



# Stanton County 4-H Welcome Packet



## What is 4-H?

4-H is a community of young people who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills using the learn-by-doing approach. 4-H encourages youth to reach their full potential through learning, working on projects, and volunteering.

## HOW IS 4-H ORGANIZED?

Many people think of 4-H as an independent organization, but that isn't quite accurate. 4-H is the youth development program of the national Cooperative Extension System through the United States Department of Agriculture.

This means that your 4-H Extension staff members are supported with resources from Land Grant Universities across the nation. Just take a look at our research-based curriculum, and you can feel complete confidence in 4-H as a sound, educational organization. Plus, we have been around for over 100 years!

Your 4-H staff members work for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and serve as faculty members for the University, the Land Grant University in Nebraska. The extension staff members who give primary leadership to the Stanton County 4-H Program are below.

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If you have any questions please contact us at:  
Nebraska Extension-Stanton County-402-439-2231  
email: [stanton-county@unl.edu](mailto:stanton-county@unl.edu)  
[www.facebook.com/stanton4-H](http://www.facebook.com/stanton4-H)  
Website: [extension.unl.edu/statewide/stanton/4h/](http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/stanton/4h/)

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## WELCOME TO THE STANTON COUNTY 4-H PROGRAM

Dear Prospective 4-H Family,

Welcome to 4-H! You have just inquired about one of the biggest youth development programs in the nation. In fact, with 130,000 youth enrolled in Nebraska, 4-H is the largest out-of-school educational program in the country.

The purpose of this welcome packet is to give you an overview of the opportunities and resources available to help your family have an incredible experience in 4-H. Keep in mind that this is only an overview. Your best way to stay informed is to read **Staying in the Loop**, the Stanton County 4-H Newsletter. Your family will start receiving this free, monthly publication once we receive your 4-H enrollment forms.

The 4-H program is so large and the opportunities so vast that it can sometimes seem a little overwhelming when you are new. Just keep in mind that your family's 4-H experience can be tailor-made to fit your goals, schedule, and interests. That is one reason 4-H is such a great program for Nebraska families. You can be involved as a whole family, learning and growing together.

When describing 4-H to someone new, we often use the analogy of a "super department store". 4-H is like a "store" full of wonderful, fun, positive, educational programs. It has pretty much every type of workshop, project, contest, trip, conference, camp, or activity you could possibly want and things fit into your schedule and your budget. Your club leader and extension staff members are like the "greeters" at the front of the store to help you find what you need. We are here to answer your questions, so please don't hesitate to call.

Keep in mind that the leader in your club is a volunteer. Like all of us, your leader is more than willing to do his/her part. But, he/she also wants help. Ask your leader what you can do to support your child's club. If we all take a small piece of the pie, it makes everyone's involvement more manageable and fun!

Nebraska Extension in Stanton County is where the 4-H program is administered. It is located on 302 6th Street in Stanton on the Fair Grounds.

Office hours: Fall/Winter	October - April	Monday – Thursday	7:00 am – 5:00 pm
Spring-Summer	May – September	Monday – Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Again, welcome to the wonderful world of 4-H!

Sincerely,

Kim Bearnes, Extension Educator

## PARENT & GUARDIAN ROLES

First and foremost, 4-H is a family program—a place where parents and their children can learn and grow together. In 4-H, you, as the parent or guardian, are very important. You are always invited and encouraged to participate in all 4-H club activities. We recognize every family's schedule is different and you may not be able to attend every club function, but there are many different ways that you can contribute to your child's 4-H group.

Your 4-H club leader will want to know about your interests and talents, and how you would like to support your child's 4-H group. Because 4-H has so many diverse experiences, we have discovered that every adult can find a parent volunteer role that matches their interests and the club's needs. Some possible helping roles include providing refreshments, supplies, or other resources for a club meeting, helping members with their projects, chaperoning a club field trip, organizing the club's service project, or coordinating the club's end-of-the-year recognition program. Your club leader may have other suggestions.

As a parent or guardian, these are the following roles you need to fulfill:

- Provide transportation for your child to and from 4-H events.
- Help your child learn to recite the 4-H pledge.
- Attend 4-H club functions with your child whenever possible. Children ages 5-7 (Clover Kid members) should always have a parent or guardian attend meetings with them.
- Guide your child as they select a 4-H project and help them develop goals that are challenging, but also realistic. Encourage their project work by making it a family learning experience.
- If your child serves in a leadership role within the club, help him/her fulfill the duties of the office.

