



Welcome to Jackson County 4-H

Jackson County 4-H New Member Guide | Updated 2024

Welcome!

We are so excited you have chosen to join 4-H! Did you know that 4-H is the nation's largest youth organization? You are now among 250,000 youth members and 14,000 adult volunteers that make up Minnesota 4-H. This year, we hope we can help you learn, grow, and have fun as a first year member of Jackson County 4-H!

We hope you enjoy exploring 4-H and everything it has to offer not only in Jackson County, but in our region (southwest MN) and the state as well. This guide is meant to supplement the [4-H Youth Development Family Handbook](https://z.umn.edu/MN4hHandbook) (<https://z.umn.edu/MN4hHandbook>) that is published by the University of Minnesota Extension. **Scan the QR code to the right to view the MN 4-H Family handbook.** While the handbook has a lot of important information about Minnesota 4-H in general, this guide will have specific information, details, and dates related to just Jackson County 4-H.



If you ever have questions (and you probably will), don't be afraid to ask us! All of us were in your shoes at some point, so we know that it can get confusing. The Extension Office is a great first place to get answers to your questions. Other great resources for you to get answers from include; our 4-H club leaders, volunteers, families, and members.



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Important Contacts and Resources

Jackson Co. Extension Office

607 S Hwy 86
Lakefield, MN 56150

- Call: 507-662-5293
- Fax: 507-662-5016
- mnext-jackson@umn.edu

Follow us on Facebook

UMN Extension Jackson County 4-H
facebook.com/jacksoncountymn4h

Extension Websites

*This website provides information, resources, and events, and events for **Jackson County 4-H.***

extension.umn.edu/local/jackson

*This website provides information, resources, and events, and events for all of **Minnesota 4-H.***

extension.umn.edu/minnesota-4-h

Office Staff

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4-H Ext. Educator
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4-H Member Website

This site is used to enroll and re-enroll as a 4-H member, register for events, ID livestock for livestock shows, and update 4-H member and family contact information.

- [4-H Online](#)
- v2.4honline.com

County Fair Exhibit Registration Website

This site is used to register your 4-H projects to exhibit at the Jackson County Fair. You will use your 4-HOnline profile to login to this site.

- [FairEntry - Jackson County Fair MN](#)
- z.umn.edu/JacksonMNFairentry

Remember for 4-HOnline and FairEntry Websites

- Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox internet browsers work best - NOT Internet Explorer!
- If you forget your password, please click reset password and DO NOT create a new account.

4-H Frequently Asked Questions

When can I participate in 4-H programs and projects?

The first day of the 4-H year is October 1 and it runs through September 30. As a new member you are all ready to go and participate in any 4-H event, meeting, program available in Jackson County as well as throughout the state of Minnesota! Keep in mind that every October all 4-H members need to re-enroll to make sure they are eligible to participate. Once you have completed your re-enrollment you are free to participate for another year in 4-H! To enroll or re-enroll in 4-H visit this link: z.umn.edu/4Honlineportal

Do I need to join a 4-H Club?

No! 4-H clubs are here to help guide and mentor 4-H members and their families through their 4-H experience and build community. It is not necessary to be a part of a club to participate in 4-H. If you are interested in joining a club there are seven clubs in Jackson County consisting of approximately 275 youth members and almost 100 adult volunteers. Families can join a club based on location or personal preference – it's up to you! Clubs generally meet 9-12 times a year to discuss business, do community service projects and have other fun activities. 4-H is a family affair, so bring the whole family! Link to the Jackson County 4-H Clubs at a Glance: z.umn.edu/Jackson4-Hclubs

What is a Cloverbud?

Cloverbuds are younger 4-H members (grades K-2). If members are in this age range, their exhibits are judged for participation ribbons. This allows both members and their parents a period to learn the 4-H system and get used to judging before they can compete in the judging process the 4-H members in 3rd grade and up participate in. For more information about Cloverbuds visit this link:

z.umn.edu/Cloverbuds4H

What is a 4-H project?

