendations based on a "yield goal" that reflects the very upper end of probability will most likely result in overapplication of N and thus excess costs for the producer.

The [K-State Fertilizer Recommendations Excel Workbook](#) is a good resource that lets you enter your soil test information and different yield goals to better understand differences in fertilizer rates based on those goals.

#### **3. Fertilizer Application Practices**

#### **Split N applications.**

Using delayed or split nitrogen applications on irrigated fields, particularly on sandy soils, often improves nitrogen use efficiency by reducing the potential for loss. Use remote sensing to support in-season N

decisions, particularly for corn. Applying closer to when the plant needs it helps with the use efficiency – i.e., corn in the V6 to R2 stages. Fertigation of nitrogen is a very efficient way to "spoon-feed" nitrogen requirements in season and also allows for adjustment if yield potential changes in either direction.

**Fertilizer placement.** In high-residue systems, such as no-till, placing fertilizer nitrogen below the residue or dribbling nitrogen solution in concentrated bands on the soil surface can improve nitrogen use efficiency by reducing N loss.

For grain sorghum, a recent K-State study in Hays found that subsurface application of 60 lb/acre urea produced yields comparable to broadcast applications of about 85 lb N/acre, resulting in a 25 lb N/acre savings when N loss was minimized with placement below the surface.

**Nitrogen stabilizers.** These products don't increase N supply, but they can reduce the amount of applied N that is lost before crop uptake. Think of these products as an N-loss insurance policy in situations where the risk of loss could be high.

- **Urease inhibitors** mitigate the conversion of urea to ammonia, leading to a loss of available N through ammonia volatilization. These are most effective when urea or UAN is surface-applied without incorporation, on fields with high residue levels (no-till or reduced-till), when temperatures are warm soon after application, and if there is no subsequent rainfall event to move the fertilizer into the soil following application.
- **Nitrification inhibitors** slow the conversion of ammonium to nitrate, helping reduce N loss through denitrification. These are most helpful in areas prone to denitrification, such as fine-textured soils and poorly drained areas. Eastern Kansas is typically at greater risk of denitrification than western Kansas.

**Variable rate nitrogen.** Fields with significant variability in soil texture, organic matter, or yield history are often good candidates for variable rate N applications.

#### **Fertilizer Price Outlook for 2026**

A recent [article](#) by K-State Agricultural Economist Gregg Ibendahl provides more information on the fertilizer price outlook as spring planting has begun in Kansas. Visit the [AgManager.info](#) website for related articles.



## Food Preservation Webinar Recordings

The National Center for Home Food Preservation recently hosted two webinars. The recordings of these webinars are now available.

- [Expanding Your Home Food Preservation Toolkit with Freeze-Drying](#)

Speaker: Andy Hirneisen, M.A., Distinguished Extension Educator and Team Leader, Retail and



Consumer Food Safety, Penn State University This webinar, recorded on 2/13/2026, guides you through freeze-drying as a method of home food preservation.

- [Botulism: Home Canning Enemy #1](#)

Speaker: Dr. Scott Whiteside, Food Systems and Safety Program Team, Food, Nutrition & Packaging Sciences Department, Clemson University This webinar, recorded on 1/30/2026, focuses on botulism risks associated with home canning and reinforces research-based practices critical for preventing *Clostridium botulinum* in low-acid foods.

## Preserving Asparagus

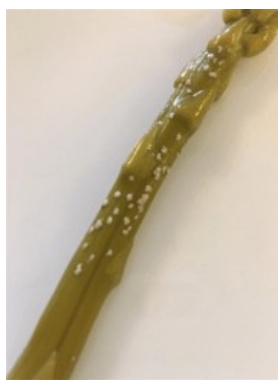
A favorite spring garden perennial is asparagus. As weather starts to warm, those tasty fresh shoots will soon be popping out of the ground.

