

WEST PLAINS EXTENSION DISTRICT



NEWSLETTER

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ATTENTION!



**DO YOU LIKE WORKING WITH YOUTH AND ADULTS?
DO YOU ENJOY THE FAIR?
IF SO, WE WOULD LOVE FOR YOU TO APPLY!**

The West Plains District is hiring summer Interns for our Garden City office.

Start time is negotiable.
\$15.50 per hour.
Please send your Cover Letter and Resume to ccrouch@ksu.edu. For more info, please call 620-272-3670.
Must be 18 yrs or older.
Have a valid drivers license.
Pass a background check.
Scan the QR Code for Job Description





West Plains
District

OFFICE HOURS:
MONDAY - FRIDAY | 8 AM - 5 PM

FINNEY COUNTY OFFICE:
620-272-3670

SCOTT COUNTY OFFICE:
620-872-2930

OFFICE PROFESSIONALS:
COZETTA O'DEA



JANET HARKNESS
4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
JLP27@KSU.EDU

CAROL ANN CROUCH

DISTRICT DIRECTOR
CCROUCH@KSU.EDU



LAUREN LITTON
AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
LITTON@KSU.EDU



UPCOMING DISTRICT EVENTS

Print or screenshot this page to keep up to date with all of our upcoming activities!
(* indicates a pre-registration is required.)

May

- 5/1 - Re-Enrollment/Enrollment Deadline for County/State Fair 4-H Division Participation
- 5/1 - 4-H Project Selection Deadline for County Fair Participation
- 5/1 - Camp Lakeside and Camp Wild Adventure Registrations Due
- 5/1 - Market Beef Online Nominations Due & DNA Postmarked
- 5/2 - 4-H Ambassadors @ Safe Kids Day, Patton Park
- 5/9 - Cattle Hoof Trimming, Finney County Fairgrounds, beginning at 8 am. \$35 per animal trimmed
- 5/11 - WPED Board Meeting, 6 pm, Scott County Extension Office
- 5/13 - WM Carpenter 4-H Foundation Board Meeting, 6:30 am, Scott County Extension Office
- 5/18 - Fi Co Cloverbuds, 6 pm, Fi Co 4-H Building
- 5/18 - Fi Co 4-H Council Mtg, 7 pm, 4-H Building
- 5/27 - 4-H Camp Counselor Training, 10 am - 2 pm, Garden City

June

- 6/2 - 4-H Food Safety Training, 12:15 pm & 5: 15 pm, Scott County Extension Office
- 6/3 - 6/5 - Discovery Days @ K-State
- 6/8 - 6/9 - Camp Lakeside
- 6/10 - 6/12 - Camp Wild Adventure
- 6/10 - Finney County Fair Entries Open via Showman App
- 6/13 - Registration deadline for Centennial & Key Award Delegates for National 4-H Congress
- 6/29 - 4-H Council Meeting, 6:15 pm, WM Carpenter Building

*Meat judging practices are held every Monday (unless specified otherwise)

*Livestock judging practices held every Tuesday (unless specified otherwise)

Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider and provider.

This institution is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Language access requests and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, and American Sign Language) " may be requested by contacting the district office at 620-872-2930 four weeks prior to the start of the event. Requests received less than 4 weeks from the date of the event will be honored as feasible to do so." Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request."

2026 West Plains District Executive Board Members

Clint Pearson, Scott County

Sara Gleason, Finney County

Tammy Hutcheson, Finney County

Duane Strine, Scott County

Anne Lampe, Scott County

Jolene Baker, Finney County

Erica Stephens, Scott County

Jill George, Finney County

Please reach out to either office for contact information.



The West Plains District Offices will have modified times going forward until further notice.

Please watch the District's Facebook page for updated weekly office hours. Calls will roll to the available office between 8-noon and 1-5, with a few exceptions.



Interested in judging a County Fair?

Have a passion for sewing, photography, visual arts, woodworking, pets, horses, electricity, fashion, public speaking, etc?

