



4-H Family News

Calhoun County

July & August 2026



Program Coordinator Update

How is it mid-July already? This summer has flown by!

I've been busy at work, busy with kids activities, and just trying to survive this crazy heat!

Summer has been off to a great start – I wrapped up an afterschool program in Albion, Exploration Days was great fun for all – and we have youth registered to attend the Great Lakes Natural Resource Camp at the end of July!

There's a lot of information in this month's newsletter – including very important fair updates, so be sure to check those out!

Best of luck to everyone at fair. The memories you make will stay with you for a lifetime!

CONTACT US

Cressie Vargo

4-H Program Coordinator

315 W. Green Street

Marshall, MI 49068

PHONE & EMAIL:

(269) 781-0785

vargocre@msu.edu

WEBSITE:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/calhoun/>

Follow us on Facebook:

[Calhoun County MSU Extension /4-H](#)

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Quentin Tyler, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.

Dates to Remember:

- August
 - 9th – Boys & Girls Barn Set Up
 - 15 – Non-Livestock Judging – NEW Belcher Building
 - 15 – Cloverbud Judging – Boys & Girls Barn
 - 16 –22 – Fair Week
 - 31 – End of 25-26 Program Year
- September (Date TBA) – Enrollment for 26-27 Opens
- September (Date TBA) – AFSR Financial Documents sent to Gold Administrative Leaders
- November
 - 8th – Awards Banquet



STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Preparing youth to be Beyond Ready through the fair experience



Beyond Ready

The fair experience is more than a showcase; it's a powerful opportunity to prepare youth to be Beyond Ready for life. Through exhibiting their projects, interacting with judges and engaging with the public, young people practice real-world skills such as communication, responsibility, problem-solving and professionalism.

When volunteers create intentional learning moments, like encouraging youth to reflect on project growth, prepare for interviews or take leadership roles in their clubs, youth deepen their understanding and strengthen skills that extend far beyond the fairgrounds. Every fair interaction becomes a stepping stone toward future readiness.

Is your club helping youth make those connections and see how fair experiences prepare them for what comes next?

#BeyondReady

July 13-15: Michigan 4-H Dairy Days

Farm Bureau Pavilion, Lansing

Join 4-H members from around Michigan July 13-15 at the Farm Bureau Pavilion for Michigan 4-H Youth Dairy Days! Dairy Days is part of Michigan Dairy Expo, a celebration of dairy farmers and dairy cattle in the Great Lakes State.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/2026-michigan-4-h-youth-dairy-days

July 16: Water Day

Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens, East Lansing

Come cool off from the summer heat and have fun in the garden with water. Play water games, do water art and explore all things fun about water. Come ready to get wet!

www.canr.msu.edu/events/water-day

July 20-21: Saginaw Bay Fish Camp

Haithco Park, Saginaw

This two-day camp will teach youth to fish and protect our Great Lakes. All campers receive a fishing rod with a reel, tackle box, t-shirt and snacks. Learn about knot-tying, tackle crafting, casting, aquatic ecology, angler ethics and more! Open to 4-H members ages 8-13. Registration deadline is July 10.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/2026-saginaw-bay-4-h-fish-camp

July 23: Bug Day at the Children's Gardens

Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens, East Lansing

Join for a tribute to insects in the gardens. Collect, observe and even make bugs! The MSU Bug House will also be on site with their collections of insects from all over the world.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/bug-day

July 27: 4-H Garden Adventures Summer Camp

The Botanic Garden at Historic Barns Park, Traverse City

Youth ages 7-12- are invited to join this camp for fun adventures in nature, nurturing resilience, kindness, community and creativity as they explore sustainability and growth through an engaging, hands-on approach.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-garden-adventures-summer-camp-2026

July 30: Bubble Day at the Children's Gardens

Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens, East Lansing

Come celebrate summer vacation at the garden with bubbles! Youth will paint, eat and even make music with bubbles.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/bubble-day





STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Building work
readiness skills
through 4-H**



Beyond Ready

4-H programs create intentional opportunities for youth to build essential work readiness skills that prepare them for future success. Through structured, hands-on activities, young people practice communication, collaboration, problem solving and time management. Volunteers play a key role by guiding youth through meaningful tasks, helping them set goals, and encouraging personal responsibility and follow through.

