

September 2025 Focus

Bell County Staff

Sheryl Austin

Cooperative Extension
Family & Community
Health

Meagan Cline

County Extension Agent
Natural Resources

Beverly Hodges

County Extension Agent
Family & Community
Health

Floyd Ingram

County Extension Agent
Agriculture

Sheryl Long

County Extension Agent
4-H & Youth Development

Laila Romero

4-H Program Assistant

VACANT

BLT Extension Agent

4-H Open House

September 9, 2025

5:00-7:00 pm

Cadence Bank Center

Assembly Hall

Sign up at <https://forms.gle/nwd1y57bU3gPYrz46> if you want to have a booth at this event!

Hunter's Spectacular

SAVE THE DATE!

The Bell County 4-H fundraiser will take place **Saturday, October 18, 2025!** More information inside the newsletter!



The new 4-H Year starts

on August 15th! This means you

can start re-enrolling your

family on 4-H Connect. NEW

families need to wait until

September 1st.

More details inside

this newsletter on enrollment.



1605 N. Main, Room 102

Belton, TX 76513

Phone: (254) 933-5305

Fax: (254) 933-5312

Website: <http://agrilife.org/bell4h/>

4-H Enrollment

4-H Enrollment starts **August 15th**! All enrollments are done via 4HOnline. You can access 4HOnline by going to our 4-H website at <http://agrillife.org/bell4h/> and clicking on the 4HOnline icon. V2.4honline.com.

A youth that is 8 years old and going into the 3rd grade must wait until September 1st to enroll for correct fees to be charged.

To maintain the level of programming and opportunities in the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program, an annual participant fee is implemented for each 4-H member (excluding Clover Kids). The participant fee is \$25 if enrolled from **August 15th to October 31st**, November 1st the participant fee will increase to **\$30**. **Please do not worry if you are still pending at the county level once you have enrolled.** The county office will try to keep up as best as we can by approving them at least once a week. As long as you complete your enrollment, you are in the system and good for enrollment and BCYF requirements. Enrollment dues must be paid by an electronic payment.

For instructions on how to enroll, please visit:

<http://agrillife.org/bell4h/4-h-enrollment-guidelines/4-h-enrollment-information/>

All volunteers who enroll will be charged \$10.00. This covers your screening for the year. All volunteers will have to re-enroll each year. Club Managers must enroll ASAP!

If you have further questions, please contact the County Extension Office at: 254-933-5305

4-H Age /Grade Requirements

Texas 4-H membership eligibility will be based on SCHOOL GRADE and not age. The eligibility rules and guidelines are:

Youth may participate in 4-H year from September 1st of grade three through August 31st following completion of grade twelve, with these age restrictions:

Minimum age - 8 (as of August 31, 2025 and in the 3rd grade)

Maximum age - 18 (as of August 31, 2025)

4-H Member Categories

Juniors: Grades 3, 4, and 5

Intermediates: Grades 6, 7, and 8

Seniors: Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12

Hunter Spectacular

Event Details

Drawing for 20 Guns and other large ticket items

*Winners will be drawn on Facebook Live on **Saturday, October 18th starting at 11:00 am**

-Once a ticket is drawn, it will not be put back into the drawing.

*4-H members are expected to sell at least **5** tickets per member.

-\$20 tickets

*Ticket turn-in will be by Club appointment only on:

Tuesday, October 14th through Friday, October 17th

8:00am – 11:00am or 1:00pm – 4:00pm

NEW This Year Sign up times available via a Google Sheet emailed out by Laila Romero

Clubs MUST pay with their 4-H Club check

Handgun Bonus Draw

These tickets will be \$50 per ticket and this drawing is limited to 100 tickets. The Bonus Draw will be sold only by Bell County 4-H Ambassadors.

*Each club is expected to donate \$100 to purchase the handgun for the Bonus Draw.

*Deadline for \$100 donation – September 26, 2025

*Bell County 4-H Ambassadors are expected to sell at least **5** tickets to the Bonus Draw before selling tickets for the main Hunter Spectacular drawing.

Each club needs to recruit at least one \$200 sponsor for this event. Feel free to get more!

4-H Club Incentives

We want to continue to incentivize member participation. In that effort, each Club that meets the 3 requirements listed below will earn a 10% kickback.

1. 100% ticket sales based on enrollment from last year based on each member selling 3 tickets.
2. Donate \$100 to the Bonus Draw side raffle.
3. Recruit at least one \$200 event sponsor—Deadline September 22, 2025

For example: if your club is given 100 tickets to sell based on last year's membership, you will receive the 10% kickback if you sell those 100 tickets, recruit at least one \$200 event sponsor, and donate \$100 to the Bonus Draw side raffle.

