4-H Great Debate
WHO: 4-H members ages 14 to 18
WHEN: March 27-28
WHERE: State Capitol, Springfield
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT: The 4-H Great Debate offers 4-H members a chance to explore the Illinois legislative process first hand. Members will work together to get their facts together on bills, then debate as teams in the actual Illinois House of Representatives, and, finally, vote using the microphones and voting technology.
HOW TO GET INVOLVED: Register online SOON @ http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/events/greatdebate.cfm. Don’t want to miss it? Sign up for our email list @ https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=11400.

Illinois State 4-H Livestock Ambassadors
WHO: 4-H members and recent alums ages 16 to 21
WHEN: First deadline to apply is January 15
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT: State 4-H Livestock Ambassadors will promote Illinois 4-H and the livestock industry throughout the state at events such as Illinois State Fair, Illinois 4-H Livestock Judging, as well as the new livestock ambassador conference. This first year, 21 youth will be selected and serve staggered terms.
HOW TO GET INVOLVED: Applications are available at all county Extension offices.

4-H Citizen Scientist
WHO: 4-H volunteers, 4-H members and youth in junior & senior high school who are interested in science and the environment
WHEN: One day of training required; pick from 10 different times & training locations
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT: Really put your “Hands to larger service” as a 4-H Citizen Scientist. Members observe and record information on a river site in their local area. They’ll collect data from samples taken at their site and contribute data to the growing field of scientific research related to water quality. There is NO COST to participate. Each team will receive a complete toolkit to collect your samples.
HOW TO GET INVOLVED: Read more online @ http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/news/index.cfm?ID=31479.

Illinois 4-H State Dairy Quiz Bowl
WHO: Youth with an interest in dairy production. 4-H members do not need to be a dairy project member to be eligible. There is no limit to the number of youth who may attend from any county.
WHEN: March 7; 8 a.m. registration; 9 a.m. testing
WHERE: Chateau Hotel and Conference Center, 1601 Jumer Dr., Bloomington
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT: Four-person teams will compete. Individual members competing alone can be assigned to a team at the contest. The state team is supported with funds from the Illinois 4-H Foundation.
HOW TO GET INVOLVED: Learn more online @ http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/news/index.cfm?ID=31480.

Encourage older teens to take the Clover Challenge
Let’s face it; older teens sometimes “out learn” the material in their 4-H manuals. To keep teens involved, encourage them to enroll in a CLOVER CHALLENGE project. Clover Challenge is the most advanced level of a 4-H project . . . and the best part ... TEENS get to decide what TEENS want to learn and what TEENS want to exhibit.

CLOVER CHALLENGE PROJECTS are available in all project categories. Here’s what you need to know:
- Teens must be 15 years of age and older (4-H age)
- Teens must have completed all the previous levels of the project category
- Teens must be enrolled in the specific Clover Challenge project to exhibit in this class.
- Teens must have an adult mentor.
- Teens must complete the Clover Challenge agreement @ http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/projects/ and include it with their exhibit.

Clover Challenge project exhibits are to be “above and beyond” the activities listed in the project manual. It’s really an accumulation of all the things they’ve learned throughout their years of 4-H. The exhibit can be presented in any format which best shows your knowledge and skill. Check to see if your county offers CLOVER CHALLENGES.

Market heifer class added to State Fair Junior Show
A market heifer division has been added to the Illinois State Fair Junior Show this year. The market heifers will follow the same rules, guidelines and nomination procedures as steers. Check with the local Extension office to be sure to get your market heifers nominated.
4-H Junior Leadership Conference

WHO: 4-H members & their friends in seventh & eighth grades
WHEN: February 28 & March 1; Register before February 7
WHERE: Decatur Hotel & Conference Center, Decatur
WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT: Junior high youth will have fun while they learn new leadership and communication skills. The Conference theme is “Dream. Lead. Achieve.” At the conference, members will learn how their genes (not their jeans!) make them different from one another. They’ll build rockets, learn to present their best foot forward in fashion, and fight stage fright while they also fight back against hunger in our communities. The Illinois 4-H Foundation provides funding for the full cost of chaperones.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED: Cost for the conference is $135 which includes all meals, lodging and conference supplies. Youth may purchase a commemorative t-shirt for $10. One may learn more about the two-day event and register online at: http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/events/juniorleadership2015.cfm. Fifteen $50 need-based scholarships are available from the Illinois 4-H Foundation. Each participant is invited to make a donation which will help pay for supplies we will use to package more than 10,000 meals for hungry families in Illinois. Clubs can also make a donation toward this statewide community service effort.

4-H College Scholarships

WHO: Illinois 4-H high school seniors and 4-H college freshmen
WHEN & WHERE: Deadline is March 1 to the State 4-H Office
WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT: Two different scholarships are provided by the Illinois 4-H Foundation
- LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP—Six $1,000 Legacy of Leadership Scholarships are given. Must have been a 4-H member at least five years.
- LA-CO LIVESTOCK SCHOLARSHIP—One, $1,000 LA-CO Livestock Scholarship is awarded each year. Must have been a 4-H member at least five years; plus the member must have been enrolled in a livestock project a minimum of three years during their 4-H involvement; must be pursuing a college degree related to the agriculture industry; AND plan to be actively involved in the agriculture industry after graduation (such as farming, teaching, large animal veterinarian, etc.).

HOW TO GET INVOLVED: Applications for both scholarships are available on the 4-H website: http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/members/recognition_scholarships.cfm.

Speaking for Illinois 4-H Training

WHO: Open to 4-H members ages 14 to 18
WHEN: February 7; Register before January 28
WHERE: Stevenson County Extension Office, Freeport
WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT: SFI4-H focuses on providing 4-H members skills on public presentations, telling the 4-H story, 4-H Positive Youth Development, using county and state statistics to their advantage, and more. Youth who go through the training will be invited to participate in the two legislative events planned for spring at the State Capitol in Springfield.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED: Register online @ http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/members/leadership_sfi4h.cfm.

Get paid to do research

The Illinois Soybean Association will provide five $500 grants for youth interested in a topic related to soybeans. Pioneer Hi-Bred will provide five $500 grants for youth interested in exploration of corn or small grains. Research may relate to but is not limited to production practices, processing, crop and/or crop-byproduct utilization (such as nutrition related exploration).

Both grants are funded through the Illinois 4-H Foundation. 4-H members, ages 15-18, are challenged to research a topic and design at least two different delivery methods. The deadline for application submission is February 16, and projects must be completed by July 31. Learn more @ http://4hfoundation.illinois.edu/grants/clover.

Just a note about ...

State 4-H Meats Judging Contest
March 7, 9 a.m. @ U of I Meat Science Lab, Urbana. Open to any 4-H member. The state team is supported with funds from the Illinois 4-H Foundation.

Horse Bowl & Hippology Contests
- Northeast Region, March 14 at Marengo High School in Marengo. Contact: Cindy Sarkady@ 847-223-8627 & Janine Heidtke @ 815-338-3737.
- Northern Region, March 21 at Rochelle Middle School in Rochelle. Contact: Johnna Jennings @ 815-732-2191 & Jodi Baumgartner @ 815-732-2191.
- Southern Region, March 28 at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. Contact: Elizabeth Miller @ 618-548-1446.
- Central Region, March 28 at Lakeland Community College in Mattoon. Contact: Dana Homann @ 217-345-7034 & Yolanda Nation @ 217-774-9546.
- State Horse Bowl & Hippology Contest, April 18 & 19 @ U of I campus. The team is supported with funds from the Illinois 4-H Foundation.