Reach out to the Finney or Scott office to see how you could become a judge of one of these events during a county fair in KS!



FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



Making meals at home can boost health, save money

Families juggling busy schedules often put mealtime low on the priority list, but experts say cooking at home can pay off in healthier habits, stronger relationships and even reduced stress.

Christina Holmes, a family and consumer sciences specialist in Kansas State University Extension's southeast region, said the key to at-home meal prep is being intentional.

"This time of year is especially busy for families as they juggle work, athletic practices, track meets, and various end-of-school-year activities," Holmes said. "With so many evening commitments, family dinner can easily become an afterthought."

Listen to an interview by Jeff Wichman with Christina Holmes and Cloe Mills on the weekly radio program, [Sound Living](#), produced by K-State Extension

Holmes said even small changes -- such as adding one extra home-cooked meal per week -- can have meaningful benefits. "Making it an intentional effort to plan ahead to eat more meals at home can be beneficial for the family's health, for your finances, and reduce stress throughout the week," she said.

Research highlighted in the publication [Healthy Connections: Family Meals in a Snap](#) -- available online from the [K-State Extension bookstore](#) -- shows that families who eat at home tend to consume more fruits and vegetables and have better control over portion sizes, calories and sodium.

"When you eat meals at home, you have a better control of what you're eating and how much you're consuming," Holmes said. "Sometimes, when you go out to eat, they give you more portions than what you actually need, and it's tempting to overeat."

Cloe Mills, an intern in the southeast region and a graduate student in dietetics, said home cooking also provides transparency about ingredients.

"One of the biggest benefits of eating at home is knowing what's actually going in your food," Mills said. "When you're eating out, much of what you are eating is processed foods, which generally have much higher sodium, along with higher calories and higher saturated fats."

Beyond nutrition, Holmes said family meals can positively affect emotional and social well-being, particularly for children.

"When we're consuming those meals at home, we're seeing decreased rates of depression and violence in adolescence, along with decreased risk of disordered eating patterns," she said. "A lot of that comes from...sitting with your family at the table and spending that time together."

Involving children in meal preparation can also support development. Tasks like measuring ingredients, problem-solving substitutions and communicating in the kitchen help build life skills.

"It gives them experience with fractions, communication skills and problem-solving," Holmes said. "It also gives them the opportunity to develop a relationship with their parent or guardian."

Still, experts acknowledge that cooking at home can feel overwhelming. Holmes encourages families to start small and build gradually.

"If the family sees meal planning and meal prepping as a burden, it's not going to be something that's sustainable long term," she said. "Focus on one meal at a time." Planning ahead is another key strategy. Holmes suggests reviewing the family's weekly schedule to identify busy nights and plan accordingly.

"It's not realistic to prepare a gourmet feast on a night that you're not going to get home until 8:30," she said. "So look at those evenings and plan something quick or prepare ahead of time, like using a slow cooker."

Leftovers can also simplify mealtime. Preparing larger portions or double batches allows families to reuse meals throughout the week or freeze them for later. "You're only spending time in your kitchen once to feed your family twice," Holmes said.

Stocking a pantry with staple ingredients and nonperishable items -- such as canned goods and frozen vegetables -- can make it easier to prepare meals quickly while staying on budget. Holmes also recommends shopping sales to stretch grocery dollars. Mills said setting realistic goals is essential for long-term success. "If you try to start out with a huge goal and it doesn't go well, then you feel less motivated to continue," she said. "Start with a small goal, and the more you do it, the more comfortable you become."

She added that involving children in age-appropriate tasks -- from choosing recipes to writing grocery lists -- can make the process more engaging and meaningful. And remember: Home-cooked meals do not need to be elaborate.

"It doesn't mean you have to spend lots of time preparing a gourmet meal," Holmes said. "We want to focus on the time together and trying to get a variety of food groups on the plate."

More information on nutrition, child development and many other topics is available at [K-State Extension offices in Kansas](#).