4-H Member Incentives

The 4-H member with the highest number of ticket sales, will get \$100 cash! This does not include tickets sales from the Bonus Draw (Ambassadors only). Make sure to complete the "sold by" portion on your tickets to get credit! Club Managers will have to keep track of this and share with the Extension Office on their club's highest seller and the number of tickets they sold.



County Council & Ambassadors



County Council Meeting Dates

Dates and programs have been set for 2025-2026 Bell County Council meetings. These meetings will take place at the Bell County Extension Office starting at 6:30 pm.

Date	Meeting Program	Community Service Projects
September 11	Club Officer Training	Crayon Initiative
November 13	Police Department	Military Appreciation Cards
January 8	State 4-H Officers	Hope Pregnancy Center Donations
March 5	Fire Department	Safe Place Donations
May 7	Council Officer Elections	Non-Perishable Food Drive

Crayon Initiative Donations

Bring us your old and broken crayons! The Crayon Initiative takes your old crayons and remanufactures them into new crayons for kids in hospitals all over the country, including our local McLane Children's Hospital. Bring your old, broken, worn-out, and unwanted crayons for recycling. Please do not bring new crayons for this event!



Suggestion: take new crayons to your church's children's section and bring their old crayon's for recycling.

Bell County 4-H Ambassadors for Hunter's Spectacular

The Bell County 4-H Ambassadors will be selling the Bonus Draw tickets for a very nice handgun. These tickets will be \$50 per ticket and this drawing is limited to 100 tickets. **The Bonus Draw will be sold only by Bell County 4-H Ambassadors.** Bell County 4-H Ambassadors are expected to sell at least 5 tickets to the Bonus Draw before selling tickets for the main Hunter Spectacular drawing. You will pick up these tickets from the Bell County Extension Office AND turn in your ticket stubs with payment back into the Extension Office.



FCH Project News



FCH Coalition Meeting

When: Monday, September 22nd

Where: Bell CEO

Time: 6:00 pm

We will be planning and prepping for the Bell County 4-H Food Show and Food Challenge contest!

Food Challenge Practices

Food Challenge is a 3-4 person team contest where the team is given 1 ingredient, and along with their predetermined pantry items and items they obtain from the on-site grocery store, they have to prepare a dish for the category given (appetizer, side dish, main dish, dessert). They have 40 minutes to use their supply box to make the dish and clean up. Then they present to Judges their dish talking about how it was prepared, nutrients, substitutions, etc. If this sounds like fun to you, practices are as follows:

- **September 7**, 1:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church Family Life Center (FUMC)
 - **September 14**, 2:00 p.m., County Extension Office
 - **September 21**, 1:00 p.m., FUMC
 - **October 5, 12, 19**, 2:00 p.m., FUMC
 - **November 2, 9, 16**, 2:00 p.m., FUMC

There are a variety of contest opportunities available, but the ones all participants should plan on are:

- Bell County, normally sometime in late October
- District 8, December 4 (if qualified to attend at the County contest)

Please contact Barbara Wood if you have any questions: 254-624-6507 or woodbtwice@gmail.com.

Leaders 4 Life Practices

Leaders 4 Life (L4L) is a 4-6 person team where they conduct a mock meeting using parliamentary procedure, handling the situations provided at the contest. Practices will be held at the County Extension Office at 6:00 p.m. and are scheduled as follows:

- **September 2, 16, 23, 30**
- **October 7, 14, 21, 28**
- **November 4, 11** - location for both of these days TBD
November 18 is the District 8 contest.

Please contact Barbara Wood if you have any questions: 254-624-6507 or woodbtwice@gmail.com.

FCH Quiz Bowl Practices

FCH Quiz Bowl is a 4-person team contest utilizing buzzers to answer questions. Practices will be at the County Extension Office at 6:00 p.m. and are scheduled as follows:

- **August 21, 28**
- **September 4, 11, 18, 25**
- **October 9, 23** (location TBD), 30
November 6 is the District 8 contest

Please contact Barbara Wood if you have any questions: 254-624-6507 or woodbtwice@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

4-H Open House

SAVE THE DATE! The Bell County 4-H Open House is set for **Tuesday, September 9th** at the Cadence Bank Event Center (formerly Bell County Expo Center), Assembly Hall from 5:00-7:00 pm. Want to have a 4-H Club or Project booth? Sign up for a booth here! <https://forms.gle/nwd1y57bU3gPYrz46>

4-H Robotics

When: Saturday, September 20th

Where: Cadence Bank Center

Time: 8:00 am—3:00 pm

Calling all adult volunteers wanting to volunteer with the new 4-H robotics program! Come learn from Texas 4-H Specialist, Derrick Bruton, on all things Texas 4-H Robotics. This is an all day event with lots of hands-on training! This is free for 4-H volunteers. Lunch will be provided.

