4-H Family Newsletter

March 2026

Nebraska Extension in Madison County
1305 South 13th StreetNorfolk, NE 68701
Phone: 402-370-4040
Website: www.madison.unl.edu
Like Us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/UNLMadisonCounty

Congratulations to:

Aubree Knapp

Her artwork was chosen for the cover of the 2026 Madison County Fairbook! She is a member of the Pioneers 4-H Club. Fairbooks will be available online soon. Printed copies available in early April.

SAVE THE DATE!

MADISON COUNTY FAIR

July 6-12, 2026

- **4-H Static Judging Day Monday, July 6th**
- **4-H Foods and Gardening Judging Day will be held on Tuesday, July 7.**
- **4-H Fashion Show will be held Saturday, July 11th at 3:00pm - indoor arena**

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United State Department of Agriculture. Ó2016

ENROLL IN 4-H TODAY!

Welcome to the Madison County 4-H Program! Enroll today to ensure you receive all the information needed to be a part of the 4-H program and participate at the Madison County Fair! Follow this link below for more information about 4-H, clubs in Madison County and how to enroll! Reminder: you only have to choose one project to continue. All project selections will be put on your pre-enrollment form in upcoming newsletter.
https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/madison/4-h/join-4-h-today/

Feeling LUCKY

The drawing is open to youth aged 5-18 and requires payment either online or by visiting our office. If you have any questions or would like to verify your enrollment status, please don't hesitate to reach out!

REGISTER FOR 4-H IN MADISON COUNTY BY APRIL 1ST (11:59PM CT) TO BE PUT INTO A DRAWING FOR A PAIR OF 4-H BOOTS! SPREAD THE WORD! *MORE INFO WAS IN FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER*

Enter to Win!

We will draw live on our Facebook page on April 2nd!

4-H Hay Bale Decorating Contest
Open to All Madison County 4-H Clubs!

Prepare to participate in the 1st ever Round Bale Decorating Contest at the 2026 Madison County Fair! Clubs are invited to develop their own distinctive themes and decorate their bales the week prior to fair. Bales will be supplied to each club and assigned on the fairgrounds. Please confirm your participation by May 1st.

A CASH prize awaits the club with the winning hay bale!

This contest is proudly sponsored by the Madison County 4-H Council!

SHELF-STABLE FOOD DRIVE

If any 4-H'er, family or 4-H club would like to be a part of our little Food Pantry, please consider helping us stock ours in Battle Creek at the park! You may drop off shelf-stable items to our office or consider dropping off in Battle Creek. We appreciate the help!

QOV FOUNDATION QOV Quilts of Valor® Quilting to Honor & Comfort

Quilt of Valor Nominations

We are very excited that the Quilts of Valor tradition will continue in 2026! Thank you to all of you who have helped over the past few years create some beautiful quilts that were awarded to our service men and women. We are currently working on more quilts this year to be awarded! If you are interested in sewing a quilt top together or donating fabric, please let us know! We hope to award a few quilts during the 2026 Madison County Fair and Rodeo! More details about the award ceremony will come later, but right now nominations are being collected. Active servicemen and living veterans who received honorable discharge are eligible.
Please contact the office for a nomination form by calling 402-370-4040 or emailing spolacek2@unl.edu.

Submit nominations to the Extension Office by May 1.

NEW PRICES AND INFORMATION - READ CAREFULLY

4-H Camper Spots at the Fairgrounds 2026 - April 6, 8am

Reserve your camper spot for the 2026 Madison County Fair and Rodeo. Open to 4-H families on **Monday, April 6** beginning at 8:00 a.m. Call the Madison County Fairgrounds at 402-454-2144. (will open to the public on April 29, so be sure to call)

Prices are:

- $150/week for 30amp
- $175/week for 50amp

Credit card transaction fee is $4 if you choose to pay with a card. Must pay at reservation. Office will be open from 8am-12pm.

