

January 2026 Focus

Bell County Staff

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TSC Clover Campaign

November 29th – December 15th



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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
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

Hope Pregnancy Center Donations

The Hope Pregnancy Center is in need of donations for newborn babies. Items such as: onesie, diapers in newborn or smaller size, bottles, teethingers, baby toys, and other newborn related items.

4-H Club Managers & Volunteers

Membership Advisory Board Meeting

When: January 20, 2026 **Where:** CEO **Time:** 6:00 pm

This meeting is open to all parents and leaders! We encourage all Club Managers to attend and give their opinions on the Bell County 4-H program.

BCYF Container Pick Up

Attention Club Managers! You can start picking up your food containers starting on **January 5th** at the CEO for your club members that will be competing in the 2026 BCYF Food Division. Our business hours are Monday-Friday 9:00 am –12:00 & 1:00—5:00 pm. This is for Club Managers ONLY!

REMINDER! There will not be a 2nd chance table! Everything must be correct upon arrival!

Upcoming Events

Clover Kids

2026

January 17	Meeting at CEO @2:00pm
February 6	Deadline for CK Fair Registration
February 9-11	BCYF: Peewee Showmanship
February 21	Clover Kids Fair
March 21	Meeting at CEO @2:00pm
April 18	Meeting at CEO @2:00pm
May 16	Meeting at CEO @2:00pm
July 10	Clover Kids Recordbook to CEO
August 6	Bell County 4-H Awards Banquet

Check out the Clover Kids website for more information on upcoming events:

<https://agrilife.org/bell4h/4-h-activities/clover-kids/>

For questions, contact Dawn Brown or
Amanda Robbins - 512-333-2306

bc4hcloverkids@yahoo.com

Ag Product ID

Ag product ID practices are resuming in January. Practices will be held at the CEO at 6:00 pm on the following dates:

January: 8 and 22

February: 5 and 19

March: 5

Upcoming contests:

BCYF – February 13th

HLSR – March 18th

Rodeo Austin – March 23rd

Please contact Michael Canales at 254-541-6293 or guajamen1@gmail.com if you are interested in joining Ag Product ID or if you have any questions.

D8 4-H Youth Workshop Series

Calling all District 8 4-H youth! Get ready for an exciting new Youth Workshop Series designed to help YOU grow as a leader, improve your communication skills, and prepare for future opportunities in 4-H and beyond! These workshops will be presented virtually, via Zoom. Each one will begin at 7:00 and should last around 1 hour.

Upcoming Topics:

Jan 8: What is a Leader?

TBD: Leadership Opportunities

Apr 9: Preparing for Interviews with guest speaker Bailee Wright, Texas 4-H Foundation

Open to all D8 4-H members! Attend one or attend them all. You don't want to miss out on these superstar sessions.

Sign up here: <https://forms.office.com/r/xKmKEcHcxv>

Upcoming Events

Bell County Photography Contest

The Bell County 4-H Photography Contest is right around the corner so start preparations now! The Bell County entry deadline will be **Friday, February 23rd**. Entries must be **EMAILED to Sheryl.Long@ag.tamu.edu**. The winner of each category in each of the age divisions in the Bell County 4-H Contest will advance to the District 8 Contest. Senior aged 4-H members that win their category in the county contest, will also advance to the State contest.

Please make sure and follow the instruction on the 2025 Texas 4-H Photography Contest Rules & Guidelines AND the District 8 Contest rules. Both will be posted on the Bell County 4-H website once available.

Categories will be broken down per age division as follows: (Descriptions Below)

Junior Age Division 3 Categories

Animals – Domestic/Wildlife
Plant/Landscape/Nature
People
Catch All

Intermediate Age Division 6 Categories

Animals – Domestic/Wildlife
Plant/Landscape/Nature
People
Details/Macro
Elements of Design
Catch All
Dominant Color
Theme—Volunteers in Action

Senior Age Division All 18 Categories

Animals—Domestic	Long Exposure
Animal—Wildlife	Motion/Action
Catch All	People
Details & Macro	Plant/Flora
Dominant Color	Reflections
Elements of Design	Shadow/Silhouette
Enhanced	Transportation
Food	Theme—"Volunteers in Action", Celebrate the heart of
Landscape & Nature (non-animal)	Texas 4-H by capturing volunteers in meaningful mo-
Leading Line	ments of service.

