

WEEKLY NEWS COLUMN
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THE SHOW MUST GO ON: OPPORTUNITIES FOR 4-H'ERS DESPITE CHALLENGING TIMES

2020 has been a tough year, and it seems one thing after another is getting canceled or postponed. The cancellation of the 2020 Cowley County Fair was a tough pill to swallow for many in our community. For 4-H families, it simply meant finding an alternative. While the traditional public fair activities (carnival, midway, grandstand events, vendors, etc.) have been canceled, for Cowley County 4-H, the show WILL go on.

Throughout the spring, Extension professionals across the nation and in working groups in Kansas researched alternative showcase options for 4-H members. One of the essential elements of 4-H is Mastery and competitions including county fairs allow for this essential element to be met. Extension faculty studied in-person, virtual and combination options for county fairs and other competitions carefully weighing the health, safety and educational components for participants, judges and volunteers. Locally, Extension staff met virtually with fair officials to continue to discuss options for 4-H.

In June, the Cowley County Fair Association made the decision to cancel the public events for the Cowley County Fair. In the meantime, Extension continued to plan an alternative option for 4-H'ers. Now, with support from the Fairboard and volunteers, 4-H'ers will get to exhibit their 4-H projects.

This year's plan is to hold a Cowley County *4-H* Fair. 4-H members will compete in a combination virtual, "drop and go" and "show and go" fair. Judging is currently being held virtually for Rabbits, Poultry and Fashion Revue utilizing Flipgrid, an online platform used in schools that allows a judge to view the project and provide feedback. Static, or non-livestock exhibits, are being judged in a "drop and go" format. Families will deliver projects to the fairgrounds, where skilled judges will evaluate them and provide feedback. None of the exhibits will be on display for public viewing.

Horses and livestock will show in a "spring show" or "show and go" format. Horses will be shown at the Burden Arena with limited spectators. Livestock will exhibit at the fairgrounds with one or two species exhibited and judged each day for three days. Livestock will not be housed at the fairgrounds. We are asking families to limit the number of people attending to family and volunteers. Spectators are encouraged to watch the shows from the comfort (and air conditioning) of their home on the Cowley County 4-H Facebook page livestream.

So, what about the sale? Livestock supporters are accustomed to visiting the fairgrounds Monday night of the fair to enjoy fellowship, food and the auctioning of the 4-H market animals. In order to limit the number of people in one area, the 4-H Premium Livestock Auction will be

held in a live online format hosted by Theurer Auction and Realty. Photographs taken during the livestock shows will be displayed online during the sale and bidders can support 4-H members by purchasing the premium for livestock on Monday, August 3 beginning at 6:45 p.m. It is important to note that this year's auction will be premium only, buyers do not have the option to purchase an animal to send to the locker.

Early registration for the 2020 4-H Livestock Premium Sale is encouraged. Buyers should visit www.theurer.net to register. Questions can be directed to Cowley County Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent, Kelsey Nordyke at 620-221-5450 or klnordyke@ksu.edu.

To learn more about changes for Cowley County 4-H project exhibits in 2020, contact the Cowley County Extension Office at 620-221-5450 or email Kelsey Nordyke (klnordyke@ksu.edu) or Becky Reid (bkreid@ksu.edu).

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