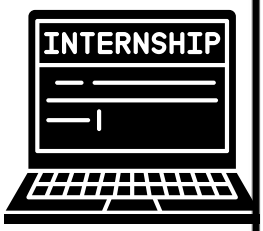
GOVERNOR'S AG EXCELLENCE AWARD– Due May 31

Sponsored by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, the purpose of the award is to recognize 4-H clubs for the work of the individuals in the club and the community service work of the entire club. Applications are due May 31. Check out the following link for more information! chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ne4hfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Governors-Ag-Application-Instructions.pdf for more information.

Please direct any questions to Lindsay Shearer by email lshearer2@unl.edu or by calling 402.472.9019.

Nebraska Extension in Madison County is looking for a summer intern to engage in 4-H Youth Development and Early Childhood programming. Responsibilities include:

- Assisting with summer programming and partnering with local libraries for 4-H reading programs.
- Participating in the Madison County Fair, including setting up exhibits and helping with animal shows, computer management, and customer service.
- Managing the summer learning kit program for childcare providers, leading activities, and developing new kits and curriculum.
- Coordinating schedules, inventory, payments, tracking finances, and creating an impact report.
- Additional tasks involve assisting with the Growing Together Nebraska donation garden project and other duties as needed.



Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Wayne Ohnesorg at wohnesorg2@unl.edu by noon on March 3, 2025, with the internship expected to run from May to early August.

4-H SPEECH, PSA, AND PRESENTATION CONTEST
APRIL 21, 2026 AT 7PM

STATE - PCE
'Premier Communication Event'
June 16-17 - Lincoln

Share your public speaking skills at the Madison County Speech, PSA, and Presentation Contest Tuesday, April 21 at 7:00 p.m. at the Extension Office. Registration is due April 14th. Contact Jayd at jroberts41@unl.edu or 402-370-4040 to sign up for the contest, scan the QR Code, or visit this link

https://go.unl.edu/4irf

PSAs must be submitted April 14th to be judged prior to the contest.

We would love to help you prepare a speech or practice!
Contact Sarah at 402-370-4040 or spolacek2@unl.edu to set up a time!

PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST

Purple $8.00 Blue $7.00 Red $6.00

NO costumes, props, visual aids, etc. will be allowed. Note cards are acceptable. Select the purpose of the speech, whether to inform, entertain, persuade, or motivate the audience. Organization should include an introduction (capture attention and provide central thought of speech), the body (present main points through discussion and examples), and a conclusion (restate central thought and summarize points). Acknowledge the source of information used in the speech. For example, an article from a magazine may be used for reference and should be cited if directly quoted. Contestants must qualify at the regional contest to compete in the state competition. Only senior division PSA and Speech Regional winners will advance to the state competition.

- **Cloverbuds** – Ages 5 to 7 (reading a poem, story or speech)
- **Junior** – Age 8 to 10 as of January 1;
- (2 to 3 minutes)
- **Intermediate** – Age 11 to 13 as of January 1 (3 to 5 minutes)
- **Senior** – Age 14 to 18 as of January 1
- (5 to 8 minutes)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Did you know US92 will record your PSA and add sound effects? Or come to the Extension Office and we will help you write, record, and fine-tune your PSA!

Purple $8.00 Blue $7.00 Red $6.00

Public Service Announcement – must be 60 seconds. **The state theme for 2026 is "Ready Today, Leading Tomorrow".** Must promote 4-H and be general enough to be used anywhere in Nebraska any time of the year. Include the following tag line in the last 10 seconds of the PSA: "Learn more about the Nebraska Extension 4–H Youth Development Program at 4h.unl.edu". Include the within the 60-second total time limit. Sound effects and public domain music may be used. Copyrighted material may not be used. Radio PSA's will only be submitted to the regional and state competitions electronically as a .wav or mp3 format.

- **Junior** Division – Age 8 to 10 as of Jan. 1
- **Intermediate** Division – Age 11 to 13 as of Jan. 1
- **Senior** Division – Age 14 to 18 as of Jan. 1

4-H SPEECH, PSA, AND PRESENTATION CONTEST

Illustrated Presentation

Purple $8.00 Blue $7.00 Red $6.00

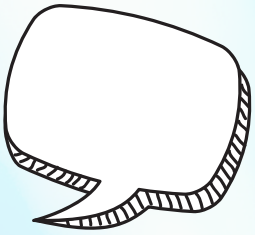
An Illustrated Presentation is a live presentation with a formal talk where youth will use visual aids (such as props, posters, computer-based visuals, handouts, video, etc.) to show and tell others how to do something. The judge views the entire presentation and engages in a question-and-answer session following the presentation.

