

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

February 11, 2026 | Sheriff's Complex, Lewistown, MT

Call to Order: The Fergus/Petroleum County 4-H Leader's Council meeting was called to order by President, Corry Arntzen at 5:38 pm on February 11, 2026. Attendees participated in the Pledge of Alliance and 4-H pledge.

Introductions / Attendance / Roll Call:

- Corry Arntzen – *Christina Busy Bees, President*
- Sonja Gregory – *Independent Leader, Vice President (Virtual)*
- Karly DeMars – *Christina Busy Bees, Secretary*
- Gisele Yaeger – *Christina Busy Bees, Treasurer*
- Amber Arntzen – *Christina Busy Bees, 4H Foundation Representative*
- Nicole Tholt – *Winnett Shamrocks, State Leaders Council Rep, Ambassador Leader (Virtual)*
- Yvette Hersel – *Creative Critters*
- Shawna Crawford – *Creative Critters*
- Davey Storfa – *Independent Member, Ambassador*
- Anne Bergum – *Winifred Mustangs (Virtual)*
- Judi Martin – *Snowy Mountain Trailblazers (Virtual)*
- Cody Ream – *MSU Extension*
- Teresa Young – *MSU Extension*
- Aubrey Young – *Member*

Secretary's Report / Approval of November Minutes: Gisele Yaeger moved to approve the minutes from November 16, 2025, meeting as submitted. Yvette Hersel seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Correspondence: Leaders' Council received two thank-you letters. Justine Curry expressed appreciation for the monetary support to attend the fall leadership training, and Kylie Crawford thanked the Leaders' Council for funding state events and opportunities.

Treasurer's Report

- Ending Balance as of 2/8/2026: \$137,141.32 (all accounts)
 - Leader's Council account (as part of entire account) \$62,305.58; reports submitted are strictly for Leader's Council and do not include the established sub-accounts.
 - Income includes member/leader dues, club EIN fees and proceeds from the Winter Fair food booth (approximately \$650)
- Amber moved to approve the Treasurer's report and file for audit; Yvette Hersel seconded the motion. Consensus approval of Treasurer's Report was passed, and the report will be filed for audit.

Announcements

- Newsletter went out via email last week. Reminder to review important dates and information.
- Clubs are requested to submit their annual plans, including those for independent members and design-your-own projects. Teresa will email the link to club leaders, and Extension asks that plans be submitted as soon as possible – the deadline has passed.

Committee Reports

- **Extension Office** (Cody Ream, Teresa Young): Teresa introduced herself, noting her 4-H background in Broadwater County and degree in Health and Human Development/Family Services. She will oversee non-animal projects while Cody continues managing livestock projects, and they will serve as co-supervisors of the office. The Extension Office is working to clarify roles between staff and volunteer leaders and is continuing forward to hire a 4-H Program Assistant. Katy Jones was hired recently to staff the front desk. A Leader training is are scheduled for the afternoon of March 21. The following are expectations shared by the Extension Office during the meeting:

1. **Programming:** Can add/change/remove programs or projects to make sure they are educational, effective, utilized, etc. Host direct educational sessions—workshops, etc. Educational resources for project areas; recruit project leaders.
 2. **Volunteer Management:** Recruit, train, and support volunteer leaders.
 3. **Motivate:** Help Fergus/Petroleum 4-H be a part of the larger 4-H and Extension system with state events, using educational resources, networking with other counties/regions, etc.
 4. **Communication:** (Newsletter, social media, website) Compile and distribute information for county events and programs. Compile and distribute information for state events and programs.
 5. **Official Capacity:** Intermediary to State regarding dues, trainings, and events. Clubs/leaders need to have the office aware of who is registering, even if it is an online registration. Use our official capacity to do official/legal work, i.e., liability insurance.
 6. **Rules & Policy:** Hold members, clubs, and leaders accountable to their club bylaws and program requirements. Ensure compliance and consistency with state and national policies. Extension office is enforcer in areas of conduct and discipline.
 7. **Safety & Compliance:** Extension Agents maintain final authority on safety, risk management, and conduct for 4-H events.
 8. **4-H is primarily youth and club led/directed.** Extension helps create a team of Extension, leaders, parents, and members who collaborate together with the goal of youth empowerment.
- **County Ambassadors:** Davey Storfa reported the Ambassadors met to plan Farm Safety Day and the Traveling Farm (dates to be determined). Ambassadors will be holding a countywide contest/fundraiser for the 2026 fair T-shirt design (front, one color), with the winner receiving a free shirt; most shirts will be pre-ordered with some available on hand. The Fergus County Livestock Association has offered to assist with Farm Safety Day event. Lexie Wichman and Chris England are the current contacts, with Davey taking over for Lexie.
 - **State Leaders Council** (Nicole Tholt): Nothing to report, no meeting since October 2025. Going to be doing one session at Rec Lab as a leadership training. Doesn't know the theme but will share when it becomes available.
 - **Montana 4-H Foundation** (Amber Arntzen): The Foundation is hiring a new director and a development officer, Gillette Viara, from the Billings area who will work remotely. A redesigned website is expected to launch soon, and People Partner grant applications are due February 14, 2026.
 - **Livestock Committee:** Cody Ream reported that the committee met January 19, 2026. The same judge has agreed to return for 2026, prizes and sponsorships are arranged, and planning for the buyers' meal is underway, putting the group ahead of schedule. The committee will present a proposed new pavilion layout to the Fair Board, and the next meeting is scheduled for March 2.
 - **Small Animal Committee:** Nicole Tholt reported good attendance at the January workbook day; the committee discussed fair plans and prizes, with a showmanship clinic and next meeting scheduled for June 8 after the workshop.
 - **Horse Committee:** Working on clinics and have fair judges booked. The next committee meeting is scheduled for March 10.
 - **Static Committee:** The committee met informally last week and will meet again tomorrow at noon at the Extension Office. Teresa is organizing FCS project workshops. Intent-to-sell forms are due May 15, with the sale scheduled for Thursday of the fair (July 23). The next meeting will occur after May 15.

