



# Clover Chronicle

## February- March 2026

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## Teen Exchange Breakfast Fundraiser

Join us for a community meal!



**Saturday,  
February 21**  
7:30-11:00 AM  
Easton Firehouse  
11804 NY Route 40  
Schaghticoke, NY 12154

\$10.00 - Ages 13+  
\$8.00 - Ages 6-12  
FREE - Ages 5-



**Reserve Your Spot Today!**

Text/Call - 518-421-2360 OR  
Scan to Prepay & Reserve  
Add reservation details in the "Add Note" box



Details for the breakfast on page 5

## 4-H Club Reports

### Club Reports

At the end of each month, club secretaries should submit the Secretary's Monthly Report form to Kandis Freer at the CCE.

Refer to page 27 in the "4-H Club Secretary's Handbook" for examples and forms. Even though the Clover Chronicle is printed bi-monthly, secretaries should submit their reports every month. You receive points on the Honor Club Application for every Secretary's Report submitted on a timely basis.

The Secretary's Monthly Report is also available on the Rensselaer County 4-H website. You can find it on the 4-H Forms page. Secretaries, please email reports to [kmf83@cornell.edu](mailto:kmf83@cornell.edu).

### Clover Kids and Critters- Pittstown

Clover Kids and Critters 4-H Club hosted the Winter Fair in December at Tamarac Elementary School. We offered natural ornaments, knowing your greens and a community service project. Our club met in December and made ornaments and in January learned how to use a wood burner. A couple of our older members visited a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom with their rabbits.



### Stablemates- Melrose

The club met in October, and we elected officers for the year. We planned a horse rescue halter drive. Voted for the Lohnes Award and made centerpieces for the horse banquet. In November we met and discussed topic ideas for horse communications. We donated food to the food

pantry and planned the church community service dinner. We also discussed doing a club drill team.

## Holiday Mitten Tree

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Mitten Tree! Thanks to your generosity, we were able to assist several of our neighbors to stay warm this winter!



## STAR

Save the date for the 2026 4-H State Teen Action Retreat (STAR), complete with a time of year and new location! 4-H STAR will take place September 18-20, 2026, and Camp Woodland in Oswego County. This program is open to 4-H members ages 13-19. Please continue our website for updates: <https://www.nys4-h.org/star>





## How to reach us

Call the CCE Office: (518) 272-4210  
Monday through Friday, 8am to 4pm

You can leave a voicemail message  
any time!

## 4-H Program Development Committee (PDC)

*4-H PDC members are available to you.  
If you have comments or suggestions don't hesitate  
to reach out to any of our PDC members.*

### STAFF

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**Kandis Freer**, 4-H Team Leader  
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**Fax:** (518) 272-1648 - ATTENTION 4-H

**Facebook:** Rensselaer County 4-H

**YouTube:** CCE Rensselaer  
<https://www.youtube.com/ccerensselaer>

### **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County**

99 Troy Road, Suite 203  
East Greenbush, NY 12061

**Cornell Cooperative Extension is a unique  
educational network, linking Rensselaer County  
with resources from Cornell University, USDA,  
and the land grant university system.**

**Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer  
and educator recognized for providing equal  
program and employment opportunities in  
accordance with applicable laws.**

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The Clover Chronicle is published six times a year  
by the 4-H Youth Development staff of Cornell  
Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County as  
part of our informal educational programs for youth.

No one shall be denied the opportunity to  
participate or receive information based on their  
ability to pay. If you have special needs that we can  
accommodate, please contact us at (518) 272-4210  
or [rensselaer@cornell.edu](mailto:rensselaer@cornell.edu)

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Cooperative Extension.



## Leader's Digest

Volunteers are the life's blood of our organization.

We would like to thank all our volunteers for their passion for working with youth, and their dedication to 4-H.

## Reenrollment Update

Reenrollments were due back to the 4-H office by November 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have not reenrolled at this time, please know that you are not covered by our insurance. If you plan to participate in any 4-H activities (i.e. club meetings, community service projects, county-wide events, etc.), please send in your enrollment forms. We will be transitioning over to our new distribution lists shortly for communications from the 4-H office to our 4-H families. If you have not re-enrolled by then you will not be receiving any further communications from us.

If you have questions, or need copies of the reenrollment forms, please contact Eileen at [emd32@cornell.edu](mailto:emd32@cornell.edu)

To complete the online reenrollment process please follow the instructions below:

Log into 4-HOnline; *You will be asked to reset your password if you have not logged in before.* Use the email address which you are receiving the email blast with to sign in. Update any incorrect information and add any new projects.

Go to the CCE website 4-H Forms section at <https://rensselaer.cce.cornell.edu/4-h-youth/4-h-forms> and complete a Code of Conduct & Acknowledgment of Risk Form/ Photo Release for each youth.

