

Fergus/Petroleum County 4-H Leaders Council | Meeting Notes

April 24, 2025 | Fergus County Sheriff's Complex, Lewistown, MT

Call to Order: The Fergus/Petroleum County 4-H Leader's Council was called to order by President, Corry Arntzen at 5:32 pm on April 24, 2025. Attendees participated in the Pledge of Alliance and 4-H pledge.

Introductions / Attendance / Roll Call:

- Corry Arntzen - *Christina Busy Bees, President*
- Sonja Gregory - *Independent, Vice President (Virtual)*
- Karly DeMars - *Christina Busy Bees, Secretary*
- Gisele Yaeger - *Christina Busy Bees, Treasurer*
- Shelly Van Haur - *Hilger High Goalers*
- Yvette Hersel - *Creative Critters*
- Olivia DeMars - *Christina Busy Bees*
- Nicole Tholt - *Winnett Shamrocks, Ambassador Leader*
- Virgil Tholt - *Winnett Shamrocks, Ambassador*
- Davey Storfa - *Independent Member, Ambassador (Virtual)*
- Annie Bergum - *Winifred Mustangs (Virtual)*
- Jada Bantz - *Big Sky - Grass Range (Virtual)*
- Chris England - *4-H Program Assistant, Creative Critters*
- Allison Smith - *Extension Office*

Secretary's Report / Approval of February Minutes

Yvette Hersel moved to approve the minutes from February 13, 2025. Virgil Tholt seconded the motion and the February minutes were approved unanimously.

Correspondence - None

Treasurer's Report

- Ending Balance as of 4/22/2025: \$135,558.27 (all accounts)
 - Leader's Council account (as part of entire account) \$83,523.06
- Virgil Tholt moved to approve the Treasurer's report and file for audit; Olivia DeMars seconded the motion. Consensus approval of Treasurer's Report was passed, and the report will be filed for audit.

Committee Reports

- **County Ambassadors:** Farm Safety Day was a success, featuring stations on cattle, horses, electrical safety, ATV safety, grain bins, weeds/chemicals, bear safety, and a presentation from the Montana Cattlewomen's Association. The Traveling Farm event was also well received, with eight youth and several animals participating. A Cloverbud activity will be facilitated during the Food Safety Training on Sunday, April 27. Work is also underway on a video tutorial for conducting interviews.
- **Livestock Committee:** The Livestock Committee has begun preparations for the fair by ordering prizes and securing both a photographer and an ultrasound technician. The committee also voted to modify the pavilion setup: the north and south ends will be flipped to place swine on the cooler north side and cattle on the south. Additionally, swine and sheep/goat pens will be arranged north to south to improve airflow. This year, the committee will pilot the sale of a club animal, with proceeds going back to the selling club. Denton FFA will sell the inaugural club animal in the 2025 Central Montana Youth Livestock Sale. The sale will offer both an online and a phone-in bidding option. A new Livestock Superintendent has also been appointed.
- **Small Animal Committee:** The Showmanship Clinic is scheduled for June 16 at 5:30 p.m. at the small animal barn, followed by a committee meeting. Youth voted on their preferred showmanship and Best of Show prizes. A photographer has been secured, the budget was approved, and all new dog show supplies have arrived. Dog, cat, and rabbit clinics are already underway.
- **Horse Committee:** Horse clinics are scheduled for May 10 (Ranch Horse) and May 31–June 1 (Performance Horse). 4-H members have been actively preparing, with weekly practices led by two dedicated volunteers. The next committee meeting was April 22 at 5:30 p.m.
- **Static Committee:** The next meeting is May 19 at noon. Intent-to-sell forms have been distributed and are due by May 15. The committee is finalizing the auctioneer for the indoor auction. There are still stickers available for sale at the Extension Office.
- **Food booth:** Clean-Up Day is scheduled for July 17. Three days of meat sponsorship are still needed due to the loss of one donor to other commitments. Each sponsor can expect to donate 50–60 lbs. of meat per day. The remaining days to fill are the Horse Show, Performance Horse Show, and Check-In Day. Meat can be donated in

bulk, and Hilger Meats will handle pattying if needed. Current sponsors include the Cattlegirls/Gran Prairie, Ranchers, and Black Butte Beef. The food booth will be closed on Sunday and Monday of fair week due to changes in the schedule. Chris has purchased a new freezer and fridge. Food permits and the fairgrounds contract are complete. Food booth shift sign-ups begin June 2.

