



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

February 2026



4-H Project Day:
Sat., February 28th
Madison County
Fairgrounds
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Return the included form to the Extension Office or register at
<https://go.unl.edu/zj9d>



Registration due Friday, February 13 by 5pm.

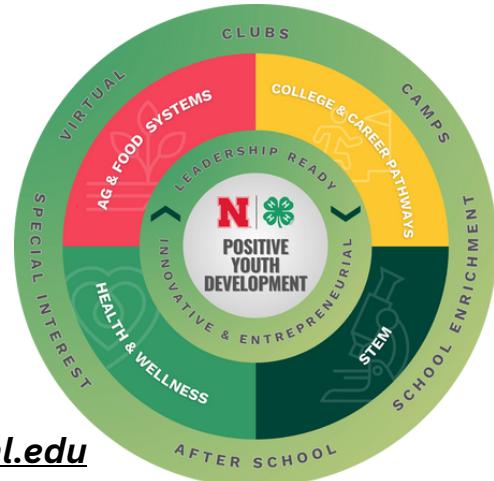


Bring a friend! Open to 4-H'ers and non 4-H members!

Photos of project on Google Form link above

• • It's Nebraska 4-H Month • •

Nebraska 4-H encourages diverse groups of youth to develop their unique skills and talents to their fullest potential. Young people participate in 4-H through clubs, special interest groups, after-school programs, camps and many other activities. "Learning by doing" through hands-on activities and community involvement empowers 4-H'ers to develop and strengthen life skills.



Let's Celebrate Together! -send photo's to spolacek2@unl.edu

- Share photos of your 4-H Club members proudly wearing their 4-H shirts.
- Send us pictures from your club meetings.
- If you're involved in a service project, we'd love to hear about it!
- Enroll in 4-H for a chance to win a brand new pair of boots.
- Join us for 4-H Project Day on February 28.
- Count the 4-H clovers in this newsletter for a chance to win a prize!



Feeling LUCKY



REGISTER FOR 4-H BY

APRIL 1ST (11:59PM CT)

TO BE PUT INTO A DRAWING FOR A PAIR OF BOOTS

A PRIZE FOR EACH AGE DIVISION WILL BE DRAWN:

CLOVERBUD, JUNIOR, INTERMEDIATE, & SENIOR

SPREAD THE WORD!



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!

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

2026 4-H JUDGING DAYS



MONDAY, JULY 6TH

8:00AM - 12:00PM

**JUDGING FOR ALL STATIC EXHIBITS
(EXCEPT FOODS AND GARDENING)**

All families are welcome to drive into the fairgrounds to unload exhibits and then please move vehicles to the NORTH parking lot. Since this is the Monday of the fair, there is a lot of preparation and movements of vehicles, vendors and other large equipment that might need to get around, so please move your vehicles after exhibits are unloaded.



TUESDAY, JULY 7TH

8:00AM - 12:00PM

JUDGING FOR ALL FOODS, GARDENING, & HORTICULTURE

Families are to park in the NORTH parking lot and walk to the 4-H building where the exhibits will be judged. If larger items are needed delivered, please bring them to the 4-H building and then move your vehicle back to the NORTH parking lot. We appreciate this! .



SATURDAY, JULY 11TH

PUBLIC FASHION SHOW - INDOOR ARENA - 3:00 PM



Attention All Madison County 4-H Clubs!

Get ready to join the first ever Round Bale Decorating Contest at the 2026 Madison County Fair! Clubs are encouraged to create their own unique themes and decorate their bales accordingly. More details will be provided in the March newsletter. A CASH prize awaits the winning club's hay bale Contest is sponsored by the Madison County 4-H Council!



Nebraska 4-H Month Fun!

Placed throughout this newsletter are 4-H clovers! Can you find them all? The first 3 families to email spolacek2@unl.edu will receive a prize! Please include each individual youth's name and guesses.



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!



4-H SPRING VENDOR FAIR

The 4-H Council is excited to announce their Vendor Fair, taking place at the Madison County Fairgrounds on March 27 & 28th.

Needing some volunteer hours or service hours, please contact us as we need help setting up tables for the booths on the evening of Thursday, March 26th.



Enroll in 4-H

Visit: v2.4honline.com



Keep up the enrollment for the 2025 year! Encouraged to enroll EARLY to have all the information needed for the summer 4-H events and the Madison County Fair!

Questions—please contact Sarah, Jayd, or Betty at 402-370-4040.



Cake Decorating Theme for 2026: All American, Red, White and Blue

Dept. E, Div. 910, Class *912

- ◆ Decorate three sugar cookies or three cupcakes with only edible decorations and frosting. Must use different techniques on each cookie or cupcake.
- ◆ Can use purchased cookies to decorate.
- ◆ No glue gun use allowed.
- ◆ Display on a small white paper plate.



2026 4-H Theme

"READY TODAY, LEADING TOMORROW"

We're still looking for youth entries for our 2026 Fair Book Cover!

We'd love to see your creativity and talents—submit your design and be part of the fair! email Sarah - spolacek2@unl.edu



APRIL 21

Speech, PSA, & Presentation Contest

Madison County Extension Office

7:00 p.m.



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.