- Acknowledgement of Risk/ Photo Release
- Code of Conduct

These can be uploaded to 4-H Online, or emailed to Eileen at [emd32@cornell.edu](mailto:emd32@cornell.edu)

Volunteers do need to complete and submit a Volunteer Code of Conduct. These also can be uploaded to 4-H Online, or emailed to Eileen at [emd32@cornell.edu](mailto:emd32@cornell.edu)

Payment for your reenrollments can be made via the CCE website donation page at <https://rensselaer.cce.cornell.edu/donate> please note that the payment is for 4-H Re-enrollments and for who, or a check payable to CCE Rensselaer County, that can be mailed to the 4-H office at 99 Troy Rd., Suite 203, East Greenbush, NY 12061

Enrollment fees are:

\$15.00 for each child (maximum of \$45 for families with more than 3 children)

\$10.00 for each leader (Maximum \$10 per couple)

\*\*\*A maximum of \$55.00 per family\*\*\*

Re-enrollments need to be submitted by November 1st. If you have not reenrolled by then please know that you are not covered by our insurance. If you plan to participate in any 4-H activities, make sure you have completed the reenrollment process. Youth do need to be enrolled by May 15th to show at the fair.

## Annual Volunteer Harassment Prevention Training

4-H volunteers, the Harassment Prevention Training is an annual requirement to be enrolled as a Cornell Cooperative Extension volunteer and needs to be completed each year. The virtual training takes approximately 10 minutes and can be found at <http://blogs.cornell.edu/ccevolunteertraining/required-training/>. When completed, please forward the confirmation email to [cce-rensselaer-volunteer@cornell.edu](mailto:cce-rensselaer-volunteer@cornell.edu).

## Ambassador Council Teens

The Ambassadors Council Teens met in January and after their business meeting, they prepared a meal for the Joseph's House shelter. The group also planned out a few more community service projects for the upcoming year. The next meeting of the Ambassadors Council Teens will be March 20<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm at Van Rensselaer Manor. We will do egg dying and a spring door hanger project as a community service with the residents. Any 4-H teens are more than welcome to join us! For more information about the Ambassadors Council Teens, please contact Eileen at [emd32@cornell.edu](mailto:emd32@cornell.edu).

Thank you, MacKenzie Damond, Sophie Townsend and Lili Ruepp, for speaking to the legislators during National 4-H Week. Your voices and stories helped show that our youth are truly *Beyond Ready* for anything. We appreciate your leadership and the impact you make every day.



## Teen Exchange

It is all about our Pancake Fundraiser and our upcoming Smith Orchard Pie fundraiser. Please keep an eye out for details related to the pie sale as they will come out in one of our future weekly email blasts. We hope to fix you a delicious Pancake Breakfast on February 21<sup>st</sup>. We are serving from 7:30 AM to 11 AM at the Easton Firehouse. The fundraising is essential to help our members meet their goals of traveling or hosting this summer. Thank you in advance for all that support our fundraisers. Please find the Pancake Breakfast details in this issue.



## Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser – Benefit 4-H Teen Exchange

Mark your calendar and plan on letting the Rensselaer County 4-H Teen Exchange serve you February 21<sup>st</sup> between 7:30 and 11 AM at the Easton Firehouse – 11804 NY Route 40, Schaghticoke 12154. You are sure to have a hearty meal that will get your day started off right. RSVP recommended by texting/calling 518-421-2360 and/or going to our CCE Rensselaer website at the link below to pre-pay and place your reservation in the “additional information box”.

[https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=NJDL6WY2MGZ58](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=NJDL6WY2MGZ58)

5 years and under eat free, 6 to 12 years old are \$8 and 13 years and over \$10. We hope to see you there. The more the merrier! \*Flyer on the front page

## 2026 Agricultural Literacy Week Call for Volunteers

We are seeking volunteers for our Agricultural Literacy Week Program. Volunteers will be visiting local elementary schools in the week of March 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 and select dates from March through May to read a fun and engaging book in addition to completing a related activity with kids. If you would like to participate in this exciting educational event, please contact Mamnenge: [mbq242@cornell.edu](mailto:mbq242@cornell.edu)

## Horse Bowl Practices are Underway

Do you have an interest in horses and would like to learn more about them? You don't need to have a horse, you do not even have to be in a horse club. Consider joining our coaches and fellow 4-H members that want to learn all about horses. Practices are being held for non-Cloverbud Youth on Sundays from 1:30 to 3 PM at the Gospel Union Church in Averill Park on Plank Road. Feel free to bring a friend. Please spread the word and RSVP so we have a way of reaching members should we need to cancel. Please RSVP to Bernie at [bw27@cornell.edu](mailto:bw27@cornell.edu) or call 518-272-4210 and leave Bernie a message. The regional contest for Horse Bowl is March 21<sup>st</sup>. Stay tuned for more information about practices for Hippology. The regional Hippology Contest is scheduled for April 25<sup>th</sup>.

