MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™ EXTENSION

DeSoto County Extension Newsletter

DESOTO COUNTY NOVEMBER 2026

It's November folks and December is just around the corner! That means the holiday season is officially upon us! If you are counting down, we are roughly 7 weeks away from Christmas!

As we head into this season, we want to take a moment to reflect on the many reasons we have to be grateful. Over the past year, we have walked alongside you through seasons of change and uncertainty. We know some of you might face real challenges from shifting programs and drought to working hard to maintain stability and navigating uncertain times. Through it all, we hope that the Extension Office has been a source of support, knowledge, and connection, providing you resources to help you find solutions that work for you, your family, your business and your farm.

Because of your support, our 4-H program continues to grow, reaching more than 9,200 youth this past year! Our Master Gardeners hosted their annual conference, welcoming more than 250 attendees and shining through their outstanding hospitality. We planted many "seeds" of growth, knowledge, and opportunity throughout DeSoto County this past year. We look forward to seeing them continue to flourish.

Thank you for letting us serve you and for trusting us in being a part of the solution. Your needs, concerns, and challenges truly matter to us and we are thankful for the opportunity to serve you, be a part of your lives and our community.

This month in the newsletter we are reflecting on what happened at the Mississippi State Fair and sharing a few articles that we feed are relevant to your this season. We can't wait to celebrate the achievements of our 4-Hers on November 17th at our 4-H Awards Ceremony!

Our office will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday, starting at noon on November 25th through November 27th. Sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. As always please let us know if you have questions because we are here to assist you! We are thankful for the ability to serve you and look forward to continuing to grow together in the year ahead!

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Join us for an upcoming Library Programs

Turn Trash into Treasure: Composting & Vermiculture Workshop!
November 7, 2026, 1:00pm - 2:00pm
Southaven Library with Mary Ann Cabler

Wreath Making for Adults with Lara Angel
December 2 @ 10:00 a.m.
Call 662-895-5900
Olive Branch Library

Dining with Diabetes (4 part series) with Lara Angel
Hernando Public Library @ 10:00 a.m.
Dec. 1, Jan. 5, Feb. 2, March 2

Egg-citing News! 4-Hers Take on Omelet Contest & TV!

Recently, we had two DeSoto County 4-H members, Fenix & Janika Schaafsma, shine on television while promoting the Mississippi State Fair omelet competition. This was an very exciting opportunity to represent Mississippi 4-H on television.

Fenix and Janika appeared on WLBT with News Anchor Angela Evans, and alongside Mississippi Egg Marketing Board President, Ryn Laster to showcase the annual competition and share the many ways 4-H members can develop valuable life skills through educational contests and public speaking opportunities. During the segment, they helped demonstrate omelet preparation while, discussing the upcoming event at the Mississippi State Fair.

The appearance provided a unique platform for the youth to build confidence, strengthen communication skills, and serve as ambassadors for both DeSoto County 4-H and Mississippi 4-H. By participating in media interviews and live demonstrations, Fenix and Janika represented the 4-H program with enthusiasm and professionalism.

Experiences like these help young people grow as leaders, while highlighting the importance of agriculture, nutrition, and hands-on learning. The Mississippi State Fair Omelet Competition continues to be a fun and educational event that connects youth with agricultural industries and encourages the development of practical cooking skills.

We are proud of Fenix and Janika for stepping into the spotlight and doing an outstanding job representing DeSoto County 4-H. Their willingness to share their talents and experiences demonstrates the 4-H motto