Please RSVP by September 12th to Jennifer.Thompson@ag.tamu.edu or 254-933-5305.

Reach out to Sheryl.Long@ag.tamu.edu if you have any questions.

Junior Master Photography Workshop

WORKSHOP - JMP 1 (Class of 2026), 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$50.00

Where: District IV 4-H Center (@ Water Building), 17360 Coit Rd, Dallas

Who: 4-Hers 6th grade and up. Must bring a DSLR or mirrorless camera

What: Focus of Workshop: Camera Basics & Lighting. To be a certified “Junior Master Photographer”, candidates must attend BOTH workshop I and workshop II, complete a competency test with a minimum score of 80%, submit four photos taken by applicant demonstrating understanding of instruction, participate in at least one practice event, complete a photography community service, and take part in at least two organized project experiences. All activities attended during the application year may count towards JMP requirements.

Why: Although there is no yearly performance requirement, Junior Master Photographers are expected to return to counties and districts to help expand their photography programs. They receive the Junior Master Photographer pin. Certified JMPs in 9th grade are eligible to apply to the State 4-H Photography Ambassador Program.

RSVP: Registration is open September 1, 2025 on 4-H Online. Space is limited to 50 participants.

BRING: DSLR or mirrorless camera and batteries

Questions: Liz Schlak, 254-718-1332, liz.schlak@gmail.com

Pink Fishing “Reeling in the Cure”:

When: Saturday, September 6, 2025, 1– 4 p.m.

Who: All 4-H age kids 8-18 years old

What: Bass Fishing Tournament benefiting the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Organizers are requesting photography coverage of the event and winners. www.pinkfishing.com

Where: Cedar Ridge Park, Sunset Pavilion, Belton Lake, Temple

RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/SignupPinkFishing2025>

Questions: Liz Schlak, 254-718-1332, liz.schlak@gmail.com



Livestock Project News



2026 Major Show Lamb and Goat Validation

Physical validation will be held at the **Bell County EXPO** on the dates listed below:

Sheep and Goat Validation: October 21st and October 28th from 4:00 – 7:00 pm

Special Notes for Sheep and Goat Validations:

- The deadline for ownership, transfer, and registration is October 1, 2025. A color copy of the original registration papers MUST be sent to meagan.cline@ag.tamu.edu prior to validation.
- All lambs and goats validated during the 2025 State Fair Validation period including market animals WILL BE ELIGIBLE for 2026 Spring Major Shows. Once validated, the project MUST stay in the care of the exhibitor that project is validated to; if the exhibitor chooses to sell the project to a new exhibitor, the new exhibitor MUST REVALIDATE the project within the next validation period. Texas Lamb Breeders Association (TLBA) and Texas Goat Breeders Association (TGBA) tag numbers MUST be in the animal's ear to be recorded on the validation form at validation. All lambs and goats planning to go to San Angelo MUST have [TLBA/TGBA](#) tags in their ear and the number recorded on their validation form.
- If a TLBA/TGBA tag is added to the animal's ear after the State Fair show season, then the animal must be re-validated during the Major Show Validation season in order for the TLBA/TGBA tag number to be properly recorded on the Validation Form and eligible for TLBA/TGBA premiums during the spring show season.
- In 2021, Sheep and Goat Validation of Texas announced the introduction of the Roll-over Breeding Sheep and Breeding Goat program. For example, any BREEDING animal validated during the State Fair 2021 validation period is eligible to be exhibited by that exhibitor through the State Fair 2024 show season. If ownership changes, then the animal must be re-validated.
- All sheep and goats are eligible for family validation. Registered sheep and goats can family validate if the registration papers have all exhibitors full names listed as owners. Registration paper ownership will determine the exhibitors eligible to show that project.
- All Market Lambs, Market Goats, Breeding Sheep, Wether Dams, Breeding Goats, and Wether Does will use the same RFID validation tag.

If you have any questions, please contact Meagan Cline at meagan.cline@ag.tamu.edu or (254) 933-5305.

