

# HISTORY OF TEXAS 4-H



## Introduction

The 4-H Story: A History of 4-H Club Work, by Franklin M. Reck and 4-H: An American Idea, 1900-1980, by Thomas Wessel and Marilyn Wessel document the origin of the 4-H Youth Development Program throughout the United States. In summary, the rapid changes taking place in rural America at the turn of the century led educators to seek ways to link learning to the needs of rural families. Youth were leaving farms to seek jobs in towns and cities. Adult farmers were reluctant to try new techniques of crop production. Agricultural leaders began seeking ways to teach agricultural producers improved methods of crop production.

## The Beginning Of Texas 4-H

The first county Extension agent in Texas was appointed in 1906, 8 years before the organization of Texas A&M 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 91 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 2000!

The Texas 4-H Museum is located in Jacksboro (Jack County), the birthplace of 4-H in Texas.

## Detailed History of 4-H in Texas and the United States

**1908**

Tom Marks, Jack County agent, organized a corn club with 25 boys participating.

**1909**

O.B. Martin, formerly director of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, was appointed to direct boys' and girls' club work on a national basis.

Pig Clubs were started with the primary to use the corn from the corn clubs.

**1910**

State 4-H Boys' Corn Rally was held at the State Fair of Texas. A feature of the rally was a parade of 1,500 boys through the downtown section of Dallas, each carrying a stalk of corn.

Year of the first Farmers' Short Course (later known as Texas 4-H Roundup), including youth and adults.

First "Beef Calf Club" was organized in Coleman County

**1911**

The first 4-H Club emblem, adopted nationally in 1911, had only three "H's," one each for the head, hands, and heart. Some years later another "H" for health was added to make the four-leaf clover emblem we know today. The late O.B. Martin, afterward director of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service (1927-35), is credited with suggesting the fourth "H." Mr. Martin was the first 4-H Club leader of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**1912**

Edna Trigg was appointed Milam County home demonstration agent-the first such appointment in Texas-to organize girls' clubs, then called "tomato clubs."

C.M. Evans was appointed to head boys' and girls' club work in Texas. Six months later H.H. Williamson succeeded Evans and was named 4-H Club Agent for Texas. Under Williamson's guidance, Texas club boys began to include livestock and crops other than corn in their demonstrations.

At the close of 1912, it was reported that there were 2,283 girls enrolled in canning clubs and that 14,074 cans of tomatoes were canned.

**1914**

Smith-Lever Act was passed, making states and the U.S. Department of Agriculture partners in Extension educational programs.

**1915**

First girls' club members attended the State Fair of Texas in Dallas. The 125 girls, accompanied by chaperones, were decked out in blue serge uniforms and tomato red ties.

**1916**

First girls' encampment was held at the State Fair of Texas in Dallas. Present were 125 girls, on the basis of 4 girls from each county, and 10 chaperones.

**1918**

Club membership in the U.S. leaped to more than a half million.

**1919**

Contests became a part of the 4-H club program. Business concerns such as the railroads and banks supported club work by offering prizes to members.

The girls' club voted as their motto, "To Make the Best Better."

**1920**

Boys' and Girls' clubs (the forerunner of 4-H) adopted "To Make the Best Better" as their motto.

Home Demonstration Girls' Educational Encampment was held at the State Fair of Texas, Dallas, October 18-22. Girls who won the highest places in 4-H club work in their respective counties. Three scholarships were given to winners of the exhibits by the following companies: L.H. Lewis Company, Titche-Goettinger, and Sears-Roebuck Company.

Texas Farm Boys' 4-H Special, an eight-car train, traveled 5,000 miles in 16 days carrying 125 farm boys through the best agricultural sections of the United States and Canada for a thorough study of agriculture.

Girls' 4-H Home Demonstration Clubs initiated expanded production demonstrations in food productions, food preparation, home environment and clothing.

Girls' 4-H Club Work – 1920. Before 1919 these clubs members were known as canning and poultry club members. In 1919 girls enrolled as members of the Girls' Home Demonstration Clubs and could choose their production demonstration – either by growing a garden or raising a flock of standard-bred chickens and working on beautifying the exterior and interior of the home, preserving surplus food and learning to prepare appetizing dishes from the vegetables grown in the garden. Learning of simple stitches in sewing was also included.