A great way to preserve asparagus is to pickle it for a tangy addition to meals or a festive charcuterie board. Here's a [pickled asparagus recipe](#) that is formulated for 12-ounce jars or pint jars from the National Center for Home Food Preservation. Pickled asparagus is safely canned in a water bath canner.

Rutin crystals on pickled asparagus Photo: Oregon State University Extension

But after preserving your prized pickled asparagus, have you noticed some little yellow/white spots form on the surface? Is it safe to eat?

The answer is yes, it is safe to eat. These little specks are called rutin. According to the [University of California Extension](#), when



asparagus is heated with vinegar, the bioflavonoid rutin is drawn out of the asparagus. It becomes insoluble and crystallizes, leaving the spots on the surface of the asparagus. Commercially made pickled asparagus has an additive added to prevent this reaction.

Asparagus can also be canned plain, which requires pressure canning, or frozen. It is best to preserve asparagus the day it is harvested or purchased. Store fresh asparagus upright in about one inch of water in the refrigerator.

[Asparagus: Canning, Freezing, Pickling—PennState Extension](#)

## Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Cooler at County Fair

As the weather starts to warm up, more outdoor activities are being planned. They typically involve food stands or picnics where portable coolers or ice chests are used to keep food and beverages cold.

A 2024 [Salmonella enterica outbreak](#) happened at a county fair in Illinois that was linked to a cooler that was reused multiple days without proper cleaning which led to contaminated ice. The beverage cans in the cooler were then contaminated. No other foods or other environmental factors were linked to this outbreak.



Clean ice chests after every use, even if it only contained beverages. Wash and scrub the interior with warm water and soap to remove any residue. Rinse well. Then sanitize with a solution of one tablespoon bleach per gallon of water. Drain and let air dry completely.

[At-Home Safe Food Handling: It's in Your Hands – Kansas State Extension](#)



## IMPORTANT REMINDER

**Fair Set-up: Thursday, July 23rd at 6:00 pm.**

**Fair parade: Tuesday, July 28th at 5:30 pm.**

**Fair Clean-up: Saturday, August 1st at 8:00 am.**  
(Private Release at 7:00 am. Call the Office for more details)

**50% of your club must be present at both set-up and clean-up to qualify for a Club Seal!**

### Small Animal Weigh-In

Small animal weigh-in will be held **April 18th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm** at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Make-up day if necessary will be **April 25th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm**. Regular visual tags are \$3 each. Please let the extension office know if you are needing **Kansas State Fair or KJLS tags BEFORE weigh-in and how many**. Please have your livestock ready and bring cash or check to purchase tags.

We need volunteers to help unload, load, and move the animals during weigh-in. Please contact the office if you are able to help!

### YQCA Training Required for All Livestock Participants

The Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) certification training will be required for 4-H members ages 8-18 to be able to show and sell their livestock this year for fair. 7 year-olds are encouraged to attend, but will not become certified. **Species that require certification include beef, hogs, sheep, goats, poultry and rabbits.** This training focuses on food safety, animal well-being, and life skill development. The office will be hosting two in-person dates (will be announced soon) for members to receive their certificate. If they cannot attend either in-person date they are able to complete the training online. In-person training locations and dates are to be determined. The training will be \$3/participant in-person or \$12 online. All certificates of completion are due to the office by July 1st. For questions and to register, please call the Extension Office at 785-460-4582.

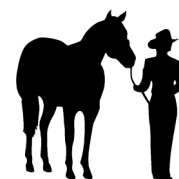


**May 1st is the last day to add or drop projects on 4-H Online. Please log-in to update which projects you will or will not be participating in this year at Fair.**

### Horse Papers

Horse Identification papers are due to the Extension Office on May 1st. The 4-H Horse ID Certificate was updated for the 2025 4-H program year.

Please destroy previous versions of the ID form and use the updated certificate moving forward. The form must be front and back only, not two separate pages and must have a standard-sized photo attached with all markings visible. Here is the [form](#).