K-State Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the wellbeing of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan. For more information, visit www.ksre.ksu.edu. K-State Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



K-State food scientist outlines proper ways to prepare infant formula

Proper preparation and storage of infant formula is critical to protecting infant health, yet common mistakes can increase the risk of foodborne illness, according to Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee.

Prepared infant formula can quickly become unsafe if not handled correctly. Blakeslee recommends using formula within two hours of preparation and within one hour once feeding begins. Any remaining formula should be discarded after feeding due to potential bacterial growth from contact with a baby's saliva.

"Prepared infant formula can spoil if it is left out at room temperature," Blakeslee said. "To prevent spoiling, it's important to follow time and storage guidelines closely."

In addition to timing, proper cleaning and storage practices are essential. Caregivers are encouraged to:

- Wash hands before preparation.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize bottles and feeding equipment.
- Refrigerate unused formula within two hours.
- Opened powdered formula should be stored in a cool, dry place -- not the refrigerator -- and used within one month.

Food safety concerns also extend to potential contamination risks, including Cronobacter infection, a rare but serious illness that can be linked to powdered infant formula. The bacteria can live in dry foods and water and may be introduced during manufacturing or preparation at home. Infants who are premature, ill or have weakened immune systems are at greater risk.

"Following proper preparation steps is one of the best ways caregivers can reduce risk," Blakeslee said.

Common mistakes include improper handwashing, failing to sanitize bottles, incorrectly mixing formula and leaving prepared formula at room temperature too long. Carefully following label directions and storage recommendations can help prevent these issues.

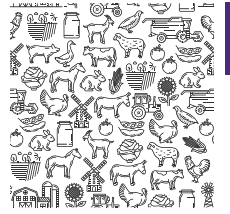
To further support caregivers, new educational videos from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide step-by-step guidance on safe formula preparation. These visual resources aim to improve understanding by demonstrating best practices in an easy-to-follow format.

"Videos are especially helpful for visual learners and make it easier to share food safety information digitally," Blakeslee said.

For more information on safe infant formula handling, caregivers are encouraged to consult resources from the CDC and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Information on food safety and other topics is also available at local K-State Extension offices in Kansas.

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For more information & to register scan the QR Code



AgManager.info

Winning the Game Grain Marketing Webinars

A monthly webinar series that helps Kansas farmers develop effective 2026 grain marketing plans for Kansas crops. Register by scanning the QR Code.

Volatile grain markets may provide Kansas farmers and agribusiness with the opportunity to price 2026 crops at or above breakeven costs. This webinar will help Kansas farmers develop effective 2026 grain marketing plans for Kansas crops.

This webinar will be presented by Daniel O'Brien and Guy Allen from Kansas State University.

2026 "Winning the Game" Grain Marketing Webinar
MAY UPDATE
May 4, 2026
12:00-1:00 pm CT

If you are unable to attend the live meeting, a recording of the presentation will be available afterward.

No fee, but registration required:
REGISTER

This is the May 2026 update of this monthly series.



Causes of Yellow Wheat

Scan this QR Code for an article on yellow wheat due to Soil Fertility Factors



Scan this QR Code for an article on yellow wheat due to Weather & Disease Factors





2026 4-H Geology State Field Trip – June 12 - 14 Southeast Kansas

Registration Deadline May 15th, 2026 – No late registrations

The headquarters for the 2026 4-H State Geology Field Trip is at Parsons Middle School, located at 2719 Main Street, Parsons, Kansas.

This trip will focus on the Tri-State Mining District, the Southeast Kansas Coal Mining Area, and the Silver City Dome Mining Area. We will be collecting specimens from the Pennsylvanian and Mississippian age rocks of the Cherokee Lowlands and Osage Cuestas. Registration is \$10 per person. Every family member who attends the trip must register, including ages 0-150. Field Trip t-shirts can be purchased for \$20. Exhibit boxes made of various woods and prices are also available. Cedar is \$55, and all other woods offered are \$65. T-shirts and exhibit boxes need to be purchased through the online registration system. We will have a variety of educational publications for sale through the Kansas Geological Survey, as well as glass vials and plastic mag box specimen containers. Publications and specimen containers will be available for purchase at the field trip headquarters.

