

# 2026 4-H Show NEWSLETTER



## Whiteside County

### Dear 4-H Family,

It may be hard to believe, but 2/3 of the 4-H year is already behind you! By now you have probably grown familiar with how your club meetings work, what it means to “take a project,” and have made some new friends in your clubs.

At present, the big buzz at your club meetings is probably “THE 4-H SHOW.” For some of you, this may have had a familiar ring to it when your club leaders discussed the Show books, reviewed judging schedules, and mentioned registration deadlines. However, you may be wondering how to figure out what your family members actually need to do, how you are going to keep the schedules straight, and why you need to register for the Show anyway. Didn't you already sign up for the fair when you picked out projects? (Hint: The answer is “no.” See the Show Registration heading to the right for more details.)

4-H Shows/Fairs are held nation-wide to give members the opportunity to exhibit products that have resulted from their in-depth yearlong project studies. They are places for members to share the amazing information they learned and show off what they can do now as a result of that learning! They are places where project-area experts and members can visit with each other to learn from and challenge one another! 4-H Shows bring members from all over the county together to develop, support and encourage one another. 4-H Shows teach valuable life lessons, and, ultimately, they are celebrations of great accomplishments!

It is very important for your family to understand the true purpose of the 4-H Show. Think of the Show as the next step in a member's project learning experience. Take this time to rejoice over your child's intellectual gains, skills attained, and the differences that were made as a result! It is up to your family to make this understanding the root of all you say and do during the days leading up to, following, and during the 4-H Show.

It's true that we distribute ribbons and other special awards at the fair. These have been a long-time tradition and have been known to be very powerful motivators when it comes to getting kids to “do their best!” What kid doesn't want to win an award or a rosette?

The very same awards that build kids' spirits up, however, also have the potential of breaking their spirits down. When friends and family get caught up in the desire to win, they sometimes say and do things that can turn the 4-H Show experience into something negative for the 4-H members. So, instead of emphasizing the awards kids get, try to highlight what they learned from the judges, or were intrigued by in the other exhibits. Please be proactive. Be positive role models for your children and help them take the high road as good sports whether they “win the awards” or not.

Wishing you personal victories as you finish this year's project studies,

Your Whiteside County 4-H Staff



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### HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT TO EXHIBIT?

The Show book, which can be found on our website and in your Friday update emails, will be your guide. It will explain specifically what you can show for each project area you are enrolled in.

### SHOW REGISTRATION

When you enroll in 4-H, you sign up for particular projects you are interested in finding out more about. Registering for the fair means identifying which class exhibits you will create in your project areas to show what you learned.

### CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE SHOW?

Most 4-H exhibits are “conference judged.” This means that judges will talk with 4-H'ers to learn how their exhibits came to be and what else members did in their project areas. As a result, members should try to attend judging.

If you have a big conflict, however, don't worry! You can still show non-animal exhibits. You will just need to fill out a special report form that asks you some of the same questions the judges will be asking those who can attend. It will help them rate your exhibit fairly.

**\*\* You must contact office ahead of time and get a SHOW ABSENTEE FORM**

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need reasonable accommodations to participate in 4-H programs, call 815/632-3611. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.

## Zsuite vs. Fairentry- Registering for the Show



# Zsuite vs. Fair Entry

In Illinois 4-H, we utilize two online systems. Zsuite and Fair Entry

This summary aims to help clarify the purpose of both systems and why both are a necessary part of your 4-H experience.

### ZSUITE

- This is our enrollment system and your first point of contact when enrolling in a 4-H club, workshop, or opportunity.
- This is the system that gathers contact information, as well as club and project information.
- Once completed, your child is enrolled in Illinois 4-H.
- This system gives our Staff an idea of what project areas members are interested in so we can plan programming and events.
- This information also helps us to know target groups for sharing specific deadlines and project requirements.

### FAIR ENTRY

- This is our 4-H Fair project sign-up system
- This system is not utilized until mid-May.
- In this system you will select the projects you EXPECT to bring to the fair.
- Information from this system allows us to plan for shows, determine how many trophies and ribbons may be needed, and what areas we need judges for.

## 4-H Show "set up" & Project Check in

**SET UP:** Monday, June 29, at 5:30 PM— This is when we will sweep out buildings, set up tables, chairs, table covers, project signs, etc. We will also clean out and set up the Poultry/Rabbit barn. Pizza and water will be available—please sign up so we know how much to get. The sign up link is in ZSuite under events or scan the QR code to the Right! ----->

### 4-H SHOW GENERAL PROJECT CHECK-IN:

Project Check-in Friday, July 12, two time options— This is when you drop off your general projects and sign up for a judging time slot.

