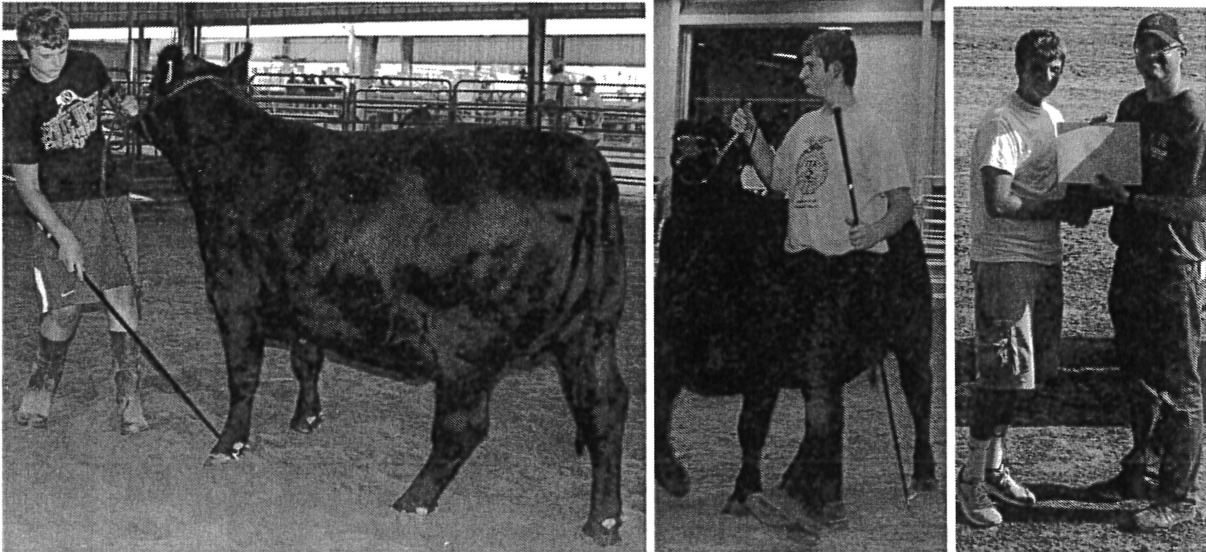


## 4-H Experiences

**“My Experiences”**  
**For ages 15-18, as of Jan. 1**

### Showing cattle at the county and state fair

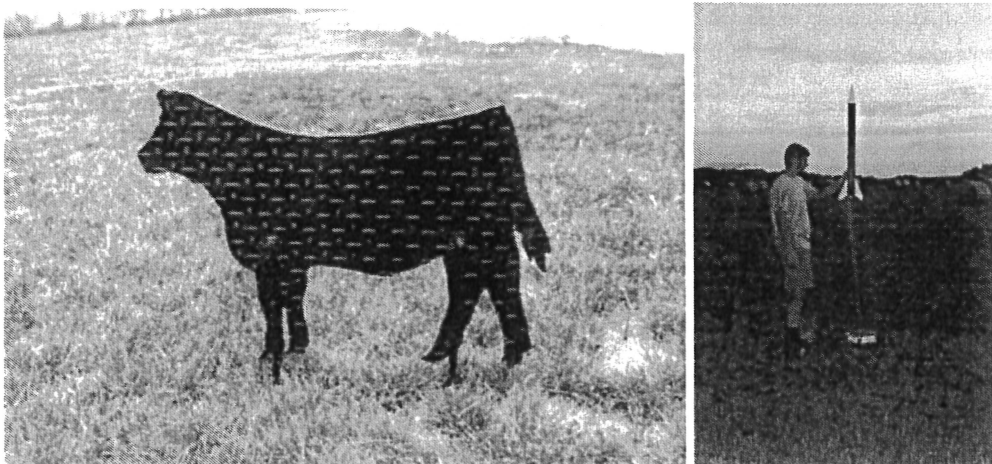
I showed a total of ten cattle in 4-H and FFA at the county level and spent hours upon hours this last summer working with them. The cattle that I show are breeding stock so they take a lot of work to be ready for the show ring. This was the first year I showed livestock at the State Fair. I really learned a lot showing at State Fair and I can appreciate the level of competition. It is a complicated process but I really enjoyed showing my cattle in the show ring. I was recognized as the Outstanding Beef Exhibitor this summer at the Colfax County Fair. It felt awesome to be recognized for all of the hard work I put into working with my cattle!



Left: Practicing in the show ring at county fair. Middle: I showed in both 4-H and FFA at the Nebraska State Fair. Right: Receiving the Outstanding Beef Exhibitor Award from Extension Agent Aaron Nygren.

### Exhibiting in the Ag Engineering area

Each year I work hard to enter at least one exhibit in the Ag Engineering department. I especially enjoy completing woodworking projects, although I don't always have enough time to complete them. I have made a bookshelf, a bench, outdoor patio chairs, coat rack and a plant stand. My favorite though would have to be the wall clock I made out of pallet wood. This was a project that I designed and created with my own plans. This past year I entered a rocket and plasma cut silhouette of a cow. Plasma cutting was a new project for me in Ag Engineering and my first time welding. I learned a lot about the types of welds and equipment used to accomplish this project. Although my entry of static exhibits is minimal because of the time I am spending working with livestock, I always find time to complete an Ag Engineering project.