First International Livestock Judging Contest at Atlanta, Georgia was held. The Texas team was named champion and won the trip to the Royal Show in Derby, England.

1921

Tabor Agricultural 4-H Club of Brazos County was recognized as having the best general record. State 4-H Club Council was initiated. This council was made up of one representative county agent from each of the nine districts. Each county was required to send one or more county team exhibits of club crop products in addition to individual exhibits to the Dallas State Fair. December was designated as campaign month for club membership and club organization. A camp school was to be held in each county annually with a constructive program of work and practical demonstrations.

State 4-H Club Council was organized. This group was comprised of one county agent from each of the nine districts. The representatives were named by their respective district agents.

4-H Clothing Contest for girl's ages 14 to 18 was organized.

State 4-H Grain Judging Contest was held in Dallas.

The State 4-H Livestock Judging Contest was held at College Station. County teams were trained intensively for 1 week and then the contest was held at the end of the course.

Boys' 4-H Sheep Clubs were organized.

1923

The first National 4-H Club Congress was held.

1924

National trophy was offered to the youth in the United States who was most outstanding in community service and junior leadership.

The fourth "H" was added to the Boy's and Girl's Farm Club emblem and the 4-H Club was born. The emblem was later adopted and received "trade-mark" status, the only trademark emblem at the time held by the government of the United States. Today, it still remains one of only a few emblems protected under United States Code (18 USC 707).

1926

The Texas Home Demonstration Association awarded its first Maggie W. Barry Scholarship.

1927

The first National 4-H Club Camp was held in Washington, D.C. At this camp, the pledge and the motto for 4-H club work were officially adopted.

1942

President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed the week of April 5-11 as National Mobilization Week for farm youth. He said, "Let your Head, Heart, Hands, and Health truly be dedicated to your country which needs them now, as never before."

The 4-H theme was "Feed and Clothe a Fighter and Myself" in support of World War II efforts.

1946

The first State 4-H Roundup held in August at Texas A&M College. Prior to 1946 the event was referred to as short courses.

1948

Worldwide exchange of youth, called the International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE) Program, began.

1949

The Junior Leadership Training program in Texas was begun, sponsored by Pennzoil United, Inc.

The movie "The Green Promise" was premiered in Houston in April at the elaborate opening of the \$8 million dollar Shamrock Hotel. One of the features of the opening was a 4-H ice cream party for the two juvenile members of the cast, Jeanne LaDuke and Natalie Wood. A special showing was held for the members of the Harris County 4-H Program.

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<b>1950</b>	The first Texas 4-H Youth Council was organized.
<b>1954</b>	State 4-H Recognition Committee was organized. This organization now is called the Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation
<b>1958</b>	Fiftieth anniversary of Texas 4-H Club Work.
<b>1962</b>	The Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation was created and operates as a nonprofit corporation under the state laws of Texas.
<b>1967</b>	The first Extension Youth Camp for Disadvantaged was held at Huntsville, Texas. 1969 With a grant from the Sears-Roebuck Foundation, a youth development agent was employed to initiate the new urban project to reach youth from lower socioeconomic families within the city of Houston.
<b>1969</b>	First youth development agent was employed to initiate the new urban project to reach youth from lower socio-economic families within the city of Houston. This position was made possible by a grant from Sears-Roebuck Foundation.
<b>1973</b>	The first Texas 4-H Congress was held in Houston, Texas at the Shamrock Hilton Hotel. The theme for this Congress was "Values in Transition."
<b>1974</b>	Groundbreaking ceremony was held for the Texas 4-H Center, Brownwood.
<b>1975</b>	The Texas 4-H Center was completed.
<b>1976</b>	4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association of Texas (VLAT) was organiz
<b>1978</b>	The Texas 4-H Center was officially dedicated on November 8.
<b>1983</b>	The first Texas 4-H Legislative Congress was held at The State Capital in Austin.  Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Texas 4-H & Youth Development Program.
<b>1986</b>	The Texas 4-H Management System was implemented to expand and enhance role of 4-H volunteers.
<b>1987</b>	The Phase II addition to Texas 4-H Center was dedicated.
<b>1989</b>	Texas 4-H "Making the Grade" Congress focusing on youth issues was held in San Antonio.  Grand opening ceremonies were held at the Leadership Lodge at Texas 4-H Center.
<b>1990</b>	Texas initiated a state-wide 4-H Strategic Planning effort and adopts a vision, mission and values to guide the 4-H program into the 21st century.
<b>1992</b>	4-H enrollment in Texas surpassed 500,000 members for the first time.
<b>1995</b>	The first 4-H Youth Issues Congress was held in Memphis, Tennessee. Thirty-one Texas delegates attended.