## Horse Communications

Mark your calendars for March 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the CCE office for our County Horse Communications. Please complete the [registration](#) and submit to the CCE office by March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Timeslots will be available for participants to sign up in advance to help keep things moving smoothly. A link to a timeslot will be sent out to registrants after March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please follow the instructions on the enclosed form to sign up. The county horse communications is the first leg in members being considered and selected to move on to the Regional and State Contests. If you have any questions, please reach out to Bernie at [bw27@cornell.edu](mailto:bw27@cornell.edu) or 518-272-4210. The Regional Horse Communications Contest will be held on April 25<sup>th</sup> and the New York State Horse Communications Contest will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> at Cornell University. Please know we will need teen evaluators as well for the county event on March 13<sup>th</sup>. This is open to any members who is interested in being a teen evaluator and ideally has presented in the past, but at the very least is interested in learning more about presenting and working with other teens to evaluate. Training will be provided prior to the start of the presentations on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Contact Bernie if you are interested in being a teen evaluator.

[County Horse Communication Fillable.pdf](#)

## 4-H Shooting Sports

The annual New York State 4-H Shooting Sports Winter Instructor Training is scheduled for February 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> at the 4-H Training Center in Ballston Spa. This three-day training is open to 4-H approved and enrolled volunteers. Disciplines offered at this training are Archery, Rifle, Air Pistol, Hunting/Outdoor Skills, Muzzleloader, and Shotgun. Registration will be very limited, if you are interested in attending, please contact Eileen at [emd32@cornell.edu](mailto:emd32@cornell.edu) as soon as possible, as you do need to be an approved 4-H volunteer to attend the training.

## New York Farm Show Tickets

Would you be interested in attending the New York Farm Show? We have FREE tickets at our office. Contact Mamnenge and arrange a time to pick up yours. Call 518-272-4210 or email her at [mbg242@cornell.edu](mailto:mbg242@cornell.edu).

Since 1985, the New York Farm Show has been the Northeast's top indoor farm event, attracting thousands of farmers and agricultural professionals. With over 400 exhibitors showcasing the latest farm equipment, agricultural technology, tractors, combines, and crop protection products, it's the ultimate destination for discovering cutting-edge innovations. Whether you need dairy and beef production tools, seed technology, or woodlot management solutions, this event offers everything to help farmers boost efficiency, increase productivity, and stay ahead in the industry.

## Junior Chefs

4-H Junior Chefs Workshop  
Tuesday, February 17th @ 5:00pm at the CCE Office  
\$10.00



The 4-H Junior Chefs will meet on Tuesday, February 17th at 5:00pm at the CCE Office. This workshop is for youth 8 years and older, and they will be making some fun foods for dinner! Pre-registration is required no later than Thursday, February 12th. There is a \$10.00 participation fee per youth. To register a youth, or for more information, please contact Eileen at [emd32@cornell.edu](mailto:emd32@cornell.edu).

## Spring Dog Obedience Classes

Ready for a better-behaved dog? We are gauging interest for basic dog obedience classes this spring at the Schaghticoke Fairgrounds. These sessions would focus on foundational skills such as leash manners, basic commands (sit, stay, come), positive training techniques, and strengthening communication between dogs and their handlers.

If you are interested in participating, please let Mamnenge know @ [mbg242@cornell.edu](mailto:mbg242@cornell.edu) by February 20th.

## 2026 NYS 4-H Livestock Summit

<https://cornell.zoom.us/j/71DowvFdTpaPO0dQeuxBEQ>

Registration is Open for the  
2026 NYS 4-H Livestock

Summit! 

Join us for an exciting series of Wednesday night sessions from February 4–March 4, 7:00–8:30 p.m., featuring expert presenters and interactive Kahoot games each week! Come for one or come for all of them.

Open to all youth interested in learning more about animal science

Sessions will be recorded and shared on the NYS 4-H YouTube page

Flyer and registration link available below



**NYS 4-H LIVESTOCK**

**2026 NYS 4-H LIVESTOCK SUMMIT**  
FEBRUARY 4TH TO MARCH 4TH @ 7 P.M. VIA ZOOM

- February 4th - Hit the Ground Running: Start your Swine Project Strong!  
Katlyn Cain- Manager of Industry Relations- National Pork Board
- February 11th - Turning Livestock into Careers: Meat Science Opportunities!  
Ethan Scheffler, Meat Lab Manager, Dept of Animal Science at Ohio State
- February 18th - The G.O.A.T. Guide, Raising Goats 101!  
Jennifer Bassman, Owner, Heritage Haus Farm
- February 25th - Next-Level Show Calves: Skills, Strategy & Preparing for the Eastern Regional Angus Show  
Nicole Tommell, Junior Angus Association of NY Advisor and Board Member
- March 4th- More Than the Show Ring: NYS 4-H Livestock Opportunities and Brand New Quiz Bowl!  
Brian Aukema- NYS 4-H Livestock Specialist