Upcoming Events

2026-2027 Texas 4-H Council At-Large Delegate

The Texas 4-H Council is a team of 4-H members elected by their peers from across the state of Texas representing the twelve AgriLife Extension districts plus an additional six At-Large Delegates, elected by any Senior level 4-H member across the state. The Texas 4-H Council members serve as ambassadors for the Texas 4-H program. Members represent the organization statewide while collaborating with Extension faculty to plan, coordinate, and facilitate activities and events.

The 2026-2027 At-Large Delegate application information and the Council Contract (applicable to both At-Large and District members) have been posted on the website <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/ambassadors/>. Please make sure you review the contract and agree to it before running for one of the positions that serves on the Texas 4-H Council.

The July Council Training is scheduled for July 27-30, 2026. Location TBD.

National 4-H Conference April 10-15, 2026

WHAT IS NATIONAL 4-H CONFERENCE?

National 4-H Conference is the Secretary of Agriculture's premier youth development opportunity to engage youth in developing recommendations for the 4-H Youth Development Program. If you want to strengthen your leadership and/or citizenship projects, this is an excellent opportunity.

LOCATION:

The 2026 National 4-H Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City – Arlington, VA. It is right by the Ronald Reagan National Airport and approximately 5 miles from the Nation's Capital, making it the perfect gateway to Washington, D.C.'s leaders, monuments and museums.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

The National 4-H Conference requires youth who are focused and committed to working during the Conference and in their state. The ***Texas delegation will be limited to 1-5 youth delegates***, and 1-2 adult chaperones who will be required to engage in pre- and post-conference work and participate in all scheduled conference activities. The minimum age requirement for a Texas youth delegate is 15 years old (must be by January 1, 2026). The maximum age for a Texas youth delegate is 18.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Applications will open on December 19, 2025. Applications must be submitted online and certified through **4HOnline** by January 18, 2026. Choose '**2026 National 4-H Conference Delegate Application**'. A fee is NOT required to complete the application. County Extension Office personnel will certify the application, so please communicate with your Extension Agent of your intent to apply. Final selection of delegates will be made based on the online application; you may be contacted for a telephone interview. The final selection of delegates will be announced on, or before, January 28, 2026.

Application can be found at: <https://agrilife.org/bell4h/> or <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/events/nationalconference/>.

Scholarships

Graduating Seniors

Make sure and watch the newsletter and the Bell County 4-H Website for scholarship application deadlines. The website is always being updated with new scholarships and deadlines. Sheryl will be e-mailing applications to family e-mails listed on 4-H Connect for 4-H members listed in Grade 12.

2026 Scholarships Available

State Fair of Texas Scholarship — **February 1st**
Houston Livestock Show Exhibitor, Hildebrand, & Area Go Texan Scholarship — **February 2nd**
Texas Extension Education Association — **February 12th**
Texas 4-H Foundation FINAL Application due ONLINE — **February 15th**
Bell County 4-H Scholarship — **TBD**
Texas Farm Bureau Scholarship — **TBD**
Bell County Youth Fair — **TBD**
Capital Farm Credit Scholarship — **TBD**
Lone Star Ag Credit Scholarship — **TBD**
District 8 TAE4-HA Scholarship — **TBD**
Heart O' Texas Fair & Rodeo Scholarship — **TBD**
Don't hesitate to ask for help if you have any questions regarding scholarships.

FCH Project News

Bell County Fashion Show Contest & Duds to Dazzle Contests

The Bell County 4-H contests for Fashion Show contest will have a date determined very soon! So start working on your projects NOW!

NEW THIS YEAR! Fashion Show—All age divisions will use the same categories

- Buying
- Business/Interview Attire
 - Fantastic Fashions Under \$25
 - Semi-Formal to Formal
 - Theater/Costume

- Construction
- Everyday Living
 - Refashion
 - Semi-Formal to Formal
 - Theater/Costume

UPCYCLE(*NEW)

TEXAS NATURAL FIBER(*NEW)

There will no longer be a separate contest for Natural Fiber. This is now rolled into the Texas Natural Fiber category. Students will only be able to enter 1 category for this contest.

