Dear 4-H Families and Volunteers,

This month, hundreds of 4-H'ers from around the state will participate in one of our five 4-H Building Leadership and Understanding (BLU) youth leadership conferences.

The annual regional youth conferences are planned and facilitated by our Minnesota 4-H State Ambassadors. The ambassadors use a youth-teaching-youth approach to teach their peers about leadership and engage participants in hands-on activities, games, small group discussions, and a dance during each event. This year’s topic is called "Find Your Element." The focus will help youth explore how they can live out the passions in their lives. The 4-H BLU conferences are one important way that we provide youth with hands-on opportunities to learn and practice leadership skills.

If you aren’t familiar with 4-H BLU, or the statewide 4-H Youth Exploring Leadership and Learning Outloud! (YELLO!) youth conference in June, I encourage you to explore these wonderful leadership opportunities for youth and adult volunteers.

Go to our website to find more information about the youth events BLU and YELLO! that are coming up.

Sincerely,

Dorothy M. Freeman
Associate Dean and State 4-H Director
East Otter Tail

Quilting Members

Any quilting members are welcome to work on quilting projects on the second Saturday of each month from 9am-4pm at the extension office. There will be adult volunteers available to help you with your project. Lunch is on your own.

Science Engineer and Design Club

Children’s Science Engineer and Design club will meet on February 2 at the New York Mills School 1-3 pm; if not already enrolled please contact extension office, malon034@umn.edu.

After-School Science Club

Due to a scheduling conflict with the school the Children's Science Engineering and Design class at the New York Mills school will on February 3 has been changed to February 10, 3:15-5pm.

Super Stitcher Club

The Super Stitchers 4-H club will meet on February 13, 10am-12noon at the Otter Tail government office building; 118 N. Main, New York Mills. This months' project is a pillow case mattress; please contact Janet, malon034@umn.edu if you are not already enrolled in this project club put would like to participate, as you will need the supply list for this month project(s).

This club will also meet on February 19, 6-8pm at the Perham Living; Town Center. The project for night will be a Mermaid blanket. All participating youth need an adult helper.

ID Deadline

Market Beef & Dairy Beef animal ID’s are due on February 15, as last year, families are to enter their animal information into the 4-H Online. All animal science updates for 2016 can be retrieved from the Minnesota 4-H website under the project resource icon; then go to the animal science project tab. 4-H tags are available at the Extension office.

Family Roller-skating Day

East Otter Tail County 4-H family roller skating day is set for February 21, 1:30-3:30pm at the Perham Area Community Center, cost is $5 per person; no pre-registration necessary; club’s that are holding meetings this day and want to use meeting rooms at the PACC must reserve the room through the PACC at 218-346-7222.

CloverBud Club

New York Mills Clover bud Club will meet on February 22, 3:15-5pm at the New York Mills School, commons area; if you are not enrolled in this after-school club but would like to please contact the Extension Office.

Super Sitter Babysitting Class

The Super Sitter Babysitting Class for youth grades 5 and above. It will be held on February 23, 24 and 25 at the Prairie Wind Middle School in Perham from 3:15-5pm, in room 406 (old FACS room). The program fee is $15 per person. Please contact the extension office to register; malon034@umn.edu.

West Otter Tail

The Extension Office will be closed on Presidents Day, February 15.

Youth Leadership Team Club Visits

A team of young adults has put together an exceptional program to present to your club. They will offer Officer training to your club leadership team, parliamentary pizza making activity, take home project and fun & games.

The goals of this group are:

- Increase club participation and new member retention
- Increase club quality and add fun to meetings
- Officer training/Office Leadership
Mentor 4-H youth

This team is looking forward to visiting every club in our county this year. Please call the Extension office 218-998-8750 and schedule a club visit.

Project Bowl

Good luck to the Rabbit, Wildlife and Dog Project Bowl teams from West Otter Tail.

WOT Adopt a Pig and Adopt a Kid Program

If you have never shown pigs or dairy goats at the Fair, now is the time to give it a try. Apply for a free pig or dairy goat by contacting the Extension office for an application or for more information.

WOT Crops & Forage Show

The WOT Crops & Forage Show will be held on February 3 at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls. Youth and Open class divisions are available. Call the Extension office if you have any questions about entering a crop or forage sample.

WOT Bowling Tournament

The West Ottertail Bowling Tournament is February 14 at the Northern Aire Lanes in Fergus Falls. Teams will bowl from 1-3pm. Please send your club registrations to the Extension office.

Cal Mielke Grants Application

Applications are currently being accepted for 4-H projects and programs that will promote youth development, leadership, life skill and citizenship. Examples include community service projects, project meetings, attending trainings or camps to promote youth development. Application deadline is March 14 at your local Extension Office. The application is available at this link.

Wilkin

To keep up on events and information happening in the county and surrounding area, please visit the Douglas County Extension website.

State News and Events

NW Youth Leadership Award

There will be $500 cash awards presented to young adults between the ages of 17 and 21! Applications must be postmarked no later than March 4. Your 4-H Program Coordinator has additional details as well as the application.

This award is given by the Red River Valley Development Association to further the higher education of young adults in northwest Minnesota (particularly those in the counties of Becker, Clay, Clearwater, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau and Wilkin. The application requests an essay describing one project the youth was involved in (must be written by the youth), and how leadership skills were used. Additionally, youth must list other activities and their leadership roles in each, whether or not they are in or accepted to school beyond high school, what they are or will major in, and how their plans will enrich life in northwest Minnesota. One letter of recommendation must also be included.

