

Email via 4HOnline sent March 26, 2020

Hello Tuscarawas County 4-H Family,

As many of you are aware, the OSU Extension Administrative Cabinet declared on March 23 that all existing activities scheduled through May 15 will be postponed, canceled, or offered virtually. No new Extension-led activities will be planned until further notice. I know you are all very disappointed by that message. That was difficult for us to hear, too. There's a lot of uncertainty, but we in Extension are doing our absolute best to still provide families with resources, tips, and tools to have a positive 4-H experience.

Many people are feeling inconvenienced or irritated that we are being asked to socially distance ourselves and stay home for the good of the whole. We are in unprecedented times. Schools are closed for weeks, quite possibly until the end of the school year. Businesses are closed, people are working from home, our healthcare workers are out battling to keep us safe, and we are finding out which workers are truly essential to keep us safe and healthy.

In 4-H, we are facing tough questions about if this summer's activities will be the same. It absolutely breaks my heart to think these activities may be canceled - our volunteers, youth, and families are feeling it too. Nearly 1,100 youth in Tuscarawas County participate in a 4-H community club and their summers are highlighted by meetings, service projects, camps, judging experiences, and the county fair.

In 2019, Ohio 4-H had more than 170,000 youth participants, and we're all in the same boat right now. We're trying, folks. We are doing our best and I appreciate your cooperation and patience as we navigate these uncharted waters. As we receive news, we'll share it. The latest bullet points from the State 4-H Office are:

- Ohio State University Extension 4-H Youth Development is committed to doing our part to help defeat the mass spread of the novel coronavirus.
- All 4-H activities, club meetings, events, and programs must be held virtually between now and May 15. Events that cannot be held virtually must be postponed or cancelled.
- **We may need to extend the ban on in-person gatherings beyond May 15.** The situation is dynamic and changes daily. We will continue to monitor conditions and will reevaluate as needed.
- 4-H club advisors are encouraged to explore the tip sheets and other information provided at go.osu.edu/4Hadvisorinfo. We encourage you to read



“Communicating Online with your Club”, and “Tips & Tricks for Meetings When You Can’t Meet (in person).” We also have a couple of 4HOnline help sheets.

- We know that 4-H camps, club meetings, and junior fair participation are highlights of the 4-H experience. During this time of unprecedented health concerns, we must work together to do our part in stemming the spread of the novel coronavirus.
- We work closely with our senior fair board partners to offer junior fair exhibition opportunities to 4-H members. Ohio 4-H understands the concerns that some fairs may not be able to take place this year due to the global pandemic health emergency. Any decision to cancel a local fair, festival, parade, or other large group gatherings will be made by those authorized to protect the health and wellbeing of all Ohioans.
- 4-H members and their families should consider several factors as they make their decisions to purchase 4-H market livestock projects. As with any agricultural enterprise, possible risks and rewards must be considered. For example, we encourage families to consider their overall available budget, space to care for livestock, availability of alternative markets, availability of local processing and family freezer space.
- OSU Extension and 4-H Youth Development are working together to support our 4-H members, families, volunteers and local partners, including senior fair boards, classroom teachers, and magistrates, as we navigate this health emergency.

I plan to hold more face-to-face QA sessions once we are permitted to do so; however, many families have been asking about online options. The instructions for the online QA platform (YQCA) are about ready to be released should you choose this route. The online version is an option, but it will not be the only option. There is a fee associated with the online training and because YQCA does not belong to OSU, this is not something I can waive.

We hope to have an update next week regarding 4-H project book distribution. There are still details that need to be figured out by those in Columbus. It may be early May before we know what the decision will be on project judging and other events that take place later in the summer. Ohio 4-H is also seeking clarification from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) on the animal tag-in process and we will work with our county Senior Fair Board once we know more.

Look for the 4-H daily challenges that I’ll begin posting on the OlderYouth Facebook page starting next Monday! (Search for and “Friend” OlderYouth Tuscarawas.) I’m teaming up with Jamie McConnell, 4-H Educator from Muskingum County, to put these

challenges into place. We'll also be launching a virtual demonstration contest for people to vote on. The winner will get a pizza party (eventually!) for their 4-H club.

Again, I thank you for your patience and perseverance. We continue to work for and with you!

Yours in 4-H,

Kiersten