4-H believes that kids learn best by doing. That's why all 4-H'ers do hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture, animal science and civic engagement. Youth can concentrate on one project area or they can try as many as they like. Visit this link for more information about what a 4-H project is:

z.umn.edu/projectsin4H

What is a 4-H exhibit?

A **4-H exhibit** is something that 4-H'ers can make and show at the fair or other showcase event to demonstrate what they have learned in the project area.

- Examples: a plate of cookies they have baked, a desk they refinished, a rocket they built, a chicken they raised, a poster or three-sided display board of photographs they took.

Why do 4-H'ers bring exhibits to the county fair? What happens there?

4-H'ers bring their exhibits to the county fair to showcase their project learning. At the county fair, 4-H'ers explain their projects to a 4-H judge - a caring adult who asks questions about their learning and awards a placing based on how well they explain what they learned. It's a good idea to practice this before you go to the county fair. Youth in grades 6 and up may have the opportunity to take their exhibit to the Minnesota State Fair.

How do I know what to exhibit at the fair?

Anything you have made or learned about throughout the 4-H year can be showcased at the county fair. Many members create projects on their own, and some even use school projects they had fun learning about. If you are interested in a project area and have a hard time finding a project, use the project idea book or look on Pinterest. If you have a project and don't know what area to put it in, let us know in the Extension Office and we will help you find a project area for it. For a list of project areas you can showcase before or during the county fair visit this link: z.umn.edu/4-Hprojectguide

What exhibits are judged before the Jackson County Fair?

- **Before the County Fair:** We have a judging day before the county fair called the Presentation Day. This includes the projects: Clothing (Constructed Clothing, Purchased Clothing, and non-garment sewing), Creative Writing, Fashion Revue, Food Revue, Demonstrations/Illustrated Presentations and Performing Arts. That night, youth model their outfits and the performing arts participants can showcase their talents to the public audience.
- **During the County Fair:** Youth are encouraged to bring their general/static (non-livestock) projects to be judged and showcased at the county fair. These projects include everything from arts, STEM, citizenship, gardening, photography, safety, youth leadership and so much more! Youth can also bring their livestock and show them in livestock shows such as beef, dairy, poultry, sheep, horse, swine, and rabbit.

What is the 4-H Federation?

The Jackson County 4-H Federation is the county-wide governing body. All 4-H members are part of the Federation. Older youth serve as officers and adult volunteers serve as the Advisory Board for Federation. Meetings are held every 3rd Monday of the month (unless it falls on a holiday) in the following months at the Lakefield Multi-Purpose Building: January, March, June, September, October.. Votes that take place at Federation meetings affect the WHOLE county, so plan to attend these meetings so that your voice is heard.

What Committees are in Jackson Co. 4-H?

Each committee has a certain role to help plan and coordinate different events and programs during the 4-H year, but more specifically during the Jackson County Fair. Jackson County has some committees that youth and adults can join and help make decisions and plan certain events. Committees that youth and adults can join include the Foodstand Committee and the General Project Committee. Other committees require members to be elected. Auction committee is a committee of elected adult volunteers. Some

committees may be short term committees such as the Banquet Committee or the Fair Schedule Committee. If you are interested in joining any of these committees please contact the Extension Office.









What is Animal ID and why should I fill out an Animal ID Sheet for livestock?

If you plan on showing an animal at the county fair, it needs to be ID'd in 4-HOnline. **We STRONGLY suggest that you fill out an Animal ID worksheet too.** People make mistakes – and we understand that it happens. If you fill out the Animal ID worksheet and turn it into the office by the February 15 (for Market Beef ONLY) or May 15 (all other livestock) deadlines, it is an extra record for us. That way, if you accidentally enter an animal wrong on 4-HOnline, we can check it against the paper copy and fix it for you without penalty. For more information about 4-H Animal ID and for the Animal ID worksheets visit this link: z.umn.edu/animalid

Have other questions?

