

## Is the Rains 4-H Club for You?

Summertime for the Rains 4-H Club includes various summer day camps for our members to learn about livestock, cooking, and sewing. It is also the time our newly elected 4-H Officers and Club Managers meet to plan the activities and meeting topics for the upcoming school year. I must say that this year's officers have worked diligently, along with their parents, to plan an exciting year for our club. Each meeting has a specific theme that will include activities and speakers from our community. This year's calendar has some really fun and interesting themes!

If you aren't familiar with 4-H, I would like to share some history and information about it. The first county Extension Agent in Texas was appointed in 1906, 8 years before the organization of Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Two years later, T.M. (Tom) Marks, County Agricultural Agent, organized the first boys' "corn club" in Jack County. Marks found that he was more successful teaching new production technology to the youth than to the adults.

Within a matter of years, "pig clubs," "beef calf clubs" (Coleman County, 1910) and girls' "tomato clubs" (Milam County, 1912) were also initiated. The stage was set for the rapid expansion of educational programs directed to rural youth. Within a span of 100 years, 4-H enrollment in Texas has grown from the original 25 corn club members in Jack County in 1908 to more than one million youth in 2012!

There are many projects that 4-H offers the youth of Texas. Some of those offered in Rains County are animal projects, citizenship and civic education programs, clothing projects, photography, Consumer and Family Science projects, personal development and leadership programs, plant projects, and science and environmental education. Basically, we offer something for everyone!

Many of the students in our school system participate in UIL academic contests. Well, 4-H also offers competitions within our project areas. Texas 4-H Roundup is a qualifying and invitational event for youth between the ages of 11 and 18 that have successfully placed in a qualifying event at the district level or signed up to compete in an invitational event at the state level. County and District Roundup's are open to all ages of 4-H members from 9 to 18. Texas 4-H Roundup includes approximately 50 different contests and workshops that test 4-H members on life skills in such attributes as decision making, public speaking, organization, and working with others. These contests include such things as Fashion Show, Food Show, an assortment of judging contests, and educational presentations.

There are also many scholarships given within the 4-H program. In 2012 the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Opportunity Scholarships totaled \$2,005,900.00 and were given to 4-H members across the state of Texas. Our program values higher education and rewards our members for their work not only in 4-H, but also their school and community. The Rains 4-H Club also gives local scholarships to our high school seniors.

We are very proud of our active club and the work our members give to our community, but there is always room for more youth in the Rains 4-H Club. If you are interested in finding out more information on our club or would like to join for the 2012 – 2013 year, please drop by the

Texas AgriLife Extension Service office at 410 Tawakoni or call us at 903-473-4580. Our first meeting of the year will be held in August and we hope to see you there!