## Intro to Robotics using XRP

Youth ages 12+ (no experience necessary)

February 25<sup>th</sup>- March 18<sup>th</sup>,

5:30pm-7pm

Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development

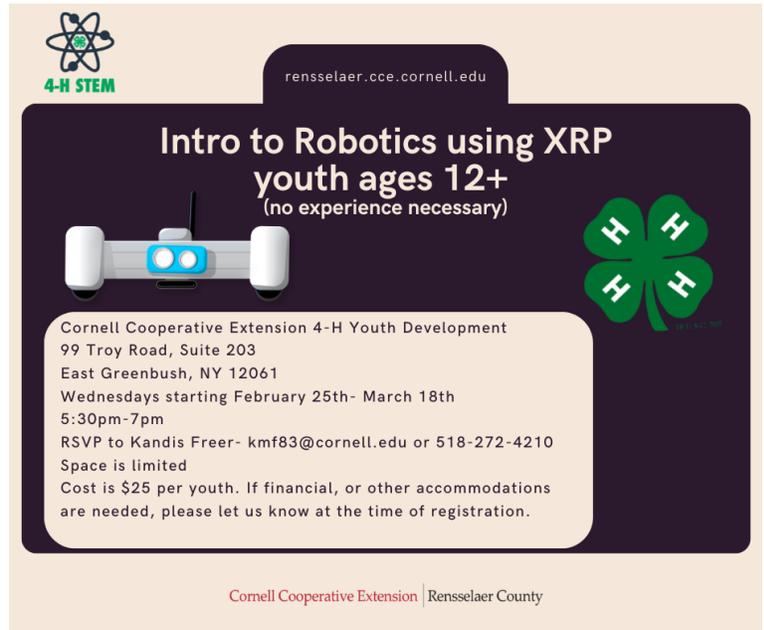
99 Troy Road, Suite 203

East Greenbush, NY 12061

RSVP to Kandis Freer- [kmf83@cornell.edu](mailto:kmf83@cornell.edu) or 518-272-4210

Space is limited

The cost is \$25 per youth. If financial, or other accommodations are needed, please let us know at the time of registration.



The flyer features a dark purple background with a white robot (XRP) in the center. At the top left is the 4-H STEM logo, and at the top right is the URL [rennselaer.cce.cornell.edu](http://rennselaer.cce.cornell.edu). The title "Intro to Robotics using XRP" is in white, with "youth ages 12+ (no experience necessary)" below it. A green 4-leaf clover logo is on the right. A white box contains the event details: "Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development, 99 Troy Road, Suite 203, East Greenbush, NY 12061, Wednesdays starting February 25th- March 18th, 5:30pm-7pm, RSVP to Kandis Freer- kmf83@cornell.edu or 518-272-4210, Space is limited, Cost is \$25 per youth. If financial, or other accommodations are needed, please let us know at the time of registration." The bottom of the flyer says "Cornell Cooperative Extension | Rensselaer County".

## 2026 March Dog Madness

This year's event will take place on Saturday, March 7th, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The cost of the workshop is \$25, which includes lunch and materials.

March Dog Madness is aimed at 4-H Teens, Volunteers, and Educators interested in the 4-H Dog Program. Please note that participants are not allowed to bring their own dogs; only presenters will have dogs onsite. For more details, visit <https://cals.cornell.edu/.../compa.../dogs/march-dog-madness>

All participants must register through their local 4-H Youth Development Educator at their county's Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Office by Friday, February 27th, 2026.

Contact Mamnenge @ [mbg242@cornell.edu](mailto:mbg242@cornell.edu) to register



The flyer has a green background with a white 4-leaf clover logo at the top left. It features two photos: a girl hugging a golden retriever and a white dog jumping over a hurdle. The title "2026 MARCH DOG MADNESS" is in large yellow letters, with "MARCH 7TH, 2026" and "9 am - 4 pm" below it. A vertical banner on the right says "GROW MAKE SERVE THRIVE". The text "\$25/person Lunch provided Registration required by February 27!" is in white. Below that, it says "To register please contact your CCE Educator!". A list of workshops is provided: "Pick 2 of the following 3: Canine Reproduction, Responsible Breeding Practices and living with an intact dog! Your Dog, the Scholar: Discovering Canine Thinking Power! Hunting and Sporting Dog: Is your Dog a good candidate? Each Participant will attend each of the following: Green Eggs and Ham Agility, Train for Agility Anywhere, Anytime! Understanding Canine Body Language and Applying that Knowledge to your Training. Pawsitive Learning Meeting, 4-H Dog Meeting without a Dog!". A QR code is at the bottom right, and the contact information "For more information, visit https://bit.ly/4h66Oak" and "For questions contact Brian Aukema at bja14@cornell.edu" is at the bottom.