Left: My first experience plasma cutting. Right: My rocket qualified for state and earned a blue ribbon there.

### Competing in Weed, Tree, Horticulture and Insect ID contests at the county and state level

Every year I compete in all four contests at the county and state level. I have learned that my strengths include the Horticulture and Entomology Contest areas, but I don't mind competing in the Weed and Tree identification as well. My experiences with this material has been beneficial in science and ag classes in high school. I put in extra study time before state contest and it proved helpful. I placed 5th in the state Horticulture contest senior division, 2nd for Colfax County team and was invited to be a member of the Nebraska state team at Nationals. It was an honor to be eligible to compete at the National Level but unfortunately, I had a conflict with the date. This gives me something to work towards for next year. I hope that I can put myself in a position to qualify for Nationals again.

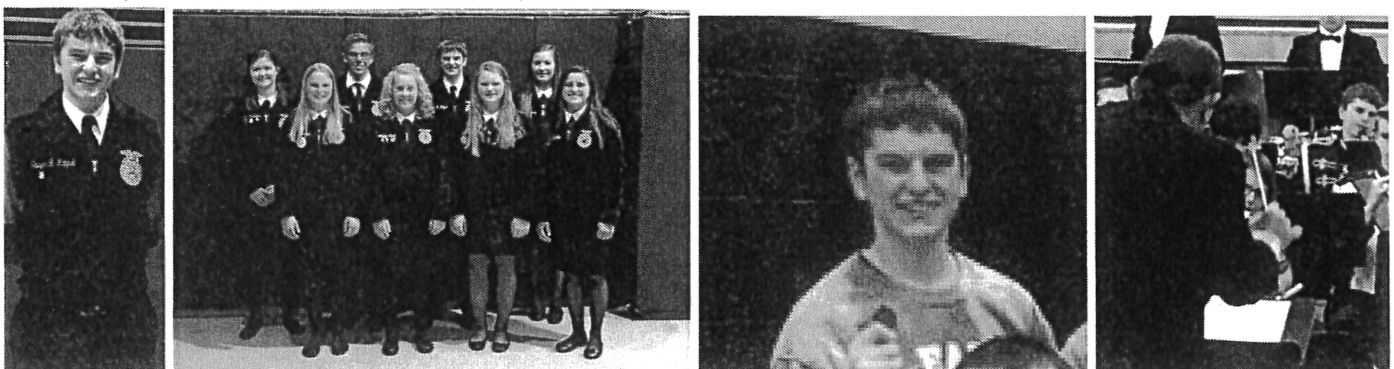


### Leadership Experiences

This year in the Blue Banner 4-H club I was elected to the office of Secretary. Responsibilities in this role include taking thorough notes during our monthly meetings and putting those notes together in a summary. I am responsible for reading the summary at each meeting. This job has required me to pay attention to details and record information. My writing skills are important in this role as well as my attendance at our club meetings.

I have continued to further develop my leadership skills in the Leigh Clarkson FFA Chapter by serving as the Chapter Parliamentarian. I assist with chapter projects such as Feed the Farmer, fundraising and Trick or Trunk at Halloween. I am also competing on the senior Parli Pro team and public speaking contest at District FFA and I continue to keep record of my SAE project. I was a member of the Livestock Judging team that qualified and competed at State FFA this past spring. I participated in leadership workshops and officer training with our advisor which have helped me to develop a stronger commitment to the FFA organization and to my fellow FFA members.

I am beginning my third year on the Clarkson Speech team. My OID team qualified and competed at State last year. I was inducted into Clarkson's National Honor Society in May of 2018. I also find music to be a strength for me and I share my talents by playing the saxophone in my school's band and trying out and qualifying three years in a row for Conference Honor Band. This year I decided to try something new so I joined Chorus and was also able to qualify and perform at Conference Honor Choir. I hope that underclassmen see through my experiences that there are many opportunities to be involved in activities.

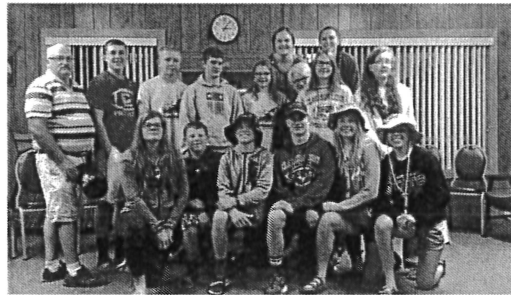


Left: Elected as Chapter Parliamentarian and the Leigh Clarkson FFA team. Middle: Placed 2nd in Oral Interpretation of Drama at Districts, qualified for State Speech. Right: Playing in the East Husker Conference Honor Band, February 2018.

## Community Involvement/Service Learning Projects

As a member of the Blue Banner 4-H Club and Leigh Clarkson FFA Chapter, I help every year with the Colfax County Fair clean-up. My responsibilities to these organizations include cleaning the beef barn which includes raking up leaves and debris, setting up the show ring, and helping to set up the aisles for the livestock exhibitors. I also help set up in the swine/sheep/goat barn by putting up the show ring, sweeping out the pens and setting up the goat pens. This takes several hours to complete but when you work with your Club or Chapter, we make this an enjoyable experience.

