

WEEKLY NEWS COLUMN  
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## NEW BEGINNINGS

Happy New Year! I know, we're long past January 1, but today is a new day! It doesn't matter if you quit your new year's resolution weeks/months ago or got off track with your goals, today you get to start again, today is a new beginning! For many of our 4-H'ers, the topic of new beginnings makes perfect sense, they are ready to start getting projects going for their 4-H year!

For our kids enrolled in livestock projects, they are beginning new right now. March 1, we will weigh and tag all of the Cowley County Market Beef projects. While many kids have had their beef project for a few months, this is a starting off point for everyone. Families will arrive at the Winfield Livestock Auction where ownership will be established with an EID eartag and official beginning weight for all market beef showing at the 2020 Cowley County Fair.

4-H'ers who exhibited breeding beef last year are in the thick of calving season. I've had the pleasure of viewing ten head of new baby calves via social media born to 4-H members over the last week alone. Orphaned calves are finding homes as bucket calves for our younger members.

Lambing, kidding and farrowing is well underway and nearly finished. This crop of lambs, goats and pigs will be exhibited by our 4-H members at spring shows, the county fair and state shows for 2020. Ownership for these projects will be established at spring weigh/tag days April 25 and 28.

The best part of the "starting over" for these projects is that many kids are not starting from scratch. As a part of the 4-H model, "Do-Apply-Reflect", 4-H members are utilizing females they exhibited previously to raise their show animals for this year. Some of this year's livestock crop will be fattened and sold in the premium sale at the fair, while others will be taken home as breeding prospects to continue the cycle. 4-H'ers learn valuable lessons through animal science projects about creating and contributing to a safe, wholesome food supply. They learn valuable animal husbandry skills while cultivating leadership, responsibility and other important life skills.

Today's youth are our future. As adults, we often think about ways to develop and grow our kids into the kind of leaders that will help our country to thrive and remain a leader in the world. We work to develop positive leadership qualities in our youth. 4-H livestock project help to instill in our youth the importance of creating a sustainable food supply, giving back to the community, working together, developing an inquiring mind and cultivating a strong work ethic among other leadership qualities.

The public has the opportunity to watch our youth grow and learn through educational exhibit opportunities. Cowley County will host its first spring livestock show of the 2020 season with the

35th Annual Cowley County Classic Beef Show Saturday, April 25. We'll offer opportunities for members to exhibit sheep and meat goats May 16 with the Cowley County Spring Sheep and Meat Goat Show. Come watch our kids show off their hard work at one of these events at the Winfield Fairgrounds.

For more information about Cowley County 4-H or Cowley County Extension Programs, contact the Cowley County Extension Office 221-5450, 441-4565.

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