As youth take on leadership roles, complete project work, and participate in real-world or simulated experiences, they begin to demonstrate growth in professionalism, work ethic and organizational skills. Every activity can help youth connect what they are learning in 4-H to what will be expected of them in the workplace.

How is your club helping youth build the skills they need to be work ready?

#BeyondReady

July 1 - August 7: Michigan 4-H License Plate Promotion Contest

Online

As part of the Michigan State Fair 4-H and Youth Virtual Showcase, youth ages 8-19 are invited to create a video or non-video promotional piece encouraging others to purchase the 4-H license plate.
www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-license-plate-promotion-contest

July 1 - August 7: Michigan 4-H Business Pitch Contest

Online

Participants may present a business they already own, currently operate or hope to start in the future, including product, service or community impact ideas. Youth will create a two-minute video pitch introducing themselves, explaining their business idea, identifying the problem they are solving, and sharing why their product or service stands out.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan4-hbusinesspitchcontest

August 12: Adulting 101 – Roadmap to a Smart Used Car Purchase

Online

Are you wanting to purchase a used car, but have no idea where to start? Learn tips, resources and strategies to help you make an informed decision with confidence.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/adulting-101-roadmap-to-a-smart-used-car-purchase

August 13-16: 2025 Michigan 4-H State Horse Show

MSU Pavilion, East Lansing, Mich.

This annual event brings together 4-H members from counties across Michigan. Members are selected by their county 4-H programs to participate; spectators are welcome.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-state-horse-show

August 17-20: 4-H Garden Adventures Summer Camp 2026

Traverse City, Mich.

Join us for fun adventures in nature, nurturing resilience, kindness, community and creativity. This camp is designed to encourage sustainability and growth from the inside out through a fun and engaging hands-on approach. Register by August 17.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-garden-adventures-summer-camp-2026-session-2

September 9: Welcome Back MSU 4-H Alumni Reception

Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens, East Lansing, Mich.

Join MSU Extension for the ninth annual Welcome Back MSU 4-H Alumni Reception. If you are a current or former 4-H'er attending MSU this fall, stop by the Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. for networking and free dinner!

www.canr.msu.edu/events/msu-welcome-week-4-h-alumni-reception





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS

Join the Michigan State Fair 4-H & Youth Virtual Showcase!

MSU Extension is thrilled to partner again in 2026 with the [Michigan State Fair](#) on an exciting program for Michigan youth: the Michigan State Fair 4-H & Youth Virtual Showcase. This statewide showcase provides a virtual platform for youth across Michigan to exhibit their work in all project areas and apply for up to \$1,000 in scholarships. Any Michigan youth ages 5-19 is encouraged to participate; 4-H membership is not required.

There is no cost to participate and youth may engage in as many classes as they wish by [submitting project photos and videos](#). **Be sure to submit your entries by the registration deadline of August 7 at 5 p.m.** Project evaluation will occur before the start of the Michigan State Fair so that winners can be announced at the event. Learn more, find helpful resources and registration links at www.canr.msu.edu/virtual-showcase/State-Fair-Virtual-Showcase/.



2026 MSF 4-H & Youth Showcase Business Pitch Contest

Got a business idea? Whether your business is already running, just getting started or still an idea, we want to hear your pitch! Enter the Michigan State Fair 4-H & Youth Virtual Showcase and share your entrepreneurial skills in a two-minute video!