Length

- Individual - Junior Division: 3-5 minutes
- Individual - Intermediate and Senior Divisions: 6-8 minutes
- Team - Junior Division: 5-7 minutes
- Team - Intermediate and Senior Divisions: 8-10 minutes
- Participants will be penalized if their presentation exceeds the time limit

- An Illustrated Presentation may be given by one (1) individual or a team of two (2) individuals. If team members are not in the same age division, they must compete in the age division of the oldest team member.
- All presentation topics should be related to what the 4-H youth is learning through 4-H educational experiences.
- Presentations should include an introduction (the "why" portion of the topic), a body (the "show and tell" portion of the topic), and a conclusion/summary (the "what" portion of the topic).
- Presenters using computer-based visuals may bring files on a USB drive that is PC formatted. Participants may also provide their own computer or other equipment as needed; however, participants must be able to connect their computers to an HDMI cord.
- At county level, live animals can be used for presentation, however they are not allowed to move on to the state level due to the of the state contest.
- Alternative ways of showing information about live animals (models, videos, photos, etc.) are encouraged.

4-H SPEECH, PSA, AND PRESENTATION CONTEST



Impromptu Speech

Purple: $8.00 Blue: $7.00 Red: $6.00

The Impromptu Speech competition gives youth the opportunity to write and present a speech around a 4-H-related topic that they select during the competition, where they are given 15 minutes to develop and prepare for their presentation. Judges evaluate the subject, organization, and delivery of the speech.

Length

- Junior Division (ages 8-10): 1 1/2 minutes
- Intermediate Division (ages 11-13): 3 minutes
- Senior Division (ages 14-18): 5 minutes

- Only individuals may compete in this class; no team entries are allowed.
- On the day of the contest, participants will have a topic randomly selected for them. Youth will have no more than 15 minutes to develop a speech on the selected topic. Participants will then deliver the speech to judges and audience members.
- Example topic: My Day in 4-H

Video Communication

Purple: $8.00 Blue: $7.00 Red: $6.00

The video communication contest allows youth to create a multi-media video around a theme related to 4-H. Judges will be evaluating on both the organization of information as well as the audio and video production.

Length: 60-90 seconds

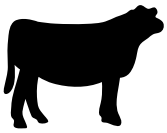
- Only individuals may compete in this class; no team entries are allowed.
- Youth may use a phone, laptop, or tablet to create a multi-media piece around the 2026 Theme: "Ready Today, Leading Tomorrow"
- Sound effects, public-domain music, and graphics can be used. Copyrighted materials may not be used.
- Videos will be brought to us via electronically as MP4 files.

4-H Livestock News

Preparing to Exhibit Your Animal at the Nebraska State Fair in 2026

Are you considering showcasing your animal at the Nebraska State Fair in 2026?
The State 4-H program has put together a list of topics that may vary from those at our local County Fair. This summary can assist 4-H families in getting ready for the Nebraska State Fair 4-H Livestock Show.

For more information, visit:
https://4h.unl.edu/statewide-events-opportunities/state-fair/livestock-exhibitor/



2026 State Horse Show

There will be NO District Horse Shows again in 2026 however, the Fonner Park State Horse Expo is the pinnacle showing experience for members of the 4-H Horse Program. The show includes a multitude of classes for youth and their horses, such as halter and showmanship classes which are open to all youth. Please be sure to have your Horsemanship Advancement Levels complete by June 1. For more information check out the following link:

https://4h.unl.edu/horse-expo-show

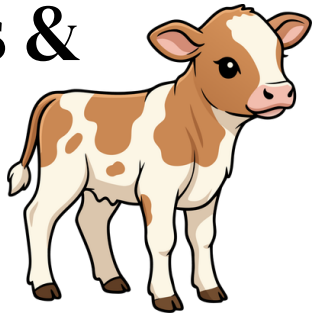
July 11-15, 2026
Fonner Park
Grand Island, NE