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**1996**

The first Texas 4-H Reunion was held at the Texas 4-H Center to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association and of the Texas 4-H Center. A time capsule was buried at the Texas 4-H Center.

4-H Friends and Alumni Association of Texas was organized.

**1997**

National Youth Voices and Action Campaign Partnership was established.

Texas 4-H "Go4It" Marketing Campaign was established.

**1998**

Texas 4-H celebrated its ninetieth anniversary.

Texas 4-H faculty member were assigned in all 12 districts.

The Texas 4-H Management System was introduced statewide

**1999**

Texas 4-H enrollment exceeds 800,000.

Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation scholarship program exceeds \$1 million.

**2001**

Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program enrollment exceeded 1.17 million youth.

**2002**

4-H in America celebrates its 100th Anniversary with a year-long celebration.

**2004**

Texas 4-H Roundup sponsors the largest state community service project to date by assisting the Brazos Valley Habitat for Humanity. More than 100 youth and adults helped build a house in Bryan and more than \$15,000.00 was raised statewide.

**2006**

Mr. Richard Wallrath and the Richard Wallrath Educational Foundation presents 71 – \$10,000 scholarship to Texas 4-H High School Seniors through the Texas 4-H Opportunities Scholarship Program.

Texas 4-H Roundup features Columbia recording artist and former Texas 4-H Council member, Trent Willmon during a concert.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service celebrates the 100th anniversary of the County Extension Agent in Texas. The first agent was located in Smith County (Tyler).

**2007**

Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program kicks off year long celebration of the 100th Anniversary of 4-H in the state.

**2008**

Blue Bell Creameries honored Texas 4-H with own ice cream flavor, Centennial Cupcake.

A delegation of forty-six 4-H members, volunteers, county Extension Agents, and 4-H faculty traveled to Washington DC to meet then President George W. Bush in the East Room to commemorate the Texas 4-H Centennial.

**2009**

Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation celebrated 50 years of provided scholarships to the youth of the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program.

one day 4-H was introduced as a day of state-wide community service projects for 4-H members to give back to the communities and county's. More than 10,000 youth from 185 counties participated in the event.

**2010**

Food Challenge Contest was added to the Foods & Nutrition Project. This team experience challenged teams of up to 5 youth to use certain ingredients and equipment to create a healthy food dish and then present on the nutritional benefits and costs.

Leaders 4-H Life was introduced as a new leadership experience for 4-H members. Focusing on leadership development, parliamentary procedure and service learning. Eight of the twelve districts held contests with seven districts having teams advance to Texas 4-H Roundup.

A new swimming pool was installed at the Texas 4-H Conference Center. The new pool includes a wheelchair accessible area, a fountain and three slides.

**2011**

4-H Day at the Capitol involved more than 300 youth and adults from across the state at the Texas Capitol. This event provided an opportunity for 4-H members to visit their legislators and interpret the benefits of the 4-H Program during the legislative session.

Fashion Storyboard was introduced as a contest in the Clothing & Textiles Project. This new experience replaced the Fabric & Fashion Contest.

A state-wide Adult Volunteer Conference was held in San Antonio and featured a weekend of project training for new and experienced volunteers.

A participation fee was implemented for all 4-H members. The fee of \$20 per person (\$25 after October 31) was for the purpose of maintaining current programming levels during the economic downturn of the Texas economy.

**2012**

Texas 4-H Roundup is held in Lubbock, Texas on the campus of Texas Tech University. This is first time in the history of Roundup that it was held off the campus of Texas A&M University.

**2015**

Duds to Dazzle was offered statewide.

**2017**

Texas 4-H celebrates the 110th Anniversary of 4-H in the state during the 2017-2018 year.

Kyle Smith, former Extension employee, was inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame.

**2018**

Clothing & Textiles and Housing & Home Environment projects were merged into one and renamed "Fashion & Interior Design."

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service South Campus building was named in honor of the Richard & Patsy Wallrath for their generous support of the 4-H scholarship program.