Entries will be judged on creativity, communication, understanding of the target audience, and overall presentation skills. Winners in each age division will receive gift card prizes (\$75, \$50, \$25) sponsored by Michigan State University Federal Credit Union and be recognized through Michigan 4-H communications and social media. For more information, visit Department 73 of the fair book at www.canr.msu.edu/virtual-showcase/State-Fair-Virtual-Showcase/.

2026 MSF 4-H & Youth Showcase Michigan 4-H License Plate Promotion Contest

Michigan youth ages 8–19 are invited to enter the Michigan 4-H License Plate Promotion Contest as part of the Michigan State Fair 4-H & Youth Virtual Showcase! Create a short video and/or design a poster, flyer or graphic that encourages others to purchase the Michigan 4-H license plate and you could win. Prizes will be awarded and winners will be featured on Michigan 4-H social media channels. Put your creativity to work and help spread the word about 4-H across Michigan! For more information, visit Department 73 of the fair book at: www.canr.msu.edu/virtual-showcase/State-Fair-Virtual-Showcase/.

New scholarships for Michigan 4-H'ers!

The Michigan 4-H Foundation is pleased to offer new scholarship opportunities to Michigan 4-H members for fall 2026. Nearly \$30,000 in post-secondary 4-H scholarships are available for the 2026–2027 academic year to high school seniors or incoming college freshmen. Youth must have participated in 4-H for three or more years.

These scholarships are made possible through generous support from 4-H alumni, retirees and friends of 4-H. Apply by September 1 at mi4hfdtn.org/scholarship.





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS

Michigan 4-H alumni & supporters invited to get connected by the clover!

As a valuable member of the Michigan 4-H community, you already know the importance of the 4-H connection. We invite those age 18 and older to take that 4-H connection one step further by joining a new statewide community of 4-H supporters: Michigan 4-H Alumni & Friends.

The Michigan 4-H Alumni & Friends database will connect 4-H families, alumni, volunteers, supporters and others across Michigan with one another – connecting them by the clover! We hope you will take a few moments to sign-up for this free community and grow your connection.

As a member of Michigan 4-H Alumni & Friends, you will receive information about opportunities to support 4-H youth and programs; 4-H programming and participants; upcoming events for the Michigan 4-H Alumni & Friends community and more!.

Michigan 4-H Alumni & Friends is open to anyone age 18+ who cares about Michigan 4-H: 4-H parents, staff members, volunteers, grandparents, supporters, partner organization representatives, donors and more. Learn more about Michigan 4-H Alumni & Friends and find the link to join by visiting extension.msu.edu/Michigan4HA&F.

**Join
Michigan
4-H
Alumni &
Friends**

Stay informed. Support youth.
Strengthen communities.
Get connected by the clover today!

Join for free at:
extension.msu.edu/Michigan4HA&F

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Going home: Biosecurity tips for animals that travel off the farm

Adapted from: https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/biosecurity_tips_for_animals_that_went_to_the_county_fair.

Animals that are exhibited at the county fair, jackpot shows, and other exhibitions are likely near and dear to their exhibitor's hearts. [Michigan State University Extension](#) offers these biosecurity steps exhibitors can take to protect their show animals and those that were left at home once the event has ended.

- Keep animals that left home separate from animals that did not for a minimum of 14 days. If at all possible, do not allow nose-to-nose contact and provide as much distance between animals.
- Disinfect all buckets, feeders, tools and footwear that left home.
- Throw away any feed or hay that left home.
- Always wear clean clothes and footwear. Boot coverings may be helpful when caring for isolated animals.
- Take care of animals that stayed home from the show first, and animals that were at the show second. Do not go back and forth between animals as this increases the risk of cross-contamination.
- Do not eat or drink in the barn.
- Observe animals daily for signs and symptoms of illness, such as:
 - Obvious pain or discomfort
 - Decrease in appetite and water intake
 - Fever
 - Lethargy
 - Diarrhea or changes in consistency in manure
 - Discharge from nasal cavity or eyes
 - Overall weakness

Care of animals after traveling is just as critical as their pre-show care. Exhibited animals were exposed to new animal populations and fair-goers, and will typically experience a lot of stress during their time away from home. By practicing these biosecurity steps, you can help keep all of your animals safe and healthy.