Special Committee Reports

- **Food booth:** will be discussed in new business
- **Nomination Committee:** n/a
- **Awards Programs:** no updates
- **Scholarship Committee** Sonya Gregory, Karly DeMars, and Shawna Crawford will review applications in April; the application will be distributed by February 20 and due March 31, with up to half of available funds (currently \$2,500), Leader's Council could offer up to \$1,250 in scholarships, not to exceed \$1000 per recipient.

Old Business

- **Endowment/Investment Proposal:** The Endowment/Investment Planning Committee (Darren Crawford, Chris England, Yvette Hersel, and Sonja Gregory) has not yet met; Corry will request a status update. With the CD

maturing May 1, the committee must provide a recommendation for Leaders' Council approval, and bylaws still need to be developed and approved to guide the use of endowment and investment earnings.

- **ACTION ITEM (Originated 11/2025):** Develop and approve bylaws that establish and guide the use of endowment and investment earnings.
- **Winter Fair Concessions:** Corry thanked all volunteers for staffing the booth and donating food items; the event generated \$650 and good notes were recorded for future planning.

New Business:

- **Fair Book Review:** Committees requested Z-drive access for updates. The Livestock and Horse Committees submitted revisions, including adding a Champion of Champions livestock competition, and an updated deadline in March is being considered.
- **County 4-H Camps:** Extension is developing future camp opportunities with tentative plans including:
 - Cloverbud Camp: First week of June.
 - Junior Camp (Camp Maiden): Week of June 22; counselors must be 14 by Oct. 1, junior counselors age 13.
 - Tween Camp (6th–8th grade): Fort Benton farm tours with an education and history focus.
 - Senior Camp: Partnering with the Stanford agent at a Crystal Lake cabin, focusing on healthy life skills and goal setting.
- **Food Booth Manager(s) Role Compliance with State 4-H Insurance Policy:** Leaders Council discussed compliance with State 4-H insurance policies regarding the \$3,000 stipend currently paid to two food booth coordinators. Payments over \$500 per person remove volunteer insurance coverage, and stipends cannot exceed 20% of what an employee would earn for similar work. Options being explored include hiring a temporary employee through Fergus County or MSU Extension or obtaining short-term liability insurance. Teresa is contacting other counties for guidance and researching coverage options. Mindy is willing to continue coordinating, Yvette is not, and Corry will inform Mindy of potential changes.
- **Dates for upcoming events:**
 - **February 12:** Valentine's Cake Fundraiser – cakes due to the Extension Office.
 - **February 13:** Valentine's Cake delivery; Corry will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Extension Office, with additional drivers assisting.
 - **March 9:** County Public Speaking/Gavel Games registration due to the Extension Office; schedule to follow.
 - **March 22:** County Public Speaking Day and Gavel Games – Boys & Girls Club in Lewistown.
 - **March 27–29:** Rec Lab in Columbus, MT (registration will be posted in Z-Suites).
 - **Meat Judging Workshop:** Details to come (Cody emailed information).
 - **April 2026 Workshops** (MT Farmers Union): Pressure canning, sprouting lentils, beeswax wraps, sourdough, and gardening/seed growing.
- **March Newsletter:** please submit items to Extension Office by first Monday of each month, newsletter will be out by first Friday of each month.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 15, 2026, location TBD. Main discussion item will be a proposal from the endowment/investment committee.

Adjournment was moved by Shawna Crawford and seconded by Amber Arntzen. Meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.



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