# Capital District 4-H HOSTA Tractor Safety Course

*Registration is now open*

*Mandatory Zoom Orientation on March 12, 2026;*

*In person sessions April 6-9, 2026*

This program provides an opportunity for youth to learn and practice safe working skills as they apply to an agricultural setting. They will gain hands-on instruction and experience in the safe operation of agricultural equipment and implements. The course consists of written work, farm tours, guest presenters and practical applications. Participants must complete all written and in-person instruction to receive their certification.

Open to youth ages 14 and older.

Cost: \$30

Questions, contact Mamnenge - [mbg242@cornell.edu](mailto:mbg242@cornell.edu)

Registration: [https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event\\_registration/main/events\\_landing.cfm?event=4HTractorSafety-2026\\_241](https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event_registration/main/events_landing.cfm?event=4HTractorSafety-2026_241)



## Capital District 4-H HOSTA Tractor Safety Course

**Open to youth 14 and older**

Youth will learn and practice safe working skills as they apply to an agricultural setting. They will gain hands-on instruction and experience in the safe operation of agricultural equipment and implements.



**Mandatory Zoom  
Orientation:  
March 12, 2026**

**April 6-9, 2026**

This course consists of written work, farm tours, guest presenters and practical application. Participants must complete all written and in-person instruction in order to receive their certification.

**To Register...**

Scan:



Visit:

[https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/4HTractorSafety-2026\\_241](https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/4HTractorSafety-2026_241)

**Or Contact Your County  
Cornell Cooperative  
Extension Office**

## NYS 4-H Livestock Quiz Bowl

NYS 4-H Livestock Program is excited to announce a Pilot program for 4-H Livestock Quiz Bowl.

Below are the key details for the pilot program:

- \*This pilot year (and potentially the next few years) will be limited to senior members ages 14 and up. We recognize interest from younger youth, and counties are encouraged to continue practicing with them and consider hosting multi-county contests to provide experience.
- \*Youth will qualify for the state contest through an online written exam developed by the committee. The test must be taken at a CCE office to ensure proper administration. The tentative testing window is March 1–15.
- \*Up to the top 36 youth will be invited to participate in the state contest.
- \*Teams will be selected by the committee and myself. If multiple youth from the same county qualify, they will be placed on the same team. Remaining teams will be formed by region through a random draw.
- \*Teams will be announced and communicated to participants by April 1 to allow time for practice.
- \*The state contest is tentatively scheduled for April 25, beginning at 2:00 p.m., following the state dairy bowl contest. This timing allows youth to participate in both events and helps us utilize shared volunteers.
- \*Contest rules will be adapted from the National Livestock Quiz Bowl rules and will be available in early to mid-February. National rules can be found here: <https://youthlivestockcontests.org/4-h-livestock-quiz-bowl>
- \*Question references will mirror those used at the national level and are available at the same link.
- \*To help build our question bank, each participating county will be asked to submit 20–25 questions by March 15. Questions may be written by coaches, volunteers, or youth and must include the correct answer, reference source, and page number.
- \*Brian will be hosting two Zoom informational sessions in February. One daytime session will focus on educators, and an evening session will be part of the Youth Livestock Summit, introducing youth and families to this program and other statewide livestock opportunities.

More details will be shared as they become available. Please reach out to Brian Aukema at [bj14@cornell.edu](mailto:bj14@cornell.edu) with any questions.



## 4-H Veterinary Science Program

Love Animals? Curious About Vet Science? Save the date!

The 4-H Veterinary Science Program is coming soon! Youth will explore animal health, behavior, first aid basics, and veterinary careers through hands-on activities. Open to youth from 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade.

WHEN: April 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> 2026

COST: \$40

More details will be announced.



## 4-H Veterinary science program

**The 4-H Veterinary Science Program is coming soon! Youth will explore animal health, behavior, first aid basics, and veterinary careers through hands-on activities!**

**Open to youth from 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Save the date!**

**April 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> 2026**

**Cost: \$40**

**More details to be announced**



# County Presentations Workshop

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*Workshop- Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00pm the CCE Office*

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Will 2026 be your first year doing a 4-H Presentation or Horse Communication Presentation? Have you done a Presentation before, and want to take it to the next level? There is always something to learn! Join us for a Presentations Workshop on Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00PM at the CCE office. We will be covering everything you need to know about creating and delivering a great 4-H Presentation.