COUNTY 4-H NEWS

2026 Fair Information

Dates to Remember:

August 9 – 4:00 PM – Clean out & set up of the Boys & Girls Barn. ALL Clubs who have youth showing non-livestock projects should plan to attend!

August 15 – **Non-Livestock Judging begins at 9 AM in the NEW Belcher Building.** Please note this location change! Make sure to arrive early enough for all of your projects to be judged – lines may be long! Parents / adults – you may want to bring a lawn chair so you have a place to sit while you wait for your youth's projects to be judged!

Cloverbud judging will take place at the Boys & Girls Barn.

August 23 – Project release day – 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. CCAIS and MSU Extension are not responsible for projects that are not picked up.

Other Fair News:

Boys & Girls Barn Duty – All clubs who have a booth or youth showing projects in the Boys & Girls Barn need to have families take shifts in the barn. Shifts are 2 hours in length and begin at 10 AM & end at 10 PM. Youth under 14 must have an adult with them. Sign up for a shift at [Boys & Girls Barn 2026](https://bit.ly/CalhounBGBarn26) (bit.ly/CalhounBGBarn26).

Lemonade Stand – Lemonade stand shift sign ups will be handled differently this year – please watch your email for sign up details. **Please note** – there have been issues the last couple of years with individuals not staying for their whole shift, not sowing up for scheduled shifts, and showing up to work when not scheduled.

The Lemonade Stand is the only fundraiser that 4-H Council does throughout the year. 4-H Council covers the cost of the Awards Banquet, programming support, scholarships for youth to attend events (including Exploration Days) and even adult scholarships for leader training. **None of that would be possible without this fundraiser.** Please be mindful of this when selecting shifts to work. We are all working together to support 4-H programming in Calhoun County. Be respectful of one another's time and energy.

2026 Exploration Days



This year at Exploration Days, attendees were able to beat the heat!

The last couple of years it has been extremely hot during Expo Days – but attendees were very happy to have mild weather this year!

Calhoun County had 19 youth, 5 chaperones & 1 staff member in attendance this year! Attendees took a wide variety of classes, learning about shooting, animals and even how to make your own TV show!

A huge "Thank You" to the 4-H Council for providing scholarships for this amazing event! Will YOU be joining us next year? If you are ages 12-19 (as of 1/1/27), you are eligible! Exploration Days 2027 is being held June 23-25, 2027 so save the date!



News from Around the County

WELCOME...

To our new volunteers:

- Jason Fry
- Brittany Dowdy
- Gretchen Esser
- Dakota Jackson
- Lee Jackson



**Beyond
Ready**

Join 4-H Council

Are you interested in learning leadership skills, or helping to guide programming in Calhoun County? Do you want to learn how to plan events? Interested in learning marketing skills? If any of this sounds like you – 4-H Council is the place you want to be!

If you are interested in learning more, contact me at vargocre@msu.edu OR you can join us at a meeting to see what we are all about!

Normal meeting dates are the first Thursday of the month, but the August meeting is scheduled for Sunday, August 9 at the Boys & Girls barn after set up. We need more youth representatives!!

Volunteers Wanted

This year we have been lucky to have lots of returning volunteers, and quite a few new folks joining us. Many hands DO indeed make light work.

Do you know an adult aged 21 and up that would be interested in becoming a volunteer?

Refer them to me – email at vargocre@msu.edu or they can start the process here: https://www.canr.msu.edu/becoming_a_4_h_volunteer/



Calhoun County 4-H
315 W. Green Street
Marshall, MI 49068

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY | Extension



4-H Family News

Calhoun County



**Beyond
Ready**