1. 7:00 - 8:30 AM
2. 3:00 - 4:30 PM

\*Morning of Saturday, July 13, Horticulture, Floriculture, Cake Decorating and Foods projects can be checked in.

## SHOW/FAIR ENTRIES

**DUE JUNE 15**

Quick Instructions for new families:

- Go to [Fairentry.com](http://Fairentry.com)
- Find-Whiteside County
- Create an account
- Begin registration
- Click individual
- Create an exhibitor
- Fill in the information asked
- **CONFIRM** you entered your address correctly as premium checks are distributed based on this address!!
- Continue to Entries
- Add entry (choose which projects you want.
- For more than one kid- click register another exhibitor!
- Repeat steps then click green SUBMIT!

**Scan QR Code for detailed instructions and pictures for [Fairentry.com](http://Fairentry.com)**



# So Many Ribbons - What do they all mean?

4-H'ers who exhibit at the Shows receive ribbons for each of their entries. The judges assign ribbons based on how much they feel members have learned, the quality of the exhibit being displayed, and how well the member followed the exhibit guidelines for their project. A major reason 4-H'ers get marked down during judging is because they fail to follow the rules and meet the exhibit class guidelines.

The ribbons that are assigned are blue, red, or white. If you receive a blue rating, it means that the judge felt that your exhibit met the class guidelines, the exhibit shown is of high quality, and you demonstrated that you learned a lot in the process of completing the project. If you receive a white rating, it means that the judge felt that your exhibit did not clearly meet class guidelines, the exhibit is of poor quality, or you appear to have learned little in completing the project. The judge will assign red ratings for exhibits falling in between the two extremes. There is no limit on the number of ribbons of any color that can be given out by the judge.

There are other ribbons/awards that will be given to 4-H'ers at the discretion of the judges and the 4-H staff member. They are as follows:

- \*Purple Rosettes - Champion
- \*Pink Rosettes - Reserve Champion
- \*Larger Yellow - Best of Show
- \*Larger Pink - Reserve Best of Show
- \*Red/White/Blue Ribbon - Top of Class
- \*Teal Rosettes - Selected For State Fair
- \*Light Blue Rosettes - Selected As State Fair Alternate
- \*Lime Green Ribbons- Outstanding Presenter
- \*Green Ribbons - Cloverbud Participation



# What is Conference Judging?

When you take non-animal exhibits to the 4-H Show to be judged, you will go through a process called conference judging. During conference judging, you will visit with a judge about the exhibit you made and the rest of the work you did in your project this past year. This will help him or her decide how much you have learned and what ribbon color you've earned.

Because many 4-H'ers will need to meet with a limited number of judges, it is likely that you will have to wait in line to see judges on judging day. Waiting will require patience. But it is merited if you want the judges to give you the same attention when it's your turn to talk.

## When are awards and ribbons presented?

### **Ribbons:**

Ribbons are placed on General projects after judging and can be picked up during project pick up Saturday, July 11 between 4:30-5:30 PM

Livestock and Small animal ribbons are either handed out after each class or at the end of judging depending on the judge discretion.

### **Other Awards/Prizes:**

Will be presented at our "4-H Celebration" will be the first Wednesday evening in November at St. Peters Church in Morrison.

This evening is full of celebrating the previous year 4-H program, 4-H Show, Celebrating members outstanding achievements and our wonderful 4-H volunteers. All 4-H Families are invited for an evening with dinner and fun provided.

### **4-H Show: Things to do while you wait**

- Visit the Garden Plain Ripsnorters club
- BAKE SALE
- \*\*bring your cash\*\*
- Games & Activities in the Brown Building
- Duck Hunt- Search for hidden mini ducks to win prizes
- Clover Hunt- Search for laminated 4-H Clovers to win prizes
- View project areas
- Bid on the 4-H Support Funds Silent Auction items
- Bring a ball or chalk and play on the lawn of the fairgrounds

# REQUIRED FOR: Beef, Dairy, Goats, Sheep & Swine

# YQCA

## YOUTH FOR THE QUALITY CARE OF ANIMALS

[yqcaprogram.org](http://yqcaprogram.org)

YQCA is a national multi-species quality assurance program for youth ages 8 to 21 with a focus on three core pillars:

-  Food Safety
-  Animal Well-being
-  Character Development



If you are planning to show any of the following: **BEEF, DAIRY, GOATS, SHEEP, or SWINE**, you must complete the *Youth for Quality Care of Animals* before June 1, 2026. This training is required once per program year. 4-H Members can take the training online (\$12)

[yqcaprogram.org](http://yqcaprogram.org)

## HORSE MEMBERS REQUIREMENT

In order to be able to show a Horse or Pony project at the 4-H Show this summer you are required to submit horse ownership/ lease paperwork. Along with Pictures of the horse/ponies you plan to show. Please scan the QR code for access to the paper work

**DUE MAY 15**  
via  
**Email, Mail or Drop off**



Scan QR Code for:  
Livestock health requirements



Scan QR Code for:  
QAEC Instructions



# REQUIRED FOR: Cat, Dog, Horse, Poultry, & Rabbits

# QAEC Training

with ZSuite

If you are planning to show a live animal in the following areas: CAT, DOG, GOAT, HORSE, POULTRY, or RABBIT you must take the Quality Assurance & Ethics Certification (QAEC) training once in your 4-H Career to be able to Participate in the 4-H Shows.