## The County 4-H Public Presentations

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*Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00am – 1:00ppm at Tamarac High School.*

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The registration form can be found at [County Presentations Registration 2026 docx.pdf](#)

### Public Presentations Guidelines

#### *Time Expectancy:*

Cloverbud: 1-3 minutes

1st year: 3-5 minutes

2nd– 4th year: 3-8 minutes

5th year and up: 10-15 minutes

- ✓ Pick a topic you like
- ✓ Keep it simple– you can do a lot of detail with a simple idea
- ✓ Prepare your presentation
- ✓ Gather your information
- ✓ Prepare your posters/slides
- ✓ Develop an outline

- ❖ You should have an introduction (a question, quotation, or statistic that arouses interest in your topic– something that draws the audience into your presentation.
- ❖ Your presentation should explain a topic
- ❖ And a conclusion should sum up what you explained. You should also ask if anyone has any questions.
- ❖ Practice what you are going to say.
- ❖ Practice what you are going to do. This is very important. Make sure you handle your equipment, ingredients, diagrams, models, or posters comfortably.

This should be a positive and meaningful experience.

Listen to the comments from your evaluators.

Ask questions so you understand.

Review the written evaluation.

Presentations are all about personal growth, building confidence.

Good Luck!



## Capital Days

The 2026 4-H Capital Days event will take place Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>.

4-H Capital Days gives youth an opportunity to meet and interact with legislators and share their

4-H story, create an awareness of career opportunities in New York State government, better understand state government, and network with delegates from other counties.

Two teens will be selected to represent Rensselaer County at 4-H Capital Days! This event fits especially well with the 11th grade social studies curriculum; some teens have even gotten “extra credit” for attending Capital Days!

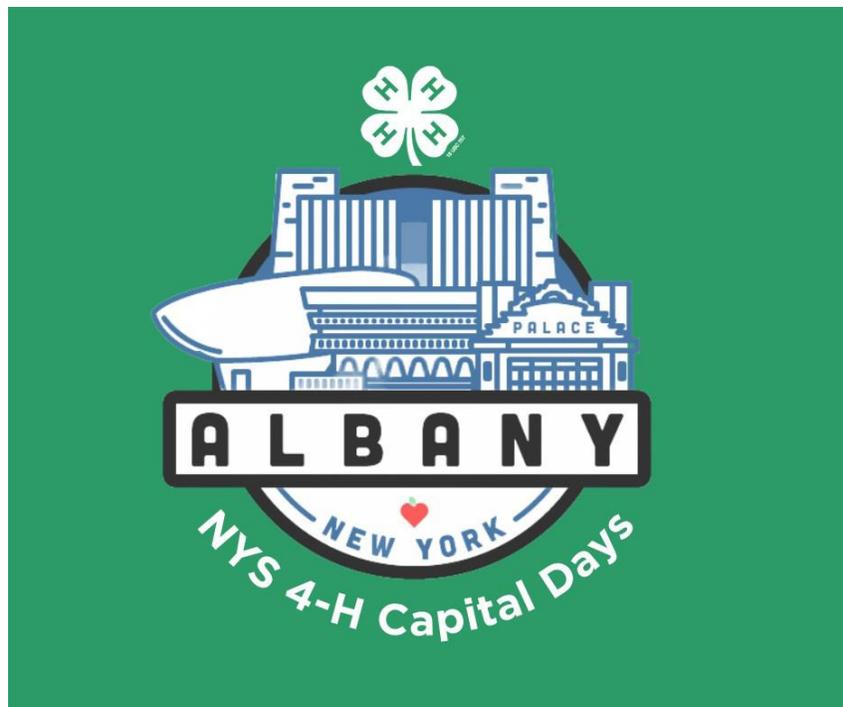
While in Albany, the teens and their chaperone will:

- Tour the New York State Capitol building.
- Explore the Empire State Plaza.
- Visit the New York State Museum
- Visit with State Senators and Assemblymembers.
- Enjoy the accommodations of a local hotel.
- Network with 4-H'ers from all across New York State.

To apply for Capital Days, youth need to complete the application and write an essay of 200-300 words answering the question: “If you had 5 minutes to talk to your State Senator or Assemblyman, what would you tell them about 4-H in Rensselaer County?”

Selection is made by an unbiased committee and is based on essay content.

Submit your essay UNSIGNED no later than March 6th, 2026, to [emd32@cornell.edu](mailto:emd32@cornell.edu). The application can be found at <https://rensselaer.cce.cornell.edu/4-h-youth/4-h-forms>



## Fast Winter Fun Facts:

New York's winters are known for being quite chilly and full of snow. There are many intriguing facts regarding winter and its weather patterns. Here are ten fascinating winter related facts:

- A snowflake can take up to 2 hours to fall from a cloud to the ground.
- The definition of a blizzard is when visibility is reduced to ¼ of a mile and winds are 35 mph or more. The storm also must last at least 3 hours. If any of these specific conditions are not met, then it's a snowstorm not a blizzard.
- Snowflakes usually have 6 sides.
- Almost 90% of snow is air.
- Snow is transparent, not white. Snowflakes seem white when they come together because of their complex crystal structure, which scatters light in all directions and reflects all colors of light equally.
- Around 12% of the earth's land surface is covered in permanent snow and ice.
- The largest snowflakes ever recorded measured 15 inches in diameter and 8 inches in thickness, according to Guinness World Records.
- Snow is beneficial to gardens. Snow is like the compost of nature. As snow descends through the atmosphere, nitrogen clings to snowflakes. It supplies the necessary nutrients and moisture plants need to grow.
- Each year, at least 1 septillion snowflakes fall from the sky. That's 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. (24 zeroes!)
- Snow can be pink, yellow, orange and green! While the snow is technically colorless, it may contain dust or algae, which give it numerous colors. It is often referred to as watermelon snow, and while it is beautiful to look at, the algae will make you sick, so do not consume it!

## Fundraising

### Bloomin' Socks Fundraiser

Rensselaer County 4-H is holding a Bloomin' Socks fundraiser. The socks will come in a variety of patterns including the 4-H Clover, several animal fun patterns (cows, goats, horses, chickens, rabbits, and sheep) and tractors. They would make great gifts, or a treat for yourself! The socks are 100% American made and will sell for \$13.00 a pair. Each purchase supports Rensselaer County 4-H. To purchase socks, contact Eileen at [emd32@cornell.edu](mailto:emd32@cornell.edu).



## 4-H Can Take You Places - National Contest Experience

Although November 2025 is clearly in our rear-view mirror, November 2026 holds the same opportunity and outstanding event for qualifying members. There are numerous animal science based educational events that have a path (for members who are 4-H aged 14 years and older) which lead to the Eastern National 4-H Round Up, in Louisville, Kentucky. Our county has active Dairy Bowl, Horse Bowl, Communications and Hippology that all lead into this possible path. There is no doubt members who qualify to represent New York State on various teams have a very positive and impactful experience that can lead to career explorations, enhanced communication skills, networking and a strength in science and animal-related industries that are benefits far beyond the 4-H realm. Below we feature, in their own words, two of our members that earned seats on New York State National teams and participated in the 2025 Eastern National 4-H Roundup, Kira and Thomas Colarossi, both members of the Equine Explorers Club. It is an immense amount of work to study and compete to earn seats on the state teams. However, it is safe to say from Kira and Thomas (see below) and our long list of members before them, that have competed on different teams at the Eastern National 4-H Round Up, it is worth the time and hard work to qualify for a New York Team and make the trip to compete. Now is the time to get involved with our various educational efforts around Dairy Bowl and the Horse Educational offerings. You will find information in this issue on how to connect with efforts underway already for these opportunities. Many thanks to Kira and Thomas for submitting their perspectives.

The following was submitted by Kira Colarossi:

This is my second year going to Nationals, and it was a fantastic trip! Two years ago, I went for Horse Bowl, and I was very nervous since it was my first time going, and I didn't know anyone on my team, or what to expect. I went again this past year for Horse Communications, and I made it a point to interact more intentionally with the other kids. I knew that everyone was nervous and sometimes all that is needed is to strike up a good conversation to break the ice. My roommate was a great and supportive person from the Rochester area, and lives only a few minutes from where my grandparents used to live. I also made friends with two sisters from Buffalo that were doing a team presentation. We stuck together on the way down to Kentucky and during the day of tours. We all helped each other prepare for our presentations, especially on Friday evening. Saturday morning at the Expo Center, we divided into our respective groups, and everyone wished everyone else good luck. I was the very first one to present, and my new friends helped me rehearse my presentation a couple of times before I headed in to compete. Once I finished, helped them prepare. Throughout the day, we spent a lot of time together exploring the Center. Once the Horse Bowl competition ended, we caught the last round of the Dairy Bowl that was taking place in a room nearby. Afterward, our Horse Bowl team challenged the team from Illinois to a mechanical bull riding contest, and of course we were invited too. We all had a ton of fun! On Saturday night, we had a big pizza party in the hotel lobby, and the Illinois Horse Bowl team joined us. It was an absolute blast! Thomas and I still chat with the friends we made at the competition! All in all, going to Nationals for any of the competitions is on the one hand a little stressful, but competing at that level was fantastic -- and making new friends was great! Ultimately, the trip is an amazing opportunity, but it is what you decide to make of it. Going with a friendly attitude, an open heart and the understanding that you have already won simply by making it on the NYS team will create wonderful memories and lasting friendships!