Again, don't be afraid to ask questions to other families, your club leader, or us in the Extension Office. Everyone is happy to help – and we have all been in your shoes before!

Important QR Codes for 4-H Members

4-H Online 	Jackson Co. Fair Entry 	Info about Cloverbuds 	Explore 4-H Projects 
4-H Project Guide 	What is Animal ID? 	Jackson Co. 4-H on Facebook 	Jackson Co. 4-H Extension Website 

4-H Monthly Communications

It is important to know what is going on in the 4-H program each month as 4-H has many opportunities for youth to participate year round. Two monthly emails will keep you posted on what's going on in the county and at the state level. Please read these as they come out. If you are not receiving these messages, please contact the Extension Office.

- The statewide news article called The Clover Update is emailed to all families once a month from MN 4-H. Make sure you check your spam inbox since sometimes these emails end up here.
- The Jackson County Extension Educator sends out a digital newsletter called the Jackson Journal. This monthly newsletter is sent out at the beginning of the month and has information that is more specific to Jackson County 4-H members and their families.

What can youth and their families do in 4-H?

While each club decides what their schedule is for meetings and other activities, the county activities are often during the same time of the year, every year. Keep reading this guide to see what happens each month in Jackson County 4-H.

Youth	Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn the 4-H Pledge.• Attend 4-H meetings whenever possible.• Exhibit projects at the Jackson County Fair.• Give a demonstration or project talk at a club meeting.• Attend county, regional, or statewide 4-H events and programs.• Serve in a youth leadership role in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ a 4-H club◦ Jackson County 4-H Ambassadors◦ as a Federation Officer◦ as a 4-H camp counselor• Have fun!!! ☺	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings are for families – go as one! Younger brothers and sisters are always welcome!• Become involved in a way you are comfortable.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Parents/guardians can be club leaders, bring snacks, host meetings, plan fun events, or serve on a committee.• Encourage youth to become involved – 4-H is all about learning by doing.• Provide or find a plan for transportation to and from 4-H meetings and activities.

4-H Activities and Opportunities in Jackson County and Minnesota

As mentioned above, 4-H is a youth development program in which youth can choose to participate in programs and events that are specific to their unique interests. The following pages of this guide are events that happen each month for youth to participate in specifically in Jackson County. The important dates and deadlines for Jackson County are bolded in green. There are also important dates and deadlines from Minnesota 4-H for all 4-H'ers to follow. These important dates and deadlines for MN 4-H are bolded in red.

October

- **Re-Enrollment Begins October 1:** You need to re-enroll every year on 4-HOnline with a few simple clicks (unless you have moved or changed phone numbers or email addresses)! If you ever change any of this info please let our office know.
- **National 4-H Week:** The first full week in October is used to both celebrate and promote 4-H. At the county level, clubs create window displays in area businesses promoting 4-H around Jackson County. Many clubs also do events and activities at schools. Check with your club to see what they do.
- **Jackson County Award Nominations and Applications Due October 15:** Awards for 4-H members, volunteers, businesses, and 4-H alumni are given out at the Jackson County Achievement Banquet

in November. Clubs and youth are encouraged to nominate or apply for awards before the deadline. See this Jackson County Awards guide for more information:

z.umn.edu/JacksonCoAwardsGuide

- **4-H Record Judging:** 4-H records are judged at the club level to decide record winners for the Achievement Banquet. Not sure what 4-H records are? See this guide: z.umn.edu/4Hrecordguide
- **Club Charters Due October 31:** Each year, the club and county 4-H programs need to charter with Minnesota 4-H in order to use the 4-H logo and be covered under MN 4-H insurance policy. You will notice at October club meetings that many things are discussed like goals and plans for the year. The club's program of work, a meeting schedule, and a club budget are also discussed.
- **Trunk or Treat:** 4-H Ambassadors and youth wanting to promote Jackson County 4-H participate in Trunk or Treat events throughout the county. Look for updates in the Jackson Journal for when these events are held.
- **Federation Meeting - 3rd Monday of the Month:** The first Federation meeting of the 4-H year is held and installation of new Federation Officers, Advisory Board members, and Auction Committee members occurs. The Federation budget is also approved and plans for the new year are discussed. 4-H Banquet Award winners from the applications and nominations are chosen.