2026 Major Show Registered Heifer Validation

Physical validation will be held at the **Cadence Bank Center** on the dates listed below:

Heifer Validation: October 20th from 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Special Notes for Heifer Validations:

- Heifers already validated do NOT have to be revalidated or have a tag. Heifers ONLY need to be revalidated if they change breed or ownership.
- If you have leftover tags from June validation, you may use them this fall.
- Heifers that have existing 840 tags (bangs/premise ID/etc.), tags will not have to be removed. However, these will NOT take the place of a validation 840 tag. In other words, a heifer can have more than one 840 tag in their ear or you can remove previous tags; but regardless, the animal has to have a validation 840 tag. We will have a specific form for you to complete at the time of validation for any previously existing 840 tags that are removed to remain in compliance with TAHC/USDA.
- Please send a PDF copy of the **ORIGINAL** registration papers for the registered heifers you plan to validate to meagan.cline@ag.tamu.edu **PRIOR** to validation

If you have any questions, please contact Meagan Cline at meagan.cline@ag.tamu.edu or (254) 933-5305.



Livestock Project News



2026 Major Show Swine Validation Tag Orders:

Market Barrows, Registered Breeding Gilts, Crossbred Gilts

DEADLINE: September 19, 2025

COST: \$30/tag

There are two options for exhibitors to submit tag orders:

- o To **order online** and pay by credit card, visit: <https://bell-livestock-coalition.square.site/>
- o To **order in person** and pay with exact cash or check, come by the Extension Office with payment, payable to *Bell Livestock Coalition*.

Physical validation will be held at the **Bell County EXPO** on the dates listed below:

November 17th and November 24th from 4:00 – 7:00 pm

- All Market Barrows, Registered Breeding Gilts, and Crossbred/Commercial Breeding Gilts will use the same RFID validation tag.
- Registered Gilt papers must be owned on or before November 30, 2025 and they must also be registered (litter registration, bottom left hand corner) on or before November 30, 2025 . There are NO EXCEPTIONS on this! Please send a PDF copy of the **ORIGINAL** registration papers for the registered gilts you plan to validate to meagan.cline@ag.tamu.edu **PRIOR** to validation.

2026 Major Show Broiler Order

Deadline for Bell County 4-H: **Friday, September 5, 2025.**

- Broiler chicks cost \$1.50 each and must be ordered in increments of 25 with a maximum of 75 chicks per exhibitor or family (if multiple exhibitors in a family wish to share an order).
 - San Antonio birds are ordered separately from Houston/Austin birds.
 - Estimated pick up for San Antonio birds is December.
 - Estimated pick up Houston/Austin birds is January.

Order form is available at the Bell County Extension Office or online.

If you have any questions, contact Meagan Cline at meagan.cline@ag.tamu.edu or (254) 933-5305.

Texas 4-H Rabbit Extravaganza

Save the date! The Texas 4-H Rabbit Extravaganza will be held at the Bell County Expo on **Saturday, September 13, 2025**. Events include: rabbit show, skill contest, arts and crafts, best dressed bunny and a skill building workshop. **All entries must be submitted through 4HOnline.**

Bell County Youth Fair

February 7-14, 2026

Bell County Youth Fair Eligibility

Club Managers, please make sure you have a sign in sheet at each meeting and announce to all members to sign in before, during, and after the meeting.

- BCYF has a website in which everything will be posted including the new fair book, entry forms, superintendent's names and phone numbers, score sheets, and other information: <http://agrilife.org/bellctyyouthfair/>
- You **MUST** attend 2 meetings to participate in the BCYF. Your name MUST be on the sign in sheets for it to count.
- 2 meetings will be allowed from **August 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025** this year. No meetings will be allowed in January to use for the 2 meeting rule.

Other Important Information

The 2025 Fair Book will be posted soon. Visit the BCYF website at <https://agrilife.org/bellctyyouthfair/> for more information on entries, rules, judges, and more.

Make sure you are giving your Club Manager a good phone number and email to reach you. You will miss important information and deadlines if you don't check your emails!

Important Dates

Commercial Steer Weigh In	September 6, 2025	8:00 AM
Roaster Orders Due	October 10, 2025	5:00 PM
Online Entries Open	October 13, 2025	8:00 AM
Validate Lambs & Goats	October 21 & 28, 2025	4:00 - 7:00 PM
Validate Heifers	October 20, 2025	4:00 - 7:00 PM
Broiler Orders Due	November 7, 2025	5:00 PM
Turkey Pick Up (Tentatively)	November 3-7, 2025	3:30 - 5:30 PM
Commercial Heifer Palpate & Judge	November 15, 2025	TBD
Validate Swine	November 17 & 24, 2025	4:00 - 7:00 PM
Online Entry Deadline	December 1, 2025	5:00 PM
Chisholm Trail Christmas Ball	December 6, 2025	
Pick Up Roasters	December 5, 2025	3:30 - 5:30 PM
Commercial Heifer Sale	TBD	Milam County Auction
=Pick Up Broilers	December 23, 2025	3:30 - 5:30 PM
Rabbit Validation	January 4, 2026	3:00 - 5:00 PM
Weigh Out Commercial Steers	January 31, 2026	8:00 AM
Commercial Steer Recordbooks Due	February 6, 2026	5:00 PM