Livestock Quality Assurance 2026

All 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors must complete this certification before being able to show at the county and / or state fair. **Cloverbuds are not required to complete this training.
Quality Assurance will be offered through the program YQCA, Youth for the Quality Care of Animals again this year - Deadline to complete is June 1, 2026.
Registering for QA will be online at https://yqca.learngrow.io using the Family 4-H Online login information for active youth. If you are in both 4-H and FFA, please register through the 4-H login. Be sure you select the 2026 training dates. Face-to-face sessions (1 hour) cost $3 and online sessions cost $12. Whether you are completing online or face-to-face certification all registrations and payments must be completed online prior to completion. Refunds can not be given if you cannot make the face-to-face session.
**There is a PRE and POST 'test' in YQCA to complete PRIOR to the office marking youth COMPLETE!

**Upcoming face-to-face certification:
April 6th | 11 am
@ Nebraska Extension Office Madison County - Norfolk

4-H Bottle Lambs/Goats & 4-H Bucket Calves



<u>Showcasing 4-H Bottle Lambs/Goats and Bucket Calves at the Madison County Fair</u>

Are you interested in exhibiting a 4-H Bottle Lamb/Goat or a 4-H Bucket Calf at the Madison County Fair? Here's what you need to know!

The aim of these projects is to provide 4-H youth with the opportunity to showcase an animal while learning essential management and record-keeping skills.

Guidelines to Follow:

1. **4-H Age Requirement:** Participants must be between 5 and 14 years old as of January 1 of the current year.
2. **Bucket Calf Details**:A bucket calf should be an orphan or newborn calf, either a heifer or steer (bull calves are not permitted). The calf can be beef, dairy, or a crossbreed and must be bottle/bucket fed. It should be born between February 1 and May 1 of the current year.
3. **Bottle Lamb/Goat Information**:This refers to an orphan or newborn lamb born between January 1 and May 1, either male or female, that is fed using a bucket or bottle.
4. **Identification Requirements:**The calf or lamb/goat must have an official 4-H ear tag/scrapie tag by June 15 and must be recorded on the county identification sheet.
5. **Record Book**:Each exhibitor is required to use the designated bucket calf/bottle lamb/goat record book for their age group. They should document their project, include a story, and submit it to the Extension office by June 29.
6. **Interviews**: All exhibitors will take part in an in-person interview during the county fair.
7. **County Fair Classes:**
   - Calves will be shown using a rope halter in the specific bucket calf class. Beef exhibitors are prohibited from using a show stick. Only washing and brushing of the calf is allowed (no fitting or clipping). Bucket Calves cannot be used for beef showmanship.
   - Lambs/Goats will be shown in a designated bottle class during the 4-H/FFA Sheep Show. Bottle lambs are not eligible for showmanship classes.
8. **Scoring System:**
   - Exhibitors aged 8-14 will be judged based on their cumulative scores from showmanship, interview, and record book, with quality and breed not being considered.
   - Exhibitors aged 5, 6, and 7 will participate in all three areas but will do so as a non-competitive project.

Madison County 4-H Council

CRAFT & VENDOR FAIR

18 USC 707

FRIDAY, MARCH 27 5PM - 8PM

SATURDAY. MARCH 28 9AM - 2PM

Madison County Fairgrounds, Madison, NE

The majority of vendors will be present on both days,
but be sure to note the few that you can only visit on Saturday!

- Watkins
- Cyro Creations
- Red Aspen
- Dragonfly Creations
- Leather & Lace Boutique
- Horstman Homegrown
- Expanded Trades
- Krickette & Lime
- Tuttle Eats
- Good H2O Craftworks
- Welchin' Beads
- Alex Makes Sweets
- Sew Blessed
- Haybale Banners
- Jean's Fashion Fun
- Precious Pearl Boutique
- Rose Grace Boutique
- Creations by Rannell
- Stefanie Nicole Designs
- Damme Good Honey
- The Bubbly Dragonfly
- Serenity Rose Sweets
- Constance Crochet
- Wild & Tame
- Jewell Lane
- Deanna's Designs
- Hardt Woodworking
- Nicole's Creations
- D & D Creations
- Country Shack Crafts

Saturday Only!