November

- **Jackson County Awards Banquet:** This banquet is held to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of 4-H members, adult volunteers, and others who support Jackson County 4-H. The banquet starts with a social hour and meal followed by the award presentations, and all 4-H families, volunteers, and supporters are invited.
- **Fall Volunteer Training:** Every fall, Minnesota 4-H provides materials for program coordinators to hold a volunteer training for at least one person from each club to attend. The topic last year centered around diversity, inclusion and changes every year.

December

- **Santa's Workshop:** Each December, Jackson County 4-H works with Bank Midwest to host Santa's Workshop during HolidayFest in Jackson. Here, youth can come make holiday crafts as gifts for family members free of charge. 4-H staff and youth and adult volunteers work together to make this possible!
- **Club Holiday Parties:** Many clubs host holiday parties during December. This is usually one of the higher attended meetings of the year, so make sure you go to meet new families!

January

- **Committee Meetings:** During January and February, a lot of our fair committees meet for the first time. This includes the General Project Committee, the Livestock Committees, Auction Committee and the Foodstand Committee. After the first meetings, these committees meet one to three more times before the county fair.
- **Federation Meeting - 3rd Monday of the Month:** The second meeting of the 4-H year. Fair schedule and premium book is discussed. Fundraising options are also discussed.

February

- **Market Beef and Dairy Steer ID Deadline:** The deadline to register and identify market beef and dairy steer animals for county fair is ALWAYS February 15th. All animals are ID'd on 4-HOnline. (If the 15th falls on a weekend or a holiday, watch the Clover Update to see if the date changes). For more information about this Animal ID deadline see: z.umn.edu/animalid
- **BLU and TEEL:** BLU stands for Building Leadership and Understanding. This event is for youth grades 6-9). It is a one day regional event where youth leaders from each county meet together and participate in hands-on activities, team-building experiences and hear from interesting speakers. TEEL stands for Teens Engaged in Emerging Leadership. This event is for youth in grades 10+. It is also a one day regional event where youth build upon the leadership skills already gained from BLU or other leadership experiences. They also learn from older youth and recent 4-H alumni.

- o For more information about BLU and TEEL visit: z.umn.edu/4HLeadershipEvents

March

- **Regional Project Bowls:** Youth in all grades can compete in project bowl teams in the areas of dairy, livestock, rabbit, or dog. After regional events in March, the state project bowl is held in the end of March or beginning of April. To learn more about project bowl visit: z.umn.edu/4-HProjectBowl
- **Federation Meeting - 3rd Monday of the Month:** The third Federation meeting of the 4-H year is held. Topics include senior scholarships reviewing the constitution and bylaws and preparing for the county fair.

April

- **LQA&E Training:** Livestock Quality Assurance and Ethics training is mandatory for all youth showing pigs at county fair and all youth planning to show any species at the state fair. To learn more about LQA&E training visit: z.umn.edu/lqae

May

- **Animal ID Deadline:** The deadline to register and identify ALL animals (besides market beef and dairy steers) is ALWAYS May 15th. Again, all animals are ID'd on 4-HOnline. This is also the deadline to reactivate animals that are in the ID system already (horses, dairy animals, breeding animals etc.). This is also the deadline to enroll in project areas you are interested in bringing to the fair. (Again, watch for holidays). To learn more about the Animal ID deadlines visit: z.umn.edu/mn4hanimalID
- **Road Ditch Pick Up:** As a community service activity and also a way to raise funds, many clubs walk road ditch miles in the spring. Club leaders contact the Extension Office to identify what roads they wish to walk.