Bell County Youth Fair

February 7-14, 2026

BCYF Commercial Steer Weigh In

September 6, 2025

8:00 AM

Evan's Ranch, Little-River Academy

Steers will be tagged. It is recommended (not required) that steers weigh at least 650 to 700 pounds at the initial weigh-in. Steers weighing below 1000 pounds at the final weigh-in will have points discounted. This will be the only day for entering steers. Steers being fed for the Commercial Steer Show must be weaned. Nurse cows are not permitted.

BCYF Unregistered Heifer Paperwork Available

COST: \$5 per Heifer due at time of validation

VALIDATION: Monday, October 20, 4:00-7:00 PM, Bell County EXPO

To validate heifers for the BCYF Unregistered division, please request forms from Cheri.OBraden@ag.tamu.edu prior to validation and return completed paperwork at validation. County only tags for unregistered heifers will be purchased on-site for \$5.00 the night of validation.

BCYF Poultry Orders

Roaster orders due **October 10, 2025**

Broiler Orders are due **November 7, 2025**

Order forms are posted on the BCYF website <https://agrilife.org/bellctyouthfair/>. Forms and payment are due to the Bell County Extension Office by 5:00 PM on the respective due dates.

BCYF Entries

Entries will open on **October 13, 2025 at 8:00 AM**. All exhibitors must submit their entries online by **December 1st, 2025 at 5:00 PM**. For more information and to access the entry link, please visit the BCYF website <https://agrilife.org/bellctyouthfair/>.

Save the Date: BCYF Validation Dates

County only tags for sheep, goats, and swine will be purchased on-site for \$5.00 the night of validation.

BCYF/Major Show Sheep and Goat Validation: **October 21 and 28**

BCYF/Major Show Heifer Validation: **October 20**

BCYF/Major Show Swine Validation: **November 17 and 24**

Important Dates

September 2025

September 1: 4-H Enrollment Begins
September 2: Leaders 4 Life Practice
September 5: Major Show Broiler Orders Due
September 6: BCYF Commercial Steer Weigh In
September 7: Food Challenge Practice
September 9: 4-H Open House
September 11: 4-H County Council Meeting
September 12: Robotics Training RSVP Deadline
September 13: Texas 4-H Rabbit Extravaganza
September 14: Food Challenge Practice
September 16: Leaders 4 Life Practice
September 19: Major Show Swine Tag Order Deadline
September 20: Robotics Volunteer Training
September 21: Food Challenge Practice
September 22: HS Club \$200 Sponsor Recruitment Deadline
September 22: FCH Coalition Meeting
September 23: Leaders 4 Life Practice
September 26: HS \$100 Donation Deadline
September 30: Leaders 4 Life Practice

October 2025

October 5: Food Challenge Practice
October 7: Leaders 4 Life Practice
October 10: BCYF Roaster Order Due
October 12: Food Challenge Practice
October 13: BCYF Entries Open
October 14: Leaders 4 Life Practice
October 14-17: HS Ticket Turn-In (Club Managers ONLY)
October 18: Hunter's Spectacular
October 19: Food Challenge Practice
October 20: Major Show/BCYF Heifer Validation, Expo
October 21: Leaders 4 Life Practice
October 21: Major Show/BCYF Lamb and Goat Validation, Expo
October 28: Major Show/BCYF Lamb and Goat Validation, Expo
October 28: Leaders 4 Life Practice

November 2025

November 2: Food Challenge Practice
November 4: Leaders 4 Life Practice
November 7: BCYF Broiler Orders Due
November 9: Food Challenge Practice
November 11: Leaders 4 Life Practice
November 13: County Council Meeting
November 15: BCYF Commercial Heifer Judging
November 16: Food Challenge Practice
November 17: BCYF & Major Show Swine Validation
November 18: D8 Leaders 4 Life Contest
November 24: BCYF & Major Show Swine Validation

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

BELL COUNTY
4-H NEWSLETTER

Bell County Extension
1605 N. Main Room 102
Belton, TX 76513
Phone: 254-933-5305
Fax: 254-933-5312

Shel Long



Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Everything will be posted on the Bell County 4-H website

<http://agrilife.org/bell4h/>