# COUNTY CLUB DAY RESULTS

<b>DRAMATICS</b>			
NAME	CLUB	EVENT	PLACE
Aleha Gabel	AH	Readings	Blue - SR
Reagan Frantz	AH	Readings	Top Blue, Blue
Emma Haag	SV	Dance	Blue - JR
Aleha Gabel	AH	Dance	Blue - SR
Asher Gable	AH	Dance	Cloverbud

<b>MUSIC</b>			
NAME	CLUB	EVENT	PLACE
Morgan Mattix	AH	Instrument - Flute	Top Blue
Korin Gabel	AH	Instrument - Viola	Blue - INT
Aleha Gabel	AH	Instrument - Violin	Blue - SR
Elijah Gabel	AH	Instrument - Cello	Blue - SR
Aleha Gabel	AH	Piano	Blue - SR
Colby Kriss-Howlett	Gem	Piano	Top Blue - SR
Matthew Schwarz	AH	Piano	Blue - INT
Rawlins Mattix	AH	Piano	Top Blue - JR
Elijah Gabel	AH	Piano	Red - SR
Korin Gabel	AH	Piano	Blue - INT
Pia Horinek	AH	Piano	Blue - JR
Timothy Schwarz	AH	Piano	Blue - JR

<b>JR PROJECT TALKS; DEMONSTRATIONS/ILLUSTRATED TALKS</b>			
NAME	CLUB	EVENT	PLACE
Ella Johnson	BPG	Project Talk - Fiber Arts	Blue - JR
Timothy Schwarz	AH	Project Talk - Shooting Sports	Top Blue - JR
Matthew Schwarz	AH	Project Talk - Type of Wood	Top Blue - INT
Joseph Schrick	AH	Project Talk - Wrestling	Blue - INT
Jaxon Bear	BPG	Project Talk - Not Listed	Red - INT
Adaline Kammer	BPG	Illustrated Talk - Goats	Top Blue - JR
Emma Haag	SV	Illustrated Talk - Sewing	Blue - JR
Libby Baird	AH	Demonstration - Smores	Blue - JR
Bear Stramel	SV	Demonstration - Cotton Candy Drink	Red - JR
Mena Schrick	AH	Demonstration - Not Listed	Red - JR
Pierce Fikan	AH	Demonstration - Love Bugs	Red - JR

<b>INTERMEDIATE &amp; SENIOR DEMONSTRATIONS/ILLUSTRATED TALKS</b>			
NAME	CLUB	EVENT	PLACE
Anthony Haag	SV	Demonstration - Soil Testing	Top Blue - INT
Morgan Mattix	AH	Demonstration - Handmade Watercolors	Blue - INT
Owen Baird	AH	Demonstration - Halter Making	Blue - INT
Rence Fikan	AH	Demonstration - Lego Hacks	Blue - INT
Max Juenemann	AH	Demonstration - Nail Art	Red - INT
Korin Gabel	AH	Illustrated Talk - How We Fly	Blue - INT
Sebastian Schrick	AH	Illustrated Talk - Pour Painting	Red - INT
Cort Stramel	SV	Illustrated Talk - Showing Pigs	Red - INT
Ella Fikan	AH	Illustrated Talk - Budgeting	Top Blue - SR
Aleha Gabel	AH	Illustrated Talk - Pollinators	Blue - SR
Sophia Stramel	SV	Illustrated Talk - Pawsitive Pastures	Blue - SR
Brody Stramel	SV	Illustrated Talk - How to Shear a Lamb	Blue - SR
Elijah Gabel	AH	Illustrated Talk - College Planning	Blue - SR

<b>MODEL MEETINGS</b>		
CLUB	PLACE	
Solomon Valley	Top Blue	Score: 89/100
Abilene Hustlers	Blue	Score: 84/100
Brewster Prairie Gem	Red	Score: 73/100

# 2026 THOMAS COUNTY FAIR SCHEDULE



June	DAY	TIME	
22	Mon	8:30	Registration opens on FairEntry
27	Sat	7:00 - 8:00	Registration for Open Class Horse Show
27	Sat	8:30	Open Class Horse Show