- **Scholarship Committee:** Will be working to review and return our recommendations by April 30.
- **Extension Office:** Camp planning and registrations are underway. Online fair entry opens May 1. We will welcome a summer intern, Ashley Fracker, for June and July. Karen South has offered to help members with crocheting, felting, and fiber arts; leaders may contact the Extension Office for her information.
- **State Leaders Council** (Nicole Tholt): The Leader's Institute, a statewide leadership workshop, will be held October 3–5, 2025, at the Billings Hotel & Convention Center. Save-the-date cards and a call for presenters will be distributed soon. The Leaders Council Education Fund may be available to support those interested in attending.
- **Montana 4-H Foundation:** Our representative, Amber Arntzen, has shared that the Foundation is currently focused on strategic planning and alumni engagement, as well as exploring new fundraising opportunities. This year, they awarded \$36,500 in scholarships, with recipient announcements coming soon, and distributed \$6,650 in grants. The annual meeting will be held July 10 in conjunction with 4-H Congress.

Old Business - None

New Business

- **Bonds/CDs:** Chris England and Gisele Yaeger have been exploring options to earn interest on Leader's Council funds and proposed investing a portion in a short-term Certificate of Deposit (CD) while a long-term solution, such as an endowment, is considered. Yvette Hersel moved to invest \$20,000 from the general fund into a six-month CD from May 1 to October 1, 2025. Nicole Tholt seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
- **Evaporative Cooler:** Chris England has been researching new evaporative (swamp) coolers for use in the livestock pavilion and other general applications during the fair. Currently, the Small Animal Barn is equipped with an evaporative cooler purchased several years ago with grant funding from the Central Montana Foundation. This unit has proven effective in keeping show animals cool and comfortable.
 - Chris received a quote for a large evaporative cooler totaling \$4,999 (reflecting a \$500 discount), with an additional \$100 for shipping. She has applied for funding through the Montana Farmer's Union grant to cover the cost, but the grant decision will not be made before the quote and discount expire. To take advantage of the discounted pricing, Chris is requesting that the large cooler be purchased using Leader's Council funds. If the grant is awarded, those funds will be reimbursed to the Leader's Council account.
 - In addition, Chris is requesting funds for a smaller evaporative cooler priced at \$3,399 (with discount), which would be added to the county's cooler inventory. She intends to apply for a grant from the Central Montana Foundation to offset this purchase. There was also discussion about the potential to rent out the units in the future to help recover costs.
 - Nicole Tholt moved to approve the purchase of both coolers using Leader's Council capital improvement funds, with the understanding that the account will be reimbursed if grant funding is received. The motion was seconded by Olivia DeMars and passed unanimously.
- **Other New Business**
 - Shelley Van Haur shared that she has procured two booth spaces in the trade center during the fair if any 4-H member would like to sell their handmade items. Please contact her at 406/350-1022 if you have members interested in signing up.
 - TABLED: Policy Discussion regarding missing scheduled fair booth shifts – the committee chose to postpone this discussion until the November Meeting.

Announcements

- Camp Registration Deadlines - Junior Camp June 11, Cloverbud and Senior Camp May 30 and Tween Camp July 28.
- Clubs need to email club meeting minutes into the Extension Office
- Radio spots (can be prerecorded) and Shout Outs – please encourage members to help with this effort.
- Fair entry starts May 1 and ends June 1.
- Intern for the summer will be begin on June 2.

- Chris thanked Leaders Council for our time and effort in helping make the Fergus/Petroleum County 4-H program a success.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday, June 30, 2025, 5:30 PM, tentative location – Fergus County Sheriff's Complex.

Adjournment was moved by Shelley Van Haur and seconded by Nicole Tholt. Meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Meeting minutes submitted by Karly DeMars, Leader's Council Secretary

Karly DeMars