The following was submitted by Thomas Colarossi:

In 2025 I qualified for the NYS Horse Bowl Team. Usually, 4-H is very girl-dominated, but our team was mostly boys, except for the team captain. The team was pretty spread out over New York State, so we had zoom meetings (mostly in September and October) to prepare. That was nice, because it helped us get to know each other a bit. I met people from a bunch of teams on the bus ride. Kira and I decided to be friendly and to try to get to know everybody. On Friday, we went on three tours, which were awesome. First, we stopped at a Standardbred breeding farm, then we headed to Keeneland Racetrack, where we broke up into groups and got a tour. There was an auction going on, and we got to see several mares and yearlings in the auction barn. We had lunch there and the auction was broadcast on the TV. From there, we went to a rehabilitation facility and saw horses swimming in the water therapy, soaking in cold water plunges and working on a submerged treadmill. They also had a hyperbaric oxygen therapy machine which they spent time explaining how it works, and the benefits. There are only a few hyperbaric oxygen therapy machines for animals in the US, and they made a point to mention that we have one in Schenectady, NY. The facility in Kentucky has treated all sorts of animals including cats, dogs, horses, and even a camel! On Friday night we studied a bit more and then competed all day on Saturday. We were undefeated going into the Championship round --where we pretty much got smoked. The girls from North Carolina were incredible and deserved to win it. We were overall pleased with how we did, and glad to have done so well all day. Afterward, we walked around the Expo Center and tried riding a mechanical bull. It's definitely harder than it looks! I would absolutely recommend going on the Nationals trip if you get the opportunity. It was a lot of fun, and I made a few new friends.

## Member Birthdays

### February

Catherine Stratton

Brennen Michel

Dylan Tubbs

Meghan Hollister

Korabeth Thompson

Blake Kaufman

Juliet Hodgdon

Emmalynn Fowler

Aaron Cipperly

### March

Carter Stratton

Keegan Luskin

Ben Stratton

Naomi Cropsey

Madyson Bull

Victor Hayashi

Marissa Tubbs

James O'Brien

Luke Hoag

Devin DeLaMater



HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY

# Calendar of Events

## February

1 <sup>st</sup>	Horse Bowl Practice – 1:30 PM at the Union Gospel Church Averill Park
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Presentations Workshop @ the CCE Office; 6:00pm
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4-H PDC @ the CCE Office; 6:00pm
8 <sup>th</sup>	Horse Bowl Practice – 1:30 PM at the Union Gospel Church Averill Park
15 <sup>th</sup>	Horse Bowl Practice – 1:30 PM at the Union Gospel Church Averill Park
16 <sup>th</sup>	Presidents' Day: office closed
17 <sup>th</sup>	Junior Chefs @ the CCE Office; 5:00pm
17 <sup>th</sup>	Horse PDC meeting – 6:00 PM via Zoom
21 <sup>st</sup>	Teen Exchange Pancake Breakfast – Easton Firehouse – serving 7:30AM-11AM
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Horse Bowl Practice – 1:30 PM at the Union Gospel Church Averill Park
20-22 <sup>nd</sup>	NYS 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors Workshop
25 <sup>th</sup>	Intro to XRP Robots 5:30-7pm
25 <sup>th</sup>	CCE Board of Directors Meeting at 7 PM at the CCE office
28 <sup>th</sup>	District Dairy Bowl Contest

## March

1 <sup>st</sup>	Horse Bowl Practice – 1:30 PM at the Union Gospel Church Averill Park
4 <sup>th</sup>	Intro to XRP Robots 5:30-7pm
7 <sup>th</sup>	County Presentations at Tamarac High School; 9:30am
7 <sup>th</sup>	NYS 4-H March Dog Madness
8 <sup>th</sup>	Horse Bowl Practice – 1:30 PM at the Union Gospel Church Averill Park
11 <sup>th</sup>	Intro to XRP Robots 5:30-7pm
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	County Horse Communications 6:30 PM at the CCE office
15 <sup>th</sup>	Horse Bowl Practice – 1:30 PM at the Union Gospel Church Averill Park
17 <sup>th</sup>	Horse PDC Meeting – 6 PM via Zoom
18 <sup>th</sup>	Intro to XRP Robots 5:30-7pm
21 <sup>st</sup>	ACT meeting – time/place tbd
21 <sup>st</sup>	District Horse Bowl Contest
21 <sup>st</sup>	Regional Horse Bowl – Ballston Spa Schools – All Day
25 <sup>th</sup>	CCE Board of Director Meeting – 7 PM at the CCE office
27 <sup>th</sup> -28 <sup>th</sup>	NYS Dairy Discovery Workshop

## April

6 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	Tractor Safety In-person Sessions
8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>	Veterinary Science Program
13 <sup>th</sup>	Cattle PDC Meeting @ 7pm at the Fairgrounds Office
16 <sup>th</sup>	Rabbit/Cavy/Poultry PDC Meeting @ 6:30pm via Zoom
25 <sup>th</sup>	NY State 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Contest
26 <sup>th</sup>	Livestock Skillathon @ SUNY Cobleskill

## May

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Animal Crackers @ Cornell
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