For the Duds to Dazzle contest, the entry deadline will be the Bell County 4-H Contest date! Extension Agents will make team assignments after the Bell County contest. You **will not** pre-determine your team. Entry forms can be found on the Bell County 4-H website once the Bell County Contest date has been set.

FCH Project News

FCH Coalition Meeting

When: January 12, 2026

Where: Bell CEO

Time: 6:00 pm

Fashion Show contest will be on the agenda!

Consumer Decision Making

Consumer Decision Making is a judging contest where the participant evaluates and ranks 4 products for a given consumer. This is open to Juniors, Intermediates, and Seniors for judging. Intermediates provide one set of verbal reasons and seniors provide two sets of verbal reasons.

Practices will be at the County Extension Office at 6:00 p.m. as follows:

January 5, 22, 26

February 2, 17, 23

March 9, 19, 24, 30

April 6, 13

Contest in San Angelo, Thursday, February 19

Contest in San Antonio, Saturday, February 21

District 8 Contest, Friday, April 17 in Waxahachie

For more information, contact Barbara Wood at woodbtwice@gmail.com or text 254-624-6507.

Photography Workshop – Food Photography

When: Saturday, January 24, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Who: JMPs and TX 4-H Photography Ambassadors

What: Learn from Central Market professional chefs and food stylists about food photography in a “Foodie Wonderland” (Central Market). We will be joined by Chef Denis Dello Stritto and a Central Market food stylist.

Where: Plano Central Market, 320 Coit Rd, Plano (<https://www.centralmarket.com>)

Cost: Free workshop, but bring money for lunch at one of the multiple options to choose from in the store, including in-store made gelato! Bring money and a good appetite!

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

AMBASSADOR LEADER: David Bureau & Bethany Wittig

ADULT LEADER: Cathy Bureau, Cebureau@yahoo.com, Brandy Gray, 979-557-3751, fireflyphotographyn-btx@gmail.com



Livestock Project News



Bell County 4-H Livestock Page

Exhibitors and their families can always find the latest Livestock Project information at:

<https://agrilife.org/bell4h/projects/4-h-livestock/>

Texas 4-H Dog Project Validation

To be eligible for the Texas 4-H Dog Show, dogs must be validated by January 10, 2026 in 4-H Online. Attached are detailed written instructions. Video instructions are also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eogx1Dv3WQI> if that is more convenient

2026 Texas 4-H Dog Show Rule Book will be posted on <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/dog-care-training/>.

As 4-H members complete their validation, here are some things to keep in mind:

The box that says Breeder is where they list the breed of the dog rather than the breeder. 4-H Online has set options, so we do the best we can to work with those options.

For purebred dogs (they do not have to be registered, just look purebred) you will select the correct Group, then type in the breed of the dog.

For mixed breed dogs you will select the Weight Group of the dog and list the dominant breed along with the word "Mix" or list the two breeds if known. (Example: Border Collie Mix or Mastiff/Great Dane.)

Photos of the left and right side of the dog should be a side view of the whole dog. Get on the dog's level so they do not turn into top views. They should also be clear and light enough we can see all markings and color of the dog. The dog should only be wearing a collar. No sweaters, costumes, rain gear or anything that covers the dog's color and markings.

Dogs MUST be validated each year. If you validated a dog last year, the information and photos will be in the system, but you must still review and SUBMIT to validate for the 2025-2026 4-H year. Please update the photos if the dog has changed significantly since last year.

We do encourage you to validate any dogs that you are eligible to show. Situations may change through the year.

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.
- All 4-H members **MUST** be enrolled by **December 10, 2025** to participate in the BCYF. However, the fee will go up after October 31st so do it quickly.

Other Important Information

The 2026 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

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

BCYF Home School Eligibility

The Homeschool Eligibility deadline is **January 16, 2026 by 5:00 pm**. All Homeschool students must fill out an eligibility form and turn it in by the deadline.

NO FORMS WILL BE AVAILABLE OR ACCEPTED UNTIL AFTER JANUARY 1, 2026.