Big Brutus will be our lunch stop on Saturday, the 13th. Participants may choose to enter the museum and Big Brutus grounds here with a group discount charge of \$4.00 per person, or pay at the door for those who choose to view Big Brutus up close. There will be no charge for picnicking in the Big Brutus Parking Area. Participants will also be able to visit the Joplin Tri-State Mineral Museum near our last stop of the day on Saturday, free of charge, by showing your group badge. The museum will be open until 5:00 pm on Saturday.

Friday, June 12: Registration and judging contest will begin at 4:00 pm at the trip headquarters. No supper will be provided. The formal meeting will start at 6:00 pm with general information and orientation. Following the meeting, we plan to have a guest speaker. We will break into workshops afterward, including Fossil ID, Mineral ID, Lapidary, and Geology 101.

Saturday, June 13: Registration will resume at 7:00 am. The group meeting will be at 7:30 am at headquarters. Make sure to have a full tank of fuel in your vehicle. We plan to depart at 8:00 am for our first stop. Everyone should have a picnic lunch and drinks for the day. Saturday evening events, held at the headquarters (Parsons Middle School), include quiz bowl, judging contest, and specimen identification. Supper is on your own.

Sunday, June 14: We will begin cleaning the headquarters at 6:45 am. Headquarters will be put in order at 7:30 am. The group meeting will be at 8:00 am, and we will depart at 8:30 am. Everyone should have a picnic lunch and drinks for the day, and a full tank of fuel.

4-H Leaders and Junior Leaders interested in helping on the field trip, please contact one of the leaders below. We will have a different colored t-shirt for the trip leaders and junior leaders again this year. You will need to purchase your shirts.

Indoor camping is offered at Parsons Middle School, and outdoor camping is also available nearby.

For additional information:

Kim Viets Sue Williams

mkviets@ckt.net swift_surfer@yahoo.com

Cell -620-724-0288 620-288-0571

This institution is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Language access requests and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, and American Sign Language), may be requested by contacting the event contact, Chandra Plate, four weeks prior to the start of the event at 620-388-7157. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider and employer



2026 KANSAS 4-H GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP REGISTRATION OPEN

When: June 12-14th 2026

Where: Southeast with Headquarters at Parsons Middle School

Registration Deadline: May 15th

K-STATE Research and Extension

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. Kansas Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



West Plains 4-H Super Saturday NW Judging Contest Results

Contest held on March 21st in Hays, KS



West Plains 4-H Super Saturday NW Judging Contest Results:
Contest held March 21 in Hays, KS

Maya V. – 13th Photography Judging, 15th Intermediate Geology Judging

WP Sr 4-H Crops Judging Team – Kennan M, Kamryn M, Grady V – 1st Team

Grady V. – 1st Sr

Kennan – 10th Sr

Kealie B – 4th Sr Wildlife Judging, 14th Sr Life Skills

Kamryn M – 6th Sr Photography Judging

Grady V – 11th Sr Photography Judging

WP Sr 4-H Livestock Judging Team – Kealie B, Kennan M, Kamryn M, Grady V – 1st Team

Kealie B – 18th Sr Individual

Brayson M – 26th Sr Individual

Kamryn M – 1st Sr Individual

Grady V – 12th Sr Individual

Kennan M – 8th Sr Individual

Hailey U – 28th Sr Individual



Livestock Judging

Maya V – 28th Intermediate Individual

Audrey B – 36th Intermediate Individual

Kinley U – 25th Intermediate Individual

Livestock Skill-A-Thon

Maya V – 5th Jr Individual

WP Sr 4-H Livestock Skill-A-Thon Team – Kealie B, Kennan M, Kamryn M, Grady V – 1st Team

