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# Thomas County

K-State Research and Extension News

*Knowledge  
for Life*

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## 4-H Officer Training

Officer Training will be Monday, October 30, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the 4-H Building. We will start off with pizza and conversation then break into groups for the training. Please RSVP to the Extension office with how many slices of pizza you would like by October 27th; \$2 for each slice – includes drink by noon on the day of the training. The October 4-H Council meeting will follow.

## 2023 Program Development Committee Elections

Watch for the ballot being emailed later this month.

The Thomas County Extension Council is responsible for conducting the Extension Program in Thomas County. Each year we elect new members to the Program Development Committees. It is these committees that design the Extension program for Thomas County.

Each Program Development Committee (PDC) consists of six members who serve a two year term. New members from each PDC are elected each year. The entire Extension Council is comprised of 24 members with six members represented from each of the Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H and Youth, and Community Vitality committees.

A ballot will be sent by email, but if more ballots are needed for members in your household, ballots will be available at the Extension office. After marking your ballot, please return it to the Extension Office by mail, by email, or by hand delivery. Ballots will not be accepted after 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 27th, 2023.

The results of our election will be announced at our annual meeting on Thursday, November 2, 2023. At this meeting, the Council shall elect from its own members, nine people to serve on the Executive Board, which consists of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and five other members. The Executive Board has the responsibility for the entire Extension Program in Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H & Youth and Community Vitality.

The problems and needs of people and their communities are in a constant state of change. Extension programs should reflect these changes. It is important, therefore, that the County Extension programs be given careful and continuous attention, so please take time to vote! All Thomas County citizens in your household, 18 years of age and older, are eligible to vote.



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KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

## Moving cold-sensitive plants indoors

As fall weather approaches, it is time to start planning to bring cold-sensitive plants indoors says Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini.

“Some gardeners move houseplants outdoors to bask in the summer heat and recover from the stress of an indoor environment,” Domenghini said. “Planning for their reentry to the house is important so houseplants have time to adjust to the changes in growing conditions.”

Domenghini said the first step is checking for insect pests such as mites and aphids.

“Insect pests can be dislodged by spraying the foliage with a hose,” Domenghini said. “If insects are found in the soil, soak the entire container in lukewarm water for 15 minutes.”



She recommends discarding plants with heavy infestation. Once moved indoors, continue to monitor for pests to prevent spreading throughout the house. Domenghini said plant growth will slow indoors and plants require less water and fertilization.

“Most houseplants will benefit from receiving water only when the soil surface is dry. Fertilization will likely not be necessary until spring,” Domenghini said.

Next steps include helping plants adjust to the lower light conditions indoors gradually to prevent leaf drop.

“Place plants near windows with the brightest light. Over several weeks move the plants further away until they’ve reached the desired location,” Domenghini said.



Supplemental lighting can be provided with grow lights. Domenghini said it is important to avoid cold drafts from doors and windows and heat from air vents. These extremes can put plants under stress.

Many houseplants come from tropical locations and favor humid conditions.

“Kitchens and bathrooms tend to be more humid areas inside the home. If space and lighting permits, this may be a good location for your plants,” Domenghini said. She also recommends grouping plants together to create a microclimate.

## Reasons to Check for Pregnancy in Cattle

When making an important decision, many people prefer to gather as much information as they can to make the most informed choice possible.

For cow-calf producers, knowing the pregnancy status of the cows is important information to have as they decide which animals they are going to keep and which ones they are going to sell, according to the experts at Kansas State University’s Beef Cattle Institute. This was the topic for a recent discussion on the [Cattle Chat](#) podcast.

“As forage availability becomes more limited, pregnancy checking in the first 60 to 90 days of gestation allows producers to make the culling decision sooner rather than later, and that helps keep the feed costs down,” said AJ Tarpoff, K-State Research and Extension beef cattle veterinarian.

Along with knowing if they are pregnant or open (not pregnant), K-State veterinarian Bob Larson also stresses the importance of knowing when the cows are conceived.

“I want as many cows as possible to get pregnant in the first 21 days of the breeding season because they will raise the biggest calves to sell at weaning,” Larson said. He also shared that the cows that calve early are more likely to resume their heat cycles on time for the next breeding season.