July			
1	Wed		YQCA certificates are due to the Extension Office
9	Thu	by 5:00pm	Dog 4-H fair pre-entries due on FairEntry
14	Tue	by 5:00pm	<b>All 4-H fair pre-entries (except horticulture and food) due on FairEntry (INCLUDING LIVESTOCK)</b>
15	Wed	by 5:00pm	Cost-Per-Wear sheets for Sewing & Textile garments and Shopping in Style outfits and Public Fashion Revue description sheets due to Extension Office
17	Fri	1:00	Registration & Vet. Check-In for 4-H Dogs
17	Fri	1:30	4-H & Open Class Dog Obedience/Showmanship at Heartland Christian School
18	Sat	8:45	Registration & Vet. Check-In for 4-H Dogs
18	Sat	9:00	4-H & Open Class Dog Agility/Rally at Colby Ball Diamonds and Public Fashion Revue description sheets due to Extension Office
20	Mon	5:30PM	Fashion Review Practice at Celebration Community Church
21	Tue	9:00	Shopping in Style Judging at Celebration Community Church
21	Tue	7:00PM	Public Fashion Revue at Celebration Community Church
23	Thu	9:00	Visual Arts & Photography Judging at the 4-H building
23	Thu	1:30	Demonstrations/Illustrated Talks & Public Speaking at Health Dept Annex
23	Thu	5:30	Fair Superintendent Meeting
<b>23</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>6:00PM</b>	<b>Fair setup (all 4-H members)</b>
25	Sat	7:30	4-H Horse Show Vet check/check-in
25	Sat	9:00	4-H Horse Show
26	Sun	11:00 - 5:00	Booth Set-up
27	Mon	7:30	4-H/FFA Livestock Weigh-in
27	Mon	7:30 - 11:00	Entry of all 4-H exhibits
27	Mon	11:15	4-H Judging begins: Static, All indoor exhibits, Consultative Judging for Robotics, Electric & Renewable
27	Mon	1:00	Consignment fees & forms due to the Fair Board
28	Tue	7:30 - 1:00	Entry of all Open Class exhibits - (all non-animal entries)
28	Tue	8:00	Swine Show
28	Tue	5:30	Fair Parade
29	Wed	8:30	Sheep and Goat Shows
29	Wed	3:00	Poultry, rabbit, cat & hand pet show
30	Thu	8:30	Beef Show
30	Thu	5:30	Livestock Sale followed by the Buyer's Meal
30	Thu	21:30	Round Robin Set-Up
31	Fri	9:00	Round Robin Showmanship
31	Fri	1:00 - 3:00	Release of all <b>LIVESTOCK</b> entries that are going to Resale & Lockers
31	Fri	3:30 - 6:00	Release of all <b>LIVESTOCK</b> entries that are going home
1	Sat	7:00 - 8:00	Private Release of all Non-Livestock 4-H Entries
1	Sat	8:00 - 9:30	Release of all non-livestock 4-H & Open Class Fair Entries
<b>1</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>8:00</b>	<b>4-H Fair Clean Up (all 4-H members)</b>



# APRIL 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 	16	17	18 Sm Animal Weigh-In 
19	20 	21	22 	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	AH = Abilene Hustlers BPG = Brewster Prairie Gem Gem = Gem 4-H SV = Solomon Valley  PP = Pawsome Paws SS = Shooting Sports	

**ATTENDING A STATE-SPONSORED 4-H EDUCATIONAL EVENT? 4-H COUNCIL WILL COVER 25% OF THE ATTENDANCE FEE. JUST BRING YOUR RECEIPT TO THE NEXT 4-H COUNCIL MEETING FOR APPROVAL!**





# **K-STATE**

**Research and Extension**

**Thomas County Office Complex**

**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>**

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**K-State Research and Extension Thomas County 4-H**



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