Grady V – 1st Sr Individual

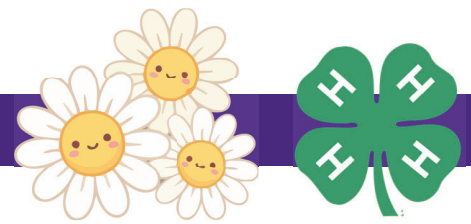
Kealie B – 2nd Sr Individual

Kennan M – 3rd Sr Individual

Kamryn M – 11th Sr Individual

Brayson M – 12th Sr Individual





STATE LIVESTOCK NOMINATION



BEEF

APRIL 8

SMALL LIVESTOCK

MAY 6



GRAND DRIVE & KJLS IMPORTANT DATES

April 20	Last Day to Order Beef DNA Envelopes
May 1	Market Beef Nominations Due Online & DNA Postmarked
June 5	Last Day to Order Small Livestock DNA Envelopes
June 15	Small Livestock Nominations Due Online & DNA Postmarked -Market Swine, Commercial Breeding Gilt -Market Lamb, Commercial Breeding Ewe -ALL Meat Goat (<i>Market & Breeding</i>)
	Commercial Heifer Nominations Due Online & DNA Postmarked Registered Breeding Heifer Papers in Exhibitor's Name Registered Steer Papers in Exhibitor's Name Registered Breeding Gilt Papers in Exhibitor's Name
July 1	Registered Breeding Ewe Papers in Exhibitor's Name
July 15	Kansas State Fair Grand Drive Entry Deadline
July 25	Kansas State Fair Grand Drive Late Entry Deadline
August 15	KJLS Entry Deadline
August 31	KJLS Late Entry Deadline
Sept. 11-13	Kansas State Fair Grand Drive
Oct. 2-4	KJLS

*All market animals must be nominated to be eligible for either show, regardless of breed or gender.
 **All commercial breeding females must be nominated to be eligible for either show.
 ***Registered breeding females must be in the exhibitor's name by the appropriate date to be eligible for either show. Refer to show rules for details.
 ****All meat goats, including market, commercial breeding does, and registered breeding does must be nominated to be eligible for either show.

<http://bit.ly/ksunominations> <https://www.kansasstatefair.com/p/competitions/grand-drive1> <http://www.kjls.net/>

For any 4-H-related event, please check with the Extension offices to see if transportation will be provided.

Looking for College \$?? Consider joining 4-H!

Join in 8th Grade, remain a member through graduation and qualify as a member in good standing for \$12,000 in interest-free student loans through the William Carpenter 4-H Foundation Student Loan Program!

For more information, contact Janet at the Extension Office, jlj27@ksu or 620-872-2930.

4-H...It just makes cents!





SCOTT COUNTY 4-H FOUNDATION

JOIN THE 4-H TEAM

WILLIAM CARPENTER 4-H FOUNDATION SUMMER INTERNSHIP

- *Work in a FUN, hands-on, team environment with Scott County youth.
- *Must be age 19 by the beginning of the program in May
- *Pay is \$15.00 per hour/30 hour flexible workweek.
- *Applicants have until May 20, 2026, to apply. Position will remain open until filled. Start date of June 1, 2026
- * Interviews will take place during the month of May.
- *Responsibilities will include: summer 4-H youth site programming, 4-H Clinics and Camps, County Fair help.
- *Teach YOUR passion!



The 4-H Facebook pages will be merged into a single West Plains 4-H page by June 1st!

Please go through and get any photos off the Finney County 4-H or Scott County 4-H page you would like by May 31st!



CLUB REPORTS:

FINNEY COUNTY 4-H HAPPY HUSTLERS

April 12, 2026, Reporter's Report

A Spring Meeting

On Apr.12, 2026, the Happy Hustlers met for their April meeting. Hailey and Kinley did a team project talk on how to full fit a steer. We sang "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" and played a hula-hoop relay. We also collected items to donate to the Finney County Humane Society. Hailey and Kinley brought spring cookies for all of the club to enjoy.