Another benefit of bringing the cows off the pasture for pregnancy checking is that producers can also evaluate the body condition of the cows, said K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster.

“Body condition scoring the cows at weaning allows producers to make decisions about how to manage the cows nutritionally ahead of the calving season,” Lancaster said. “At the start of the calving season, mature cows should be at a body condition score between five and six and first calf heifers should be at a body condition score of six.”

If the cows are thin at weaning, there is still time for them to add weight ahead of calving, Lancaster said.

“It is a lot cheaper and easier to put weight on the thin cows going through the fall than in the winter when bad weather can make it a challenge for them to overcome the additional maintenance requirements,” Lancaster said.

## How to Preserve Pumpkins this Fall

It is the beginning of October, which means pumpkins are everywhere, including in popular food and drink items.

When the popular fall treat is used for baking and cooking, Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee says sugar or pie pumpkins are the No. 1 choice.

“They are smaller than pumpkins used for carving festive jack-o-lanterns,” Blakeslee said. “They have dense flesh and high sugar content. The flesh is less stringy and the color is usually darker.”

When cooking, 1 3/4 cups of mashed fresh pie or sugar pumpkin can replace a 15-ounce can of pumpkin.

“Home canning is not recommended for any mashed pumpkin or winter squash. The only directions for canning these are for cubed pieces. Mashed products can be safely frozen,” Blakeslee said.

Mashed pumpkin or winter squash has a thick density in mashed form which prevents adequate heat transfer to the center of the jar. Blakeslee warns of insufficient research to establish a single, safe processing time for mashed pumpkin or winter squash products.

“This can lead to under processing or uneven processing and harmful bacteria can survive after canning,” Blakeslee said. She suggests freezing mashed pumpkin or winter squash as the safest method of preservation.

Some grocery stores sell sugar or pie pumpkins, but Blakeslee recommends looking for U-pick farms that grow pumpkins.

“Before cutting, always rinse with water and scrub the outside of the pumpkin to remove any dirt and debris. Check for damage to the rind such as soft spots or spoilage and remove those spots,” she said.



## Color Changes in Home Canned Foods

Pink, red, blue or light purple discoloration sometimes occurs in home canned apples, cauliflower, pears, peaches or beets.

Keep all produce cool after harvest. When using the hot pack method, do not overcook or heat to too high temperatures. Excessive heat changes natural food pigments. Use correct processing methods and time to reduce discoloration. Pressure canning can be used to can pears. But it can cause pink discoloration in canned pears. Water bath processing is a better method.



If the fruit grew in dry weather, it often turns pink and cannot be prevented. While the color doesn't look right, the pears are safe to eat. Other foods may have color changes.

Garlic can become greenish or purple if it is immature or not completely dry before canning. Red beets may lose color if overcooked before canning or over-processed.

## Drying and Roasting Pumpkin Seeds

It's pumpkin season! When carving your pumpkins, don't toss the seeds. They make a great snack by drying and roasting.

To dry, carefully wash pumpkin seeds to remove the clinging fibrous pumpkin tissue. Pumpkin seeds can be dried in the sun, in an electric dehydrator at 115-120°F for 1 to 2 hours, or in an oven on a very low, warm temperature only, for 3 to 4 hours. Stir them frequently to avoid scorching. Dried seeds should not be stored with any moisture left in them.



To roast the seeds, take dried pumpkin seeds, toss with oil and/or salt and roast in a preheated oven at 250°F for 10 to 15 minutes.



## 48 Hours of 4-H



Join us this fall in seeing just how much we can give back to our communities! The weekend after National 4-H Week is the perfect opportunity to setup a service project and join the **48 Hours of 4-H Service Challenge**, October 7-8, 2023. This year the Thomas County clubs will be providing different community services in their local areas. Register your projects [online](#) and then follow up with a report so Kansas 4-H will see all the great work that happened across the state.

## KYLF

Kansas Youth Leadership Forum will be held November 18-19 at Rock Springs. This event is for youth ages 14-18 before January 1, 2024. It will feature workshops, consulting groups, inspirational speakers, Youth Council Elections, and opportunities to learn and have fun. Registration is due October 16th. Please contact the office if you are interested.