Go to <http://agrilife.org/bell4h/4-henrollment-guidelines/eligibility> to fill out your form.

Bell County Youth Fair

February 7-14, 2026

Bell County Youth Fair – PeeWee Showmanship

Rules:

1. PeeWees may only show Lambs, Goats and Swine
2. A parent / legal guardian must be ring side the entire time during PeeWee Showmanship.
3. Only animals previously entered and exhibited in the BCYF will be used for PeeWee Showmanship.
4. Ages - 2nd grade and below / younger will be allowed to show in PeeWee Showmanship.
5. Only a BCYF exhibitor is to assist PeeWee exhibitors in the ring.

Dates:

MONDAY, FEB. 9, 2026

- o PeeWee swine showmanship is at the conclusion of the market swine showmanship.

TUESDAY, FEB. 10, 2026

- o PeeWee goat showmanship will be at the conclusion of the market goat showmanship.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11, 2026

- o PeeWee lamb showmanship will be at the conclusion of the market lamb showmanship.

For questions, contact the Bell County Youth Fair Coordinator Cheri O'Braden at cheri.obraden@ag.tamu.edu

BCYF Horse Exhibitor Ride Nights

Speed Events: Thursday, February 5, 2026; 6:00-9:00 pm in the ELC

Performance Classes: Friday, February 6, 2026; 3:00-6:00 pm in ELC

Stock Horse/Cattle Classes: Friday, February 6, 2026; 6:00-9:00 pm in ELC

Make sure you read and follow the rules for this event! Rules can be found here: <https://agrilife.org/bellctyyouthfair/files/2024/09/2025-BCYF-Ride-Night-Rules-1.pdf>

BCYF Photography CHANGES

READ THE YOUTH FAIR INFORMATION starting on page 119. Photography will NOT be entered digitally. Photography will be judged on impact, creativity, technical aspects, composition, and print quality. Make sure your photo meets class definitions.

* All entries must be printed on 5" x 7" photo paper, securely affixed on a solid white 7" X 9" mount board or foam board (see sample in fair book). Any other backer board will be disqualified. See instructions for mounting photos on BCYF website.

* The photo may be gloss or matte.

* Photos must NOT be framed, and no glass or plexiglass is allowed, these will be disqualified.

* A label with the exhibitor number and class will be affixed to the back of the foam board.

Photography examples, and definitions can be found online at <http://agrilife.org/bellctyyouthfair>

Important Dates

January 2026

January 4: BCYF Rabbit Validation
January 5: BCYF Container Pick Up—CLUB MANAGERS ONLY
January 5: CDM Practice
January 8: D8 4-H Youth Workshop
January 8: Ag Product Id Practice
January 8: County Council Meeting
January 10: Texas 4-H Dog Show Validation Deadline
January 12: 4-H FCH Coalition Meeting
January 16: BCYF Home School Eligibility Due
January 17: Clover Kids Meeting
January 18: National 4-H Conference
January 20: MAB Meeting
January 22: CDM Practice
January 22: Ag Product Id Practice
January 24: Texas 4-H Photography Workshop
January 26: CDM Practice
January 31: BCYF Weigh Out Commercial Steers

February 202

February 1: State Fair of Texas Scholarship Due
February 2: HLSR Scholarships Due
February 2: CDM Practice
February 5: Ag Product Id Practice
February 5: BCYF Ride Night (Speed)
January 8: Ag Product Id Practice
February 6: BCYF Commercial Steer Recordbooks Due
February 6: BCYF Ride Night (Performance & Stock)
February 7-14: Bell County Youth Fair
February 12: BC TEEA Scholarship Due
February 15: Texas 4-H Foundation Scholarship Due
February 16: BCYF Home School Eligibility Deadline
February 17: CDM Practice
February 19: Ag Product Id Practice
February 21: Clover Kids Fair
February 23: Bell County 4-H Photography Entries Due
February 23: CDM Practice

March 2026

March 5: County Council Meeting
March 5: Ag Product Id Practice
March 9: CDM Practice
March 19: CDM Practice
March 24: CDM Practice
March 30: CDM Practice

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

BELL COUNTY
4-H NEWSLETTER

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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/>