2026 SPECIAL AGRONOMY PROJECT



Special Agronomy Project

go.unl.edu/specialagronomy

2026: 2 varieties of Popcorn



Photo Credits: Johnny Seeds and Giving Ground Seeds

In the sixth year of the special agronomy project, youth will explore TWO varieties of popcorn!

The first is an heirloom variety that was discovered and developed by a farmer in eastern Nebraska, called Nebraska Red. The second is a commercial variety, Robust 997. Be sure not to plant sweet corn in your garden with these to prevent cross pollination.

Be eligible to enter an exhibit at the County and/or State Fair in the agronomy project area.

Simply email Jayd to sign up jroberts41@unl.edu or sign up at this google link (**Feb. 20 DEADLINE**):

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aNAfqZdtUpZZnnPGiDfcVC_ia62Jf4lmplh0xkd2HZI/edit?usp=sharing
Cost is \$2/packet.

Members are encouraged to enroll for Agronomy project through 4-H Online.

Additional Resources can be found here:

<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/special-agronomy-project>





4-H Livestock News

Livestock Achievement Program

As a 4-H Member, I have (check all that apply):

- participated in a community service activity
- participated in a workshop about my animal
- helped another 4-H'er with their animal project
- participated in at least 1 state or regional event show with my animal

WOW you've earned 80 points already for your Livestock Achievement Program! With a few more points you could earn cash and an award and be recognized at the Nebraska State Fair Grand Drive!

Learn more & apply here:

<https://go.unl.edu/lap>

Junior, Intermediate, and Senior options! Must apply by June 15th! Contact Sarah to get started.



NDA Poster Contest

Get out your art supplies! Entries for the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's annual poster contest are due March 2.

The 2026 theme is "Agriculture: Building the Future!"

Contest rules and entry form can be found at <https://nda.nebraska.gov/kids/contest>



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, 2025.

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 2025 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!



YQCA
YOUTH FOR THE QUALITY CARE OF ANIMALS



****Upcoming face-to-face certification:**

February 13th | 11am & April 6th | 11am

@ Nebraska Extension Office Madison County - Norfolk





Big Gumdrop
Outdoors

SUMMER CAMP 2026!

EXPLORING ECOSYSTEMS

OVERNIGHT CAMP

CHADRON

June 15th-19th

Ages 8-14

DAY CAMPS

GRAND ISLAND

June 30th

Ages 8-12

LINCOLN

July 22nd

Ages 8-12



Register Here
or at the link:

4h.unl.edu/camp



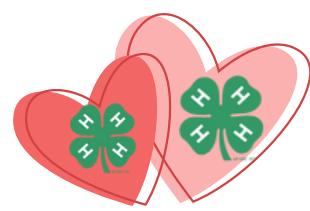
Apply for a
scholarship
today:

4h.unl.edu/camps-discounts/



Contact Us: 4hcamps@unl.edu





2025 CALENDAR



Subject to change.

More activities and workshops will be added in the future!

February - Nebraska 4-H Month

13 - YQCA, Extension Office, 11am
24- 4-H Council Meeting, Extension Office, 7pm
20- Special Agronomy Seed Order Deadline
20- Special Garden Seed Order Deadline
28- 4-H Project Day, Madison Co. Fairgrounds, 9-12

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

March

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



April

6 - YQCA, Extension Office, 11am
Save the Date: 4-H Fun Day
11 - Cat workshop, AM - Dog workshop, PM
21- Speech, PSA, & Presentation Contest,
Extension Office
28- 4-H Council Meeting, Extension Office, 7pm

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

May

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



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

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

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



4-H Project Day

Saturday, Feb. 28th 2026

9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Madison County Fairgrounds

<https://go.unl.edu/zj9d>

photos of
projects on
google sheet



Projects are limited so register early!

Project	Cost	Quantity
Hot Glue Art	\$5	<input type="text"/>
Family Heritage Wood Blocks	\$8	<input type="text"/>
Tie Pillow Project - make one, donate one	\$12	<input type="text"/>
Shim Tree	\$5	<input type="text"/>
Fabric Wrapped Wreath with Letter (without) letter	\$10 \$5	<input type="text"/>
Dream Tree	\$6	<input type="text"/>
Trees are for Everyone (tree seed)	\$6	<input type="text"/>
Birch Bark Acrylic Art	\$6	<input type="text"/>
Terra Cotta Candy Bowl	\$9	<input type="text"/>
Stacking Toy with Numbers	\$5	<input type="text"/>
Yarn Creatures	\$7	<input type="text"/>

Participant Name _____ 4-H Age (as of Jan. 1) _____

Daytime Phone Number _____ E-mail _____

Parent/Guardian _____

To attend 4-H Project Day, all youth (ages 5-12) must be accompanied by someone 16 or older who will help youth with each project. Three (3) youth may share one (1) adult. Teens may complete projects without adult supervision. Bring a sack lunch if you are staying all day.

Registration is not complete until payment is made. No registrations accepted at the door.

~ Make checks payable to: University of Nebraska-Lincoln ~

~take \$1 off / youth for any shelf stable food donations brought to project day to help us fill our Little Food Pantry located at the Battle Creek Park!~

Registrations are accepted until Friday, February 13 by 5pm.