This training is taken in Zsuite under "Clover Academy". Youth must have an account in Zsuite. Following the instructions below for each child who needs to complete the certification.

Please notify me ([Allie Johnston-lancast@illinois.edu](mailto:Allie Johnstone-lancast@illinois.edu)) once the training is complete so i can double check that it is showing as completed in Zsuite.

## Do CLOVERBUDS go to the Show?

In accordance with Illinois 4-H policy, Cloverbud members cannot **compete** at the show. To get them involved and used to the show experience, however, Whiteside County Cloverbuds can show what they have learned in their 4-H Club. Cloverbud members sign up for the show just like their older counterparts. They exhibit, conference judge, and receive score sheets and ribbons! The difference is, all Cloverbuds receive the same special participation ribbon for their exhibit they enter! They never compete for placings.

## 4-H goes to state?

Each year our county selects a number of 4-H General Project exhibits to represent Whiteside County 4-H at the Illinois State Fair. Classes from which state fair delegates may be selected are marked throughout the show book. Varying numbers of individuals may be selected from various divisions. Individuals who are selected will receive teal green rosettes. Should any of the individuals selected for state competition in a division decline that opportunity, alternates in appropriate classes will be given the opportunity to send their projects. Delegates and alternates are only selected when judges feel that the projects exhibited are of high enough quality to compete at the state level. 4-H members receiving more than 1 state fair delegate ribbon must choose only 1 to take to state fair. **Whiteside county state fair day is Sunday, August 16, held in Springfield, IL.**

***If your Child is selected for State Fair Delegate please be sure to stop at the 4-H staff table before leaving with your projects. This is necessary even if your child does not plan to attend as we can let the alternate know they can go their your place.***

## Partnership with Woodlawn Arts Academy

The last few years Whiteside county 4-H has partnered with Woodlawn Arts Academy in sterling to have another exhibition opportunity. At the 4-H Show this summer 25-30 Visual Arts and Photography projects will be selected to enter in the academies "Juried Art show" which is held August thru November 2026.

Whiteside county 4-H pays all its members entry fees if they choose to enter. 4-H members have the opportunity to try and sell their project and are invited to an open house reception on August

***If your child is selected- Please stop at the 4-H Staff Table to fill out a short form and plan to leave your project with 4-H Staff. This makes it easy for staff to deliver projects to Woodlawn in August!***

## PITCHING IN!

The 4-H Show is a big event that requires a whole lot of helping hands to pull off.

Each year, 4-H clubs are asked to provide members and adult volunteers to help fulfill a variety of jobs. These include things like: helping with show set up and tear down, assisting with an activity booth for in between judging activities and more. Please check with your club leader to see where you can be most helpful!



## HOW CAN MOM & DAD HELP?

- Assisting 4-H'ers with their project work.
- Getting 4-H'ers registered for the fair on time.
- Providing encouragement as members complete their exhibits.
- Making sure 4-H'ers are at the appropriate judging areas at the correct times.
- Being proud of their children and letting them know.
- Realizing fair committee members, staff, and leaders are not perfect.
- Respecting the judges and the judges' comments.
- Helping teach showmanship and other life skills through "teachable moments" at the fair.
- Support Federation by participating in the pork chop BBQ and encouraging others to do so.

# 4-H Show(s)-at-a-glance

## Thursday, June 11

- **5:00 PM**- Lee & Whiteside County Dog Show- Amboy

## Thursday, July 9

- 8:00 AM - Carroll & Whiteside Horse/Pony Show- Morrison

## Friday, July 10

- **7-8:30 AM** - General Project Check in
- **9:30 AM** - Poultry Show
- **12:00 PM** - Cat Show
- **2:00 PM** - Rabbit Show
- **3:00 PM** - Support Fund Silent Auction Opens
- **3-4:30 PM** - General Project check in
- **4:30-6:30 PM** - Federation Pork Chop BBQ
- **7:00 PM** - Ag Adventure Games

