

### It's county fair time!



Believe it or not, county fair season is almost upon us. While it seems like we were just holding the 2012 Phillips County Fair, the 2013 fair will be starting in just a few short weeks.

This means that 4-H members are in the home stretch with their general and livestock projects. All of those hours of practicing and working with projects will come to fruition when the project is presented before the judge during county fair.

Some people may wonder why 4-H members go to all of that hard work. What are they really getting out of 4-H and county fair participation? Probably the most obvious answer is responsibility. Through 4-H projects, members learn that they are responsible for seeing that project all the way through to the end.

They learn how to encounter and overcome hardships. Whether it's feeding and caring for a livestock project or sewing a garment, 4-H members learn responsibility through their project completion and have the opportunity to show what they've learned at county fair.

As I was pondering the importance of county fair for 4-H members and the general public, I remembered an article written by cowboy poet Baxter Black. This particular article brings out another point about why county fairs and 4-H are important not only to the youngsters of today, but our great nation as a whole.

These young members are learning important lessons, lessons which may just help them continue the tradition of feeding and clothing the world. Mr. Black says it best in his article, "County Fairs, Why?" The following is an excerpt from his article.

"Farm kids start learning the land and livestock when they are old enough to carry a bucket.

## Extension Corner

Written by Kindra Plumb

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When they help with the daily chores they are practicing. It's like taking piano lessons or tennis lessons except what farm kids learn has a much more profound objective; feeding us all.

“Our culture expends a great deal of effort on future NBA stars, astronauts, environmental lawyers, doctors and political science majors. But for every 100 rock stars, Rhoades Scholars and Heisman trophy winners our country produces, we better make sure we spend enough to train at least two future farmers, so the rest of them can eat. That is the essence of the county fair.

“Beneath all the fun, auctions and show ribbons, the serious business of learning how to make a living off the land continues like an underground river.”

As the 2013 Phillips County Fair rapidly approaches, consider Mr. Black's words. While in the midst of 4-H projects, young members don't fully realize what important lessons they are learning. But they will understand one day, when they are fully engaged in utilizing their surroundings and past experiences to either carry on the farming and ranching tradition or pursuing a career in a different field.

For more information on Phillips County 4-H, please contact the Extension office at 970-854-3616. Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

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