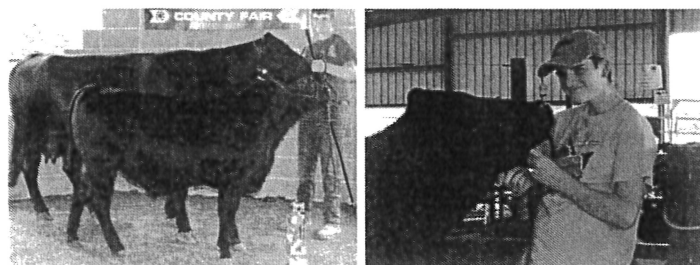
I participate in two church youth groups. I am a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Leigh and participate in Luther League. We are not a super active group but I do usher and teach Sunday School at least once a month. I am also a member of the Clarkson Presbyterian Church Youth Group. This group meets twice a month during the school year and participates in a Mission Trip out of state every other year. I also help with a community food drive around Halloween each year, recycle cans as a fundraiser, participate in community caroling and perform in a Winter Dinner every year through this group. In 2016, we went to Oklahoma City and stayed at a church for a week and helped families that were impacted by a tornado. We built a shed, cleaned up debris, painted buildings, and worked in a food shelter. In 2018, our group traveled to Texas and spent a week volunteering our time helping with flood clean-up. We helped people move into their homes, scrub, clean, and paint inside of the church. Volunteering with Youth Group can be a lot of hard work, but we always make it fun!



Youth group members that participated in the 2018 Mission Trip to Texas.

## Career Spark

I have been a member of 4-H for ten years, and during most of that time, I have been a member of the Blue Banner 4-H club. I have had a lot of experience working with animals. On the farm, I am surrounded by calves and cows, needing daily attention: checking and treating sick calves, helping with pregnancy checking and ultrasounds on cows, and assisting the local vet fix the occasional broken leg during calving season or other animal health issues. During county fair, I show breeding heifers, cow/calf pairs, and feeder calf heifers and bulls. Much care is necessary for these animals at the fair including feeding, watering, and cleaning bedding in their stalls. These experiences have guided me towards pursuing veterinary science in the future. I participated in the Vet-Science contest in FFA last year. I participated in a workshop in Columbus called Next Chapter, sponsored by 4-H extension agents. At it, I had the opportunity to explore careers and set goals for my future. This year I have had the opportunity to visit two college campuses, the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and Northeast Community College, exploring their pre-veterinary programs and learning about what I need to do in the future. I also had the opportunity to Interview Doug Eisenmann, a local veterinarian that recently started a new business between Schuyler and Clarkson. My experiences in 4-H are guiding me towards a future career in agriculture with emphasis in animal care and production.



My favorite animals!

### Why I would like to represent Nebraska at the National 4-H Congress

It would be fun to represent Nebraska at Congress and meet 4-H members from across the United States. It would be an honor to be chosen and I know I would be very fortunate to get this opportunity. I remember the enthusiasm of a past Colfax County representative and what she shared about her experience at Congress. The schedule from this year's Congress sounded amazing and I would really appreciate the chance to attend next year.

### Sharing This New Experience in Nebraska

If I were selected to attend 4-H National Congress, I would share with fellow 4-Hers stories about my experience and tell them what I learned while at Congress. I could give a presentation to the Blue Banner 4-H club to encourage younger 4-Hers to apply for this opportunity in their future. I could also create a display board for the County Fair to highlight the sessions and speakers and experiences from Congress. There are businesses, especially in Colfax County, that donate their time and money to the 4-H organization. I would share a flyer or some type of letter with those stakeholders that summarized the experiences at Congress and encourage continued support of the 4-H organization.

### As a Nebraska 4-H youth leader, when I look at my state:

I am proud of Nebraska because . . .

. . . we have a lot of educational opportunities available for students. There are so many activities that you can get involved in while in high school. Our state has strong athletics but there are so many other ways kids can be involved . . . 4-H clubs, One Act, church groups, Speech, Quiz Bowl, Livestock Judging teams, student mentoring, just to mention a few. These opportunities help kids build life skills that will be so important in their futures.

I am concerned about . . .

. . . mental health issues facing the youth of Nebraska. I am aware of kids that struggle with depression, anxiety and peer pressure to the point of being suicidal. There is a lot of pressure to be your best and unfortunately mistakes are part of learning, but some kids put a lot of extra stress on themselves. I am taking my first college class this fall, Psychology, and I've learned a lot about mental health as a result. I'm glad to see Nebraskans taking action like the #BeKind movement, to help kids get the help they need.

I want to start a conversation . . .

. . . with the youth in Nebraska about social media. I want kids to learn about the appropriate use of social media. We will occasionally hear this message at school and are reminded of the consequences of using social media in inappropriate ways. I would like every kid beginning in 3rd or 4th grade to be required to participate in lessons about digital citizenship every year.