## Saturday, July 11

- **All Day**- activity booths and club bake goods sale
- **9:00 AM** - Cloverbuds, Food Decorating, Foods, Horticulture, & Floriculture
- **10:00 AM** - Agronomy, Animal Science, Clothing/Sewing, Photography, Plants & Soils, Small Engines, Small Pets, Tractors, Vet Science
- **11:00 AM** - Entomology, BeeKeeping, Forestry, Geology, Nature: Fish & Wildlife, Natural Resources, Outdoor Adventures.
- **12:00 PM** - Aerospace, Creating with Building Blocks, Computer Science, Drones/UAV, Electricity, eSports, Exploratory/ Collectibles, Maker, Ready4Life, Robotics, Video
- **1:00 PM** - Babysitting, Career Development, Civic Engagement, Communications, Community Service, Consumer Ed, Creative Writing, Family Heritage, Health, Intercultural, Interior Design, Leadership, Service Learning, Theatre Arts, Visual Arts
- **2:00 PM** - Shoting Sports: Archery, Weather, Welding, Woodworking
- **2:30-4:30 PM** -Culinary Cook Off Competition
- **4:30-5:30 PM** - Ice cream social, show clean up/check out

## Sunday, August 2

- **5:00 PM**- Beef Check in and weigh in
- **6:00 PM** - Swine Check in and weigh in

## Monday, August 3

- 8:00 AM- Beef Show
- 12:00 PM - Goat Check in
- 12:30 PM - Goat Show
- 1:00 PM - Sheep Check in and Weigh in
- 1:30 PM - Sheep Show
- 3:30 PM- Swine Show
- 7:00 PM- Carroll County youth in Agriculture Foundation Livestock & Small Animal Auction

## Friday, August 7

- 8:30 AM- Dairy Check in
- 9:00 AM- Dairy Show

## WEATHER



As you all know weather is unpredictable and though cancellations are disappointing you and your families safety is our number one concern. We may have to cancel or delay activities and judging. In the event of a cancellation or delay please stay up to date with our Facebook page: Whiteside county 4-H or contact your club leader

## SHOWBOOK

*Scan QR Code for access to the Whiteside County 4-H Showbook- project requirements, rules & judging times!*



### Whiteside County Office

12923 Lawrence Rd, Sterling, IL 61081 Phone:  
(815) 632-3611  
Email: lancast@illinois.edu

### Your Extension Staff:

Allie Johnston, 4-H Program Coordinator  
Kathy Book, 4-H Educator  
Martha Ebbesmeyer, 4-H Educator  
Jean Eggemeyer, Office Support

# Whiteside County 4-H Federation

# PORK CHOP BBQ

## Sit down or Drive Thru

Pre-Purchase by July 6 to  
guarantee your meal.

First come first serve for  
day of purchase. Cash or  
Check only (Day of Purchase)

# Friday, July 10 4:30-6:30 PM

## Whiteside County Fairgrounds, Morrison

Meal comes with:  
Pork Chop Sandwich,  
Baked Beans, Applesauce,  
Chips, Cookie and Water

Meals:  
Pre-order:  
\$10.00

Day of order:  
\$15.00

Purchase Meals at:  
[go.illinois.edu/WhitesideBBQ](http://go.illinois.edu/WhitesideBBQ)



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# 4-H Culinary Creations Cook-Off

Saturday, July 11th

2:30 - 4:30 PM

Whiteside County Fairgrounds  
Brown Building

Grab 2-4 of your friends and sign up for a food prep competition! We will give you a secret ingredient and your team will create a well-balanced meal!

4-H members ages 10-18

\$30 per team

3-5 members per team

Limited to the first 4 teams to register

Register by July 5



[go.illinois.edu/WhitesideCulinaryCreations](https://go.illinois.edu/WhitesideCulinaryCreations)

For questions or accommodations, please contact Martha at [ebbesmey@illinois.edu](mailto:ebbesmey@illinois.edu)



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# 4-H SUPPORT FUND



Bidding Opens:  
Friday July 10, 3:00 P.M.

Bidding Closes:  
Saturday July 11, 4:30 P.M.

## SILENT AUCTION

If you would like to donate an item or basket....  
Please bring to the fairgrounds on Friday by 3 PM

*Funds go towards 4-H Award of Merits given out each year*

## 4-H Clover Hunt

A hunt to gather 4-H Clovers hidden around  
the fairgrounds to win cool prizes!



Saturday, July 11



Join us for  
an Ice Cream  
Social!



Saturday, July 11  
4:30 p.m.  
Show Wrap up  
Celebration!

Donated by:  
Rock Falls Culvers

## Ag Adventure Games



Friday, July 10  
7:00 p.m.

Come join the fun as the Whiteside County Farm Bureau's  
Young Leaders host our Annual Ag Adventure Games!  
Games will be held after the Federation Pork Chop BBQ Dinner!



Takes place:  
Lawn next to the Red Barn

