

County Fair!!! Many thanks to every entity making the hard decisions as to whether or not our youth had an opportunity to showcase their project work at the highlight of summer events in western Kansas – the County Fair!

Our 2020 Covid-19 year has been ‘a year of change’ – remote school learning, no spring school sports, work from home employees, group activities at a standstill, attending church in a virtual setting and the list goes on. My reflection on the 2020 Covid-19 year up to this point not only sees ‘a year of change’, but more importantly, a ‘change year’ – a forced opportunity to step back and evaluate our current status quo and adapt to challenges at hand.

These uninvited encounters created occasions “To Make The Best Better” in light of the uncertainty and adaptability necessary to continue to move forward. In this ‘change’ process, innovation took the lead in thinking outside the box to meet demands.

Our 4-H program empowers young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. The Kansas 4-H Vision states: Youth in 4-H will grow and develop into healthy, caring adults prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of a globally connected world. Youth members of Twin Creeks Extension District 4-H Councils addressed this year’s challenging situation with much thought and consideration in creating and adapting county fair schedules to meet suggested Extension, county and state health requirements.

As expected, some adjustments were met with hesitance allowing for negotiations, another tool necessary to develop leadership skills. The ultimate goal of a county fair is to create a learning, educational environment for our youth.

Several excellent judges hired to evaluate youth projects hammered home the idea that 4-H and FFA members should be excited about the opportunity to learn throughout the judging process. If you didn’t earn a blue ribbon, but take home information for improvements, then the judge was successful.

In assisting with each fair in our district, I am constantly listening to comments, both from youth and adults. One comment sticks in my mind from a youth exhibiting his food item who excitedly repeated several times, “My mom is going to be so proud of me! I got a blue ribbon!” He explained what he had baked, and then explained what he needed to change in order to make it better. It’s not about the ribbon – it’s about what you learn. At the end of the day, it is one person’s opinion on a given day and time.

It’s about principles, ethics, morals, integrity and your conscience. Our hope is to build youth with resilience and the sustainability needed to focus on a positive atmosphere with those around them.

We will evaluate changes made for the 2020 4-H program year, but more than likely some of those changes will continue as the new format because it met the needs of our 21<sup>st</sup> century youth. Watch for virtual educational opportunities, not only for 4-H youth, but for ALL youth in our communities! We hope “To Make The Best Better” by meeting any presented challenges!

We are also so very appreciative of the financial support offered our youth participants during the Food and Livestock Auctions. Youth utilize these funds to either re-invest in their projects for the next year, or invest their proceeds in savings for future college expenses.

Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact Twin Creeks Extension District, Norton office, 785-877-5755.

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**Article Header**

**“2020 Change Reflections”**

**“Chasing Clovers”**

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