FINNEY COUNTY 4-H WIDE AWAKE

The monthly meeting of the Wide Awake 4H club was held at the 4H building on Monday, March 9, 2026. We started off the meeting by answering "what are your plans for spring break?" for roll call. A lot of our members are staying home and working with their livestock. Tonight was parents' night. Amanda Hands gave the treasure's report and gave us a parliamentary tip. She also informed us that beef tagging is coming up. It was fun to see all the parents do the job of their kid! We made posters about 4H to display around the community promoting 4H! Jill Schmeackle gave us a devotional; Gentry Hands read a current event about oil prices and parent Jill Sowers lead us in the song "Old McDonald." We then moved on to project talks. Harper Sowers talked about her pigs, Colton Fryman talked to us about his many lambs, Jackie showed us her beautiful quilt that she made. Cort Baker discussed his forage crop project and showed us some hay and Rilynn White ended the talks by teaching us about her goat project. We have some really talented 4Her's in our club! At the end of our meeting with played a really fun game called 4 Corners. We hope everyone has a great spring break!

Submitted by Gentry Hands

FINNEY COUNTY 4-H FINNEY FLYERS

March Report

The March meeting of the Finney Flyers 4-H club was held on Sunday, March 1, 2026. The meeting was called to order by President Abby. Ten members answered roll call. The minutes from the February meeting were read and approved.

The club fundraiser was discussed. The date has been changed to Saturday, March 14. Everyone should arrive at 9:00 and bring three bake goods per member.

Kim announced the club day results. Camp Lakeside and Wild Adventure registration opens March 1. There will be YQCA meetings on March 10 and March 17.

The members present enjoyed a club activity at Escape the Clock. Everyone had a great time

Next month's meeting will be on April 12 at 4:00. The meeting was adjourned.

KJ Plunkett
Reporter
Finney Flyers



CLUB REPORTS:

FINNEY COUNTY 4-H KOURAGEOUS KIDS

March Report

The Kourageous Kids 4-H Club gathered for a lively March meeting filled with teamwork, leadership, and service. Members kicked things off with pledges and a fun roll call, bringing plenty of energy and laughter to the room.

After taking care of a few quick club updates, the group looked ahead to exciting opportunities like 4-H Camp and an upcoming meeting at a special location.

The highlight of the afternoon came after the meeting, when members rolled up their sleeves to give back—assembling donated children’s items into CASA bags. The project was a meaningful way to end the day, showing the club’s commitment to helping others and making a difference in their community.

Braeden Boyd- Club Reporter

April Report

The Kourageous Kids 4-H Club gathered at Magic’s Hope for a meeting that mixed business with a big dose of heart. Members kicked things off with the pledges and a fun roll call featuring creative horse names, then zipped through club updates, celebrations, and upcoming 4-H events.

After a quick business meeting, the group got to work giving back—teaming up under Jennifer Standley’s direction to support Magic’s Hope. Members rolled up their sleeves to help with the horses and lend a hand around the facility, turning an ordinary meeting into a meaningful day of community service and teamwork.

Braeden Boyd- Club Reporter

FINNEY COUNTY 4-H BEACON BOOSTERS

March Report

The Beacon Boosters March meeting was called to order on March 11, 2026. There were 9 members and 9 parents present. The club was reminded of the YQCA dates for livestock members to complete. Nomination dates for state fair were explained to the club. They also discussed the information about Camp Lakeside and Wild Adventure. Audrey and Kealie did their project talk on goats. The next meeting will be held on April 22, 2026.

The reporter’s report was submitted to the Garden City Telegram, Finney County Extension Office, and the Beacon Booster’s Facebook page on April 28, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Brock Cogan, Reporter

April Report

The Beacon Boosters March meeting was called to order on April 22, 2026. There were 10 members, 9 parents and 1 guest present. The club was informed that fair entries will be done through the Showman App this year. Reminders about small animal tagging were discussed. The members voted to hold a pulled pork fundraiser in August. To help our guest understand 4-H better each member spoke about different projects that 4-H has to offer. The next meeting will be held on May 13, 2026.

The reporter’s report was submitted to the Garden City Telegram, Finney County Extension Office, and the Beacon Booster’s Facebook page on April 28, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Brock Cogan, Reporter

