

4-H kids put hard work into livestock and exhibits

By Marian Ballard

Colby Free Press
mballard@nwkansas.com

While all the amusements keep the fairgrounds buzzing, a fair just wouldn't be the same without the entries and hard work of the 4-H clubs.

Thomas County has five 4-H clubs with a total of 129 members, and the weeks before and during the Thomas County Fair are undoubtedly the busiest time of year for them.

Each 4-Her is busy finishing up projects or training and grooming animals for fair entries. Everything from cupcakes to horses can be entered in the fair, and it all takes work. Not only must the vegetables, lambs and everything else be raised and cared for, they must be prepared for exhibit. Sewing projects must be made – but then they must also be modeled. Art work has to be mounted for display.

Not only does each member have individual projects to work on, there are club projects as well. Lots of thought, planning and scheduling go into making a club float for the parade, for instance, which creatively follows the rules of this year's fair theme, "Blue Jeans and Country Dreams."

The club booth is another project the group does together, working to follow the theme of the fair and to promote 4-H and 4-H programs.

The greatest strengths of 4-H come out into the open at fair time. A primary purpose of the organization is to learn by doing, and learning is taking place on many levels at once.

Particularly in livestock, club members can often be seen helping one another out, with those who have more experience offering encouragement to those who may be exhibiting in a category for the first time. Such mentoring is often between older and younger kids, but that may be reversed if an older 4-Her is exhibiting for the first time. And in herdsmanship, the club competes as a team, so that all who are showing calves or lambs, for example have side-by-side stalls which they cooperate in keeping clean and neat.

Skills in communication and leadership are

learned through cooperation at the fair, an extension of the learning that takes place in club meetings and project meetings throughout the year. Club leaders are parents, too, who are often learning more about an area right alongside the youths.

More learning takes place when entries are judged. Most judging is conference judging – that is, the judge talks to the contestant about the project, asks questions, explains what may be good or bad about the entry. The youth builds confidence, learns about the subject, and learns speaking skills in responding.

Fair is the busiest time for 4-H, but it always pays off in the end.

Kids in local 4-H clubs compete every year at the Thomas County Free Fair in a wide range of areas, everything from a fashion show (right), to livestock the kids raised (below).

Colby Free Press



Good luck to all participating 4-hers!

Someplace Special


185 W. 4th • Colby, KS
785-462-7136

Welcome to the Thomas County Free Fair



Visit us at: www.frontieraginc.com

Mingo
116 Misner Ave.
785-462-2063
Breton
3179 Hwy 83
785-462-8642
Brewster
401 Kansas St.
785-694-2281
Menlo
100 N. 5th
785-855-2256