June

- **Day Camps:** Throughout June, various day camps are held at various locations in Jackson County. Day camps vary in activity and are open to ages K-12. More information about day camps can be found in the Jackson Journal in May.
- **YELLO:** Youth Exploring Leadership and Learning Out Loud is a state-wide summer conference for youth in grades 7+. Youth attending this event build and learn skills to reach goals and plan for the future. They explore careers, college and other topics of interest through interactive workshops. They also develop positive connections with other youth and adults through small and large groups, workshops and other interactive sessions.
 - o For more information about YELLO see: z.umn.edu/4HLeadershipEvents
- **County Fair Registration Deadline: June 25th** is the deadline to register what projects you wish to bring to the fair. This will be done in FairEntry. All projects registered after this date are not eligible for any champion or reserve champion placings, state fair trips, auction participation, or premium money. To register for the Jackson County Fair visit: z.umn.edu/JacksonMNFaireentry
- **Southwest Regional 4-H Camp at Lake Shetek:** 4-H Camp is held every year in June at Shetek Lutheran Bible Camp outside of Slayton, MN. Camp is 2 ½ days long and is a great way to learn about new projects, spend time outside, and meet new friends. Older 4-H members serve as counselors and 4-H staff lead sessions.
- **Club Tours:** Many clubs use the June or July club meeting to do a club tour where members see the 4-H projects that others have been working on. Many clubs end the tour with a fun bonfire and food/snacks.
- **Federation Meeting - 3rd Monday of the Month:** The fourth Federation meeting of the 4-H year is held. Topics include new Federation Officer, Advisory Board, and Auction Committee applications and preparing for the county fair.

July

- **Jackson County Pre-Fair Judging:** Members of all ages are welcome to participate in judging for Performing Arts, Clothing and Fashion Revue, Demonstrations, Project Talks, Creative Writing, and Food Revue. After garments and performances are judged in the afternoon, an awards event is held in the evening to show off your accomplishments!
- **Jackson County Fair Clean-Up:** Members and their families help clean up the fairgrounds before and after the county fair. Each club is assigned a building and a shift to get this done. Remember, many hands make light work!
- **Jackson County Fair:** The most wonderful time of the year! Conference judging for general projects is held on Monday of fair week. All livestock entered on Tuesday. Checkin and weigh-ins may also happen on entry day or the next day. Many shows are held during fair week. It is also mandatory that all 4-H members and their families help with at least one shift at the 4-H Food Stand, which is our biggest fundraiser during the year!

August

- **Peach Sale Delivery:** We sell peaches during the County Fair to raise funds for the summer intern.
- **State Fair:** All youth grades 6+ who earn a state fair trip are eligible to advance to the MN State Fair during the Livestock or General encampments. There is a mandatory state fair meeting during the county fair that will give you more information! For information about 4-H at the MN State Fair visit: z.umn.edu/MN4HatStateFair

September

- **State Dog and Horse Shows:** The 4-H State Dog and Horse shows are NOT held during the normal state fair time frame. These are multi-day events held on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Visit this link for more information about the State Dog Show: z.umn.edu/4hdog-state-show and the State Horse Show: <https://extension.umn.edu/4-h-events/minnesota-4-h-state-horse-show>
- **State Shooting Sports and Wildlife Competition:** 4-H members practice throughout the year with Cottonwood County 4-H to participate in this event. For more information on joining the team, contact the Extension Office. Looking for more info about Shooting Sports and Wildlife? Visit: z.umn.edu/4HShootingSportsWildlife
- **Federation Meeting - 3rd Monday of the Month:** The last Federation meeting of the 4-H year is held. We elect new Federation Officers, Advisory Board Members, and Auction Committee members. The budget is developed and we reflect on the fair. We also send out award applications for the banquet.