## Photography Shutterbugs Events

Shutterbug events are photography workshops put on across the state by the Kansas State 4-H Photography Action Team. The theme for these workshops is: Spooky Times. Some of the skills that will be taught include- low light shoots, portraits with costumes, and reflections. Attendees are encouraged to wear/bring costumes. In keeping with 4-H Code of Conduct, we ask that no blood or weapons be part of costumes. The events typically end around Noon. Please RSVP to Christy Befort at [clixbychristy@gbta.net](mailto:clixbychristy@gbta.net).



- October 28th: Hays, KS at the Ag. Research Center (Big Creek). Registration begins at 8:30am. Introductions and workshops begin at 9am.
- November 4th: Oskaloosa, KS at Old Jefferson Town. Registration begins at 9am. Introductions and workshops begin at 9:30am.
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## Achievement Banquet

The Achievement Banquet will be held on November 16th in the 4-H building at 6:30pm. This event will showcase the winners of the 2023 Fair and the achievements of 4-H members from this past year.



The meal will be catered this year. Please RSVP to your club leaders at your October meeting to help us better prepare for the banquet.

## Dog Judge Training & Re-Certification

The 2024 Kansas 4-H Dog Judges Training and Recertification will be held in Leavenworth on January 26-28, 2024. If you are a parent or someone who wants to help our 4-H youth with the Dog Project, please consider taking the training. New judges are always needed. Registration deadline is January 15th.

## Save the Date!

Add these dates to your calendar so you don't miss these fun and educational events! More information about these events will be coming soon.

- January 27th- Horse Panorama
- March 2nd- Junior Beef Producer Day
- March 16th- Junior Sheep Producer Day

## Project Leader Training

A Kansas 4-H Volunteer Project Leader Training Series was held last fall. All sessions were recorded for future use. Topics include: Personal Development: Public Speaking; STEM: Rocketry; FCS: Textile Science; Animal Science: Livestock; Service Learning; Financial Literacy; and Ag & Natural Resources: Wildlife. You can find more information on the 4-H [website](#). You can find additional resources for various projects on the 4-H website or you can contact the Extension Office for assistance.





## **Join 4-H Today!**

### **New 4-H Year Begins in October**

October is a month of change in many ways. Fall has begun, weather is cooling down, the leaves are changing, and 4-H is not immune to its influence. October also marks the beginning of the new 4-H year and the opening of member enrollment. Where can youth and parents start if they are interested in enrolling in 4-H and want to learn more about what 4-H has to offer? The following are some questions and answers that can help any prospective members or parents learn more.

#### **What is 4-H?**

4-H is one of America's oldest and largest youth development organizations. It is a volunteer-led, informal education program administered through local county extension offices, state land-grant universities and the USDA. It features nearly 6 million members, rural, suburban, AND urban, throughout all 50 states and some foreign countries.

#### **What does 4-H offer?**

- Leadership opportunities for youth at the local and state level.
- Recognition for work and achievement through fairs, scholarships, awards, and more.
- Opportunity to participate in county, regional, state, and national events, including camps, educational programming, leadership positions, and conferences.
- Decision-making skills and opportunities through participation in club meetings, community service, and project work.

#### **What makes 4-H different from other youth development organizations?**

- **Self-determination** — Youth decide what projects they want to participate in, as well as how their clubs operate and support members and the community they live in. 4-H is the only youth development organization where members actually decide how it operates.
- **Experiential learning** — Members actively participate in their interest areas. Want to learn

about insects? Start a bug collection in the entomology project. Like to work with your hands? Build a rocket in rocketry or a table in woodworking projects. Learn to bake your favorite pie in foods and nutrition project. Interested in something that isn't an official project? No problem! Enter the Self-Determined project and come up with your own unique creation.

- **Research-based support from local, state and national experts** — 4-H is administered in Kansas through K-State Research and Extension, giving 4-H members, volunteers, and leaders access to the latest data in research and youth development.

#### **Why 4-H?**

A better question might be "Why not 4-H?"

A recent study of 4-H members across Kansas showed some positive results in areas of decision making, leadership, communication, and citizenship.