Small Scale Sustainable Sheep Farming Event

The second annual Small Scale Sustainable Sheep Farming Event will take place February 20, 10am at the Fosston Civic Center, 215 E. First St., Fosston. This event is open to the public and focuses on the benefits of sheep as part of a sustainable farming system where meat and wool
are viable value-added products. More information can be found here.

4-H Summer Intern Positions

Are you looking for work experience in the youth development field?

Once again this year, there will be county-based 4-H summer intern positions throughout the state of Minnesota. Each internship will provide an excellent opportunity to learn more about University of Minnesota Extension and explore job opportunities in 4-H Youth Development. Most positions will be for ten or eleven weeks, with flexible starting dates.

Candidates must have a high school diploma, and at least two years of undergraduate study is preferred. Candidates must apply on-line through the University of Minnesota job site. The application materials will include a standard application, résumé, cover letter, list of three references and a college transcript. The summer intern positions will be posted soon. The application deadline is February 15.

For more information, please contact Michele VanDyke, mvandyke@umn.edu

M4-HAVA 2016 Annual Conference

Please consider attending the 31st annual Minnesota 4-H Adult Volunteer Association Conference being held March 17-19 at the Bigwood Event Center/Best Western Inn in Fergus Falls. This year’s theme is “Keen, Green, and Lean in 2016”.

The M4-HAVA Conference is a great place for volunteers to learn about what is happening throughout the state and new trends going on in 4-H. You will meet other volunteers who are really excited about 4-H, leave with an arsenal of new activities and ideas from the 32 workshops offered to take back and share with your clubs and counties, and recognize outstanding volunteers and clubs during the annual banquet.

For more information on registration for the 2016 M4-HAVA Conference, Blue Ribbon Awards, and Membership visit our website.

2016 SS&W Spring Leader Certification Training

The Minnesota 4-H Shooting Sports & Wildlife Program Development Committee invites you to attend a 4-H Shooting Sports & Wildlife Leader Certification. The committee recommends that leaders attend the entire certification weekend every five years. Now is your chance to attend.

The training is designed for adults and youth grades 9 and up who lead or would like to lead training in shooting sports or wildlife. Classes will be offered in the disciplines of coordinator, archery, rifle/pistol, shotgun, muzzleloading and wildlife. This training meets the 4-H project leaders’ requirements for certification and recertification. Although there is range time allocated in the schedule, the majority of the training is classroom work to become an effective instructor, not to practice your own shooting skills. Please see registration materials for full details.

The training will take place in two sites on April 23-24:

• St. Mary’s Church and the Kanabec County Gun Club, Mora
• Worthington Regional Office, Worthington

Registration materials will be available February 1, at this link. The deadline to register is April 8. Disciplines fill quickly, so make sure registration forms are sent in early.

Judging at County Fairs

Minnesota 4-H depends on the skills, talents and dedication of hundreds of adults who judge 4-H
projects at county fairs across Minnesota. In support of 4-H judges, Minnesota 4-H offers online training, toolkit resources and more. To learn more or if interested in becoming a 4-H judge, visit this link.

2016 4-H Rube Goldberg Challenge: Crush and Recycle a Can

The 2016 4-H Rube Goldberg Challenge is to create a machine that will crush an empty aluminum soft drink can and put it into a recycling container.

The third annual challenge asks teams of youth to design overly complex contraptions that accomplish this year’s designated task using everyday items that interact in a series of chain-reactions. Teams compete in contests at their county fair and then will be eligible to compete at the Minnesota State Fair.

Teams are encouraged to register by May 15 and get started on their machines.

More information about the 4-H Rube Goldberg Challenge and how to register can be found here.

NOTE: No paper registration this year. Team leaders, members and youth coaches will sign up through 4-H Online accounts. Adult volunteer leaders must register before their team members can register.

What do MN 4-H first year member parents have to say?

In October 2015, the first-year member parent survey was administered to parents of new members in the 2014-2015 program year. We do this survey annually to learn more about the experiences of our families new to the 4-H program. This survey asks parents to give feedback on items such as how welcoming their experience was, if their child had opportunities for learning, and if policies were challenging.

What did we learn this year:

- Overall parents and youth feel welcomed into the program.
- A quarter of parents felt that enrollment and membership policies were challenging.
- 94% of parents said the topics their child worked on were of interest to them.
- 80% of parents agreed that their child became really good at something they worked on.
- We have a large number of youth who are experiencing 4-H for the first time in their family. Over 45% of our survey respondents had never had exposure to the 4-H program in their family history.

Currently teams of educators are looking at this information and thinking about how we can improve the 4-H program to help all our members.

Thank you first year member parents for responding to this survey.

Calendar of Events

February

15 Application deadline for 4-H Summer Intern positions
15 Youth application deadline for the State 4-H Beef Committee

March

5 Regional Project Bowl, Foley
12 Regional Project Bowl, Hastings
17-19 M4-HAVA 2016 Annual Conference, Fergus Falls
19 Regional Project Bowl, Bemidji
19 Regional Project Bowl, Redwood Falls
29 Youth Day at the Capitol
### April

- **2** Regional Project Bowl, snow date
- **7** County Livestock PDC Training webinar
- **9-14** National 4-H Conference, Washington, D.C.
- **16** State Project Bowl, Sauk Rapids
- **23-24** 4-H SS&W Leader Certification Training, Mora

### May

- **15** Animal ID deadline
- **15** 2-16 4-H Rube Goldberg Challenge registrations due

### July

- **2-9** Citizenship Washington Focus