- Stitching Grannies
- Cedar Corner Closet
- Luxe Links by Luci
- Jenni Grape Bakes
- A Blend Above

Food Trucks Available!

- Andrea's Mini Pancakes
- Crazy Hog Dog
- Pim's Thai

MADISON COUNTY 4-H COUNCIL INVITES YOU TO...

THE 2026 4-H FUN EVENT

JOIN US AT THE YMCA POOL AND FIELD HOUSE IN NORFOLK FOR AN AFTERNOON OF GAMES AND FUN WITH YOUR FELLOW MADISON COUNTY 4-H FAMILIES.

MONDAY

APRIL 6TH

1PM - 2PM - POOL

2PM-3PM - FIELDHOUSE

This event is open to members and families of the Madison County 4-H Program.
It is hosted by the Madison County 4-H Council.

TO HELP US ESTIMATE ATTENDANCE, PLEASE RSVP TO: SPOLACEK2@UNL.EDU BY MARCH 30. (NOT REQUIRED)

4-H Animal Tracking and Scat Workshop

Join us on April 6th at 3:15 PM for the 4-H Animal Tracking and Scat Workshop, immediately following the YMCA 4-H Fun Day events!

Workshop presented by: Mikayla Martensen

Become a wildlife detective! In this hands-on workshop, youth will learn to identify animal tracks and scat (animal droppings). More information will be shared in later March. Register today by calling our office or signing up through this link to help us plan this event!

See January Newsletter for more details AND registration!

18 USC 707

4-H Building Monitors:

Looking for individual or club participation on taking shifts to watch the 4-H building during the 2026 Madison County Fair - sign up below. We need all the help we can get from families!

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CyoYJjt6_Eyl7BiTc9AqD1AGFIQSjOwfwrm_Hl18ja4/edit?usp=sharing

2026 CALENDAR

Subject to change. More activities and workshops will be added in the future!

March

27-28 4-H Council Vendor Fair
28-29- 4-H Horse Stampede, Madison Co. Fairgrounds

April

6 - YQCA, Extension Office, 11am
4-H Fun Day 1-3pm - Norfolk YMCA
Animal Tracking and Scat Worshop 3:15pm
11 - Cat workshop, AM - Dog workshop, PM
21- Speech, PSA, & Presentation Contest, Extension Office
28- 4-H Council Meeting, Extension Office, 7pm

May

25- Office Closed - Memorial Day
27-29 - PASE (premier animal science event, UNL East Campus

June

15- County Fair Deadline Day!
15- Fashion Show Entry Deadline
16-17 - State Premier Communication Event - Lincoln
20- Barn Quilt Workshop, Madison Co. Fairgrounds
25- 4-H Council Meeting & Fair Clean Up, Madison County Fairgrounds, 6-8pm
26- Bucket Calf Record Books Deadline

July

3- Office Closed- Independence Day
6-12 Madison County Fair!
6- Judging Day (Static Exhibits), 8-noon
7- Judging Day (Foods/Horticulture), Madison County Fairgrounds, 8am-noon
11- Public Fashion Show, Indoor Arena, (3pm or after)
11-16- State Horse Show, Fonner Park, Grand Island

August

17-25- State Fair Drop Off, Extension Office
24 - Extension Office open until 6:30pm for State Fair Exhibit including horticulture, floriculture and foods.
26- State Fair Judging Day, Grand Island
28- State Fair Begins, Grand Island
TBA- 4-H Council Meeting, Extension Office, 7pm
TBA- 4-H Achievement Ceremony Nomination and Application Deadline

September

7- State Fair Ends
9- State Fair Projects Ready for families to pick up from Extension Office
28 - 4-H Council Meeting, Extension Office, 7pm

October-National 4-H Month

TBA - 4-H Council Meeting, Extension Office, 7pm

November

26-27 - Office Closed - Thanksgiving

December

24-Jan. 1 - Closed - Holiday Shutdown
**will return to office on Monday, Jan. 4

Sarah Polacek
4-H Educator

Jayd Krueger
4-H Assistant

Leo Gonzalez
4-H Educator