- 95% are comfortable making their own decisions
- 89% don't succumb to peer pressure
- 96% reported they can make a difference through community service
- 95% reported an increased effort to allow everyone to have a voice.

Who wouldn't want youths to be better leaders, citizens, communicators, and make better decisions? So I ask again, why not 4-H?

#### **Joining 4-H**

If you, or someone you know, is interested in joining 4-H, contact the Thomas County K-State Research and Extension office at 785-460-4582.

You can also learn more about joining and the different clubs in Thomas County by going to our [website](#). Feel free to contact Club Leaders to get a feel for how you might fit into that club.

You can also Follow us on Facebook @Thomas County Extension/4-H.

**Please note: 4-H Online Registration will be open for enrollment on October 1st. It has been updated to the 2.0 version. If you have any issues with re-enrollment please contact the office and we can assist you.**





## Volunteers

It's that time again and we need your help!! The enrollment date for adult volunteers is the same as that for 4-H members, October 1st. Returning volunteers will need to re-enroll on 4-H Online and verify their information just like returning 4-H members. If you are a new volunteer, please contact the office so we can get the forms and instructions to you. Call Laurel or Joanna at (785) 460-4582 or email [joannajohnson@ksu.edu](mailto:joannajohnson@ksu.edu).

*\*\*\*If you know someone who would be a great resource for our 4-H members to learn from, (friend, community member, etc.) please contact the office. We are always looking for new project leaders and volunteers.\*\*\**

## Club Attendance

For the 2023-2024 year, 4-H members wishing to participate in the livestock auction are required to attend 5 club meetings and complete the YQCA training between the months of August 2023 and July 2024. Members must attend meetings for the club they are enrolled in on 4-H Online. Business must be conducted at the meeting in order for the meeting to qualify for attendance. College students who enroll in 4-H for their final year must still attend 5 meetings and complete the YQCA training either in person or by technology such as Skype or Zoom.

Club members and leaders can check their attendance record by checking the BAND group. Club leaders or a designated club member should send attendance sign-in sheets to Joanna after each meeting to ensure timely record-keeping. Sign-in sheets can be dropped off at the office or emailed to [joannajohnson@ksu.edu](mailto:joannajohnson@ksu.edu).

## Schedules & Calendars



A new 4-H year began October 1, and with that our 4-H community club leaders and project program leaders are developing their schedule of events and activities. Please contact the Thomas County Extension Office at 785-460-4582 with the dates and locations of your meetings and events. Our office has a calendar posted on our website for your convenience. If you have a meeting or event you would like us to add, or if you make changes to regularly scheduled meetings, please let us know. This will help us keep an updated calendar and will help ensure you get the dates you need for the 4-H Building without scheduling conflicts.

This is a reminder that we get use of the building without a fee through the Thomas County Fair Board, so we need to appreciate their gracious offer. There are times when that building is rented to the public and that revenue is used for maintenance expenses.

This is also a good time to remind 4-H leaders that the building needs to be cleaned after each use, even if that means someone before you did a poor job of cleaning. Having our 4-H members clean the building after each use teaches responsible behavior. Leaving the building cleaner when we leave than when we arrive shows our appreciation and mature attitude.

A thank you note to the Fair Board for their support during the fair and for the use of the building would be a great way to show appreciation. The Extension staff wish you a great new 4-H year. Thank you!



# October 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Enrollment opens on 4-H Online 	2 AH—Meeting @ 4-H Bldg. 7pm					7 48 Hours of 4-H 
8 48 Hours of 4-H 	9 BPG—Meeting @ Henry Hall 7:30pm GEM—Meeting @ Gem Comm. Bldg. 7pm SV— Meeting @ 4-H Bldg. 7pm	10	11	12 Fairboard Mtg. @ 8pm	13	14
15	16 KYLF Registration due	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Shutterbugs Event in Hays
29	30 Officer Training 4-H Council Mtg. @ 4-H Bldg. 6pm 	31 Halloween 				
					PP = Pawsome Paws SS = Shooting Sports AH = Abilene Hustlers	BPG = Brewster Prairie Gem Gem = Gem 4-H SV = Solomon Valley



# **K-STATE**

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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>**

**Check us out on Facebook & Twitter:**

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



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