- Read **Staying in the Loop**, the Stanton County 4-H Newsletter, so you will know the details of upcoming special events & dates. You will automatically start receiving this publication when you or your child enroll in a 4-H club. It can also be found on our website.
- If you have online access, visit the county 4-H website for the latest information and resources at: [extension.unl.edu/statewide/stanton/4h/](http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/stanton/4h/)
- The 4-H staff will provide countywide training on portfolios, presentations, project workshops, and other core 4-H learning experiences. Try to participate in these classes and workshops. By understanding more about our various 4-H programs, you can help your child excel and take advantage of all that 4-H has to offer.
- Attend with your child, the county wide 4-H Awards Night as a family, held during the Stanton County Fair. Recognition always means more to children when their family is there to share it with them.

## 4-H FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What is 4-H age?** The age of a 4-H'er is determined by their age before January 1 of the current year. Their "4-H age" will determine what age group they will compete in at county and state fairs. To be a Clover Kid, youth must be 4-H age of 5-7. To be a 4-H member, youth must be 8 by January 1 of that year.

**What do the four "H's" stand for on the 4-H clover emblem?** The "H's" stand for: head, heart, hands, and health. Club members pledge their Head, Heart, Hands, and Health (the four H's) as they recite the 4-H pledge at meetings.

### What is the 4-H pledge?

I pledge,  
 my head to clearer thinking,  
 my heart to greater loyalty,  
 my hands to larger service, and  
 my health to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

### What is the 4-H motto? "To Make the Best Better"

**What are the 4-H colors?** The 4-H colors are green and white. Green symbolizes nature's common color and represents life, springtime, and youth. White symbolizes purity and high ideals.

**How did 4-H begin?** 4-H began in the early 1900's as Corn Clubs for boys and Canning Clubs for girls. Although the program has changed a lot through the years, it has always been a program designed to help children become productive members of their communities. The national 4-H program celebrated its 100th birthday in 2002.

**Do I have to live on a farm to join 4-H?** No, although 4-H began as a program for rural children, today 4-H is available for ALL CHILDREN whether they live on a farm or in the city.

**Do boys and girls attend different clubs?** No, all 4-H clubs are open to both boys and girls.

**How old do you have to be to join a 4-H club?** Children can join a 4-H club as soon as they are five before January 1 of the current year and they can stay involved until their final year of eligibility—the calendar year the member becomes 19. In addition, many colleges offer collegiate 4-H clubs, including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln!

**What is the 4-H year timeline?** The 4-H year runs from October 1 to September 30. However, the last few months of the calendar year are fairly slow for 4-H members. Activities and meeting really start to roll in February when the Nebraska 4-H Month begins.

**Can we join 4-H at any time during the year?** Yes, youth may enroll in 4-H at any time. However, all youth must be enrolled with the UNL Extension 4-H Office by June 15 to exhibit in Stanton County Fair or any competitive 4-H events.

**Are clubs organized by age divisions?** 4-H clubs operate best when the members are in a similar age group, preferably within a couple of years of each other. However, some clubs operate with children from a wide variety of ages. It is a little more challenging to keep everyone's interest when there is a wide age span. On the other hand, there are benefits of younger youth learning from the knowledge and example of older youth as well as the leadership opportunities for older youth.

**What are the age divisions for competitive events?** A child must be at least eight years old as of January 1 of the current program year to compete in any 4-H event. Most competition is held in the following age divisions: Juniors (8-11), Intermediate (12-14) and Seniors (15-18). However, age divisions do vary from program to program. Always carefully review the registration information for 4-H events.

**What is a Clover Kid?** Children ages five to seven are known in 4-H as "Clover Kids". These children are full 4-H members and can participate in a wide range of programs and activities, including the fair. However, because research has shown that competition at this age is detrimental, Clover Kid members are not allowed to participate in competitive events. These members do participate in many contests and receive participation ribbons. Their work just is not "judged" and compared to other children's work.

**What does it cost to join a 4-H club?** Each family will pay \$7 per year. Some clubs will assess "dues" for each member to cover the cost of the project supplies. Dues vary from club to club. 4-Hers must order their own project manuals. For ordering information, contact the Stanton County Extension Office.

**How do I stay informed about 4-H opportunities?** Read the Stanton County 4-H Newsletter, mailed to you and found online. It will give you all the details about upcoming programs. Also, visit the Stanton County 4-H website at: <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/stanton/4h>. You can also "like" us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Stanton 4-H](http://www.facebook.com/Stanton4H).

## YOUR FIRST STEP TO JOIN 4-H

A Traditional 4-H member is a 4-H Club member. An Independent 4-H member does not belong to an organized 4-H club, but participates in 4-H as an individual rather than in a club environment. You need to begin by selecting a 4-H club in your area. We encourage new members to join a club the first few years in order to better understand 4-H and help make it a fun and memorable experience for the youth and their families. We have provided a list below of the Stanton County 4-H Clubs and leaders. Please contact one of these clubs to start your 4-H experience. If you need further assistance contacting the leaders, please call the Stanton County Extension office at 439-2231.

<b>Club Name</b>	<b>Leaders</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Bloomin' Blossoms	Ardith Svitak	Norfolk	402-841-2006
Country Kids	Kim McCarthy	Stanton	402-565-4200
Hillview	Kim Spence	Stanton	402-851-1394
Rough Riders	Jon Hansen	Stanton(Horse)	402-750-7832
Stanton 4-H Shooters	Greg Wylie	Stanton	402-396-9737
	Keith Drott		402-487-9381
	Nathan Fursteau		402-750-2257
Wildcats	Traci Hilbers	Stanton	402-649-7359
The Wranglers	Jaci Bruhn	Stanton	402-649-0697

(updated 3/1/2017)

We are always welcoming new clubs. As per state 4-H guidelines, 4-H clubs must have at least three families and five youth enrolled. If you would like to start your own 4-H club, please contact the Stanton County Extension Office at 402-439-2231.

## 4-H PROJECTS

**What is a project?** Each 4-H member will have an opportunity to select one or more projects to learn about during the year. A project is simply a topic, or subject, the member wants to explore. The member will focus on increasing their knowledge and skills on this topic during the year. Projects are completely self-paced. A member may focus on a project over the whole year, or only spend a few months on a specific project. Similarly, a member may choose to explore the same topic for many years, gaining a real, in-depth knowledge of the project.

Another member may prefer to explore a wide variety of projects during his/her 4-H years. In most cases, the member will end up with one or more finished exhibits to enter in the fair from each project he/she selects. With nearly 150 projects available, there is something to interest every child.

There is not a limit to the number of projects a member can select; however parents and leaders should help guide members in setting realistic, but challenging goals. It is always better to complete fewer projects that reflect quality workmanship than to do a “rush job” and complete a lot of poorer quality projects.

Project work is at the heart of 4-H. As youth work to complete a 4-H project, a lot more is happening than “just” learning new skills. In fact, project work encompasses all four “H’s” - head, heart, hands and health. Take for instance a young person working on a sewing project.

Their project-related activities may involve...

**HEAD** Mental development: gaining deeper knowledge and reasoning abilities

- Learning how to select a pattern that is properly sized
- Utilizing smart consumer skills when shopping for fabric, equipment, and sewing notions
- Calculating the correct amount of fabric to purchases for various fabric widths

**HEART** Emotional development: developing interests, appreciation and wholesome attitudes

- Working as a team with fellow club members to select a sewing project to complete
- Caring for others by sewing baby blankets for the hospital

**HANDS** Skills development: ability to do, skill in doing, and the habit of doing

- Demonstrating the ability to properly thread a sewing machine bobbin
- Becoming skilled in sewing straight and curved seams that follow a seam allowance
- Completing a sewing project utilizing correct techniques

**HEALTH** Physical development: understanding an appreciation of a changing body

- Learning to select garments that are flattering for body shape
- Developing poise and body posture when modeling the garment in 4-H Fashion Show

**How do we select a project?** In most cases, club members and leaders choose one club project they want to complete during the year. Members will work on that project together at club meetings. A club leader, parent volunteer, community resource person, or perhaps an older 4-H member will teach the club’s project lesson.

Additional projects can be selected by 4-H members and they will be able to work on those outside of their club meetings. They may seek guidance from their parents, leaders, community organizations, or other experts in the field to assist them in acquiring these new skills.

**What is a 4-H project manual?** To help guide your learning experience, 4-H offers project manuals. These written manuals provide age-appropriate, hands-on lessons to help youth acquire new skills and knowledge. The majority of projects have manuals or resource material relating to the project. There are youth manuals and adult helper manuals. Typically the manuals are developed in a series with three or four levels. These manuals are researched-based through Universities nationwide. Some manuals are available for purchase at the Stanton Extension Office. If we do not have the one you need there are two websites you can go to purchase them:

<https://marketplace.unl.edu/ne4h/curriculum>  
[www.4-hmall.org/category/educationresources.aspx](http://www.4-hmall.org/category/educationresources.aspx)

Please keep in mind that you are not required to utilize a project manual to guide your child's 4-H project, but you will find it very helpful. Also, do not feel like you have to complete every learning activity listed in the project manual. Think of the project manual as a very useful resource for you, rather than a "to do" list of activities that must be completed.

#### 4-H PROJECTS

Projects are real life experiences that help 4-H'ers learn to make good decisions. There are over 100 different projects. Most of the projects have been planned with several phases so that a member may advance to more difficult and challenging activities within that project. Projects are selected early in the 4-H year when enrollment is completed.

When selecting projects, you should consider the following:

- ✿ Does it meet your needs and interest
- ✿ Is the project compatible with your age and ability (physical and mental)
- ✿ Will it challenge you
- ✿ How much time does the project require
- ✿ Is the project acceptable to your parents and does it fit into the family needs and situation
- ✿ How much will the project cost

1. Animal Science—Youth interested in these 4-H projects may be interested in the following careers: Agribusiness, Animal Nutrition, Business Financial Management, Farm/Ranch Management, or Travel and Tourism.

2. Communication & Expressive Arts — Youth interested in these 4-H projects may be interested in the following careers: Account Planning and Management, Advertising, Marketing, Interactive Media, Performing Arts, or Public Relations.

3. Consumer & Family Science — Youth interested in these 4-H projects may be interested in the following careers: Banking and Related Services, Business Financial Management, Family and Community Services, Foods Product Development, Professional Sales and Marketing, or Training Coordinator.

4. Environmental Education & Earth Sciences — Youth interested in these 4-H projects may be interested in the following careers: Biologist, Natural Resources Systems, Plant Systems, Seed, Fertilizer or Chemical Sales, State and Federal Regulatory Agencies, or Travel and Tourism.

5. Healthy Lifestyles Education — Youth interested in these 4-H projects may be interested in the following careers: Counseling and Mental Health Services, Family and Community Services, Food Chemist, Food Safety Inspector, Restaurant and Food/Beverage Services, or Therapeutic Services.

6. Leadership & Citizenship — Youth interested in these 4-H projects may be interested in the following careers: Early Childhood Development, Family and Community Services, Foreign Service, Professional Support Services, Public Management and Administration, or Teaching/Training.

7. Plant Science — Youth interested in these 4-H projects may be interested in the following careers: Crop Management Consultant, Elevator and Co-op Management, Governmental Service Agencies, Natural Resource Management, Plant and Soil Analysis, or Soil and Water Conservation.

8. Science, Engineering & Technology — Youth interested in these 4-H projects may be interested in the following careers: Environmental Consulting, Government Agencies, Information Support and Services, Printing Technology, Programming and Software Development, Security and Protective Services, or Telecommunications.

## THE COUNTY FAIR

One of the highlights of the year for 4-H members is being able to exhibit their completed projects in the Stanton County Fair, and then hopefully to have their exhibits selected for State Fair Competition!

**When is the fair?** The Stanton County Fair usually starts the third Wednesday in August. As part of the fair, members have an opportunity to compete in a variety of small and large animal shows, a variety of contests as well as enter completed projects for the static exhibits.

**Who can enter the fair?** Any enrolled 4-H member can participate in the fair. The Nebraska Extension in Stanton County Office will make available the fair book in April, which lists all the 4-H classes that can be entered. For the most part, the classes do not change a lot from year to year, so you can look at previous fair books to get ideas for projects to enter in the fair.

### How do we enter exhibits in the fair?

**Static Exhibits:** The process for entering a static exhibit in the fair is simple. At the end of June, each 4-H member will receive a Stanton County Fair Pre-Entry Form in the mail. From class descriptions that are found in the Stanton County Fairbook, 4-Hers will write down what exhibits they are planning to enter in the fair. These pre-entry forms are due back to the Extension Office in the middle of July. See the Pre-Fair Section (colored section) in the Fair Book for pre-fair judging schedule. When 4-Hers bring in their exhibits during fair check-in times, they will pick up their entry tags and take their project to its department. Entry date and times will be printed on the back of the Stanton County Fairbook. It is the responsibility of the 4-Her to bring their exhibits to the fairgrounds on entry day at the posted time.

**Livestock Exhibits:** The Nebraska Extension in Stanton County Office will announce the dates to have project animals tagged/identified. It is your responsibility to properly ID your animals by the deadline. Please watch for further information in Staying in the Loop, the Stanton County 4-H Newsletter.

### How are exhibits judged?

**Static Exhibits:** All static exhibits are judged earning a 1<sup>st</sup> place purple, 2<sup>nd</sup> place blue or 3<sup>rd</sup> place red ribbon. In addition, each project area will select a Grand Champion and Reserve Champion winner. Clover Kid entries are non-competitive and are not judged; each entry receives a Clover Kid ribbon. Youth receive cash premiums based upon the color of ribbon earned. Premium money will be available after the fair.

**Livestock Exhibits:** All livestock exhibits are judged earning a purple, blue or red ribbon. Additional awards will be presented at the time of the livestock show.

**When are exhibits released?** Entries are not released until the fair closes. Early release is not allowed.

### **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR 4-H MEMBERS**

Stanton County 4-H offers many different contests each year. Whenever possible our staff tries to conduct the county contest as similar to the state contest as possible, utilizing the same rules, time allowances and judge's sheets. You can find the complete details, entry forms and judging forms for each contest at the Stanton County website:

[http:// Stanton.unl.edu](http://Stanton.unl.edu)

- **4-H Public Speaking Contest**— Individual entry only. Youth research, write, and present an original speech or Public Service Announcement (PSA). The speech or PSA should relate directly to the participant's 4-H experience. Youth are not allowed to use visual aids for their speech or PSA.
- **4-H Presentations Contest**—Individual or a team of two. Youth research, write and present a presentation on any topic of interest to them. Generally the member will select a topic related to the project they are exploring. Since it is a presentation contest, members will use posters, power point, and other visual aids to "show" the steps to their audience.
- **Fashion Show Contest**—Individual entry only. Youth sew a garment or purchase a garment and model it for the judges. Judging includes clothing construction; modeling, fit, confidence and poise; and how well they respond in an interview process. All participants model their garments for the audience during the culminating 4-H Fashion Show.
- **Livestock Judging Contest**—Individual. Youth learn to judge livestock (sheep, swine, and beef) and at the state contest give oral reasons for their placement.
- **Career Portfolios**—Youth prepare a portfolio summarizing their 4-H experiences using the standardized 4-H Career Portfolio forms. The portfolio forms are available on-line. Competition is held for each curriculum area.
- **Diamond Clover Program**—The program consists of six levels that require a 4-H member to plan and report a broad range of age-appropriate accomplishments. The program's overall goal is to provide 4-H members a rich and diverse learning experience.
- **Shooting Sports Competition**—Individual entry only. Youth who have had instruction from a certified 4-H shooting sports leader can participate. Participants may compete in shooting activities. Youth provide their own equipment for the competition.
- **Camp Scholarships**—Deadlines vary so please read your Stanton County 4-H Newsletter.
- **College Scholarships**—Deadlines vary so please read your Stanton County 4-H Newsletter.



## NEW 4-H MEMBER CHECKLIST

In order to have a successful first year in 4-H, please follow this checklist:

- Choose a 4-H club and contact the leader
- Enroll online at [ne.4honline.com](http://ne.4honline.com)
- Choose 4-H projects
- Purchase 4-H manuals (we have some in the office)
- ID animals by the deadline, if applicable
- Attend 4-H meetings regularly
- Ensure parent involvement in the 4-H club
- Work on 4-H projects and take advantage of county workshops and contests
- Read **Staying in the Loop**, the Stanton County 4-H newsletter, and visit the 4-H website [extension.unl.edu/statewide/stanton/4h/](http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/stanton/4h/), and Facebook [www.facebook.com/Stanton4H](https://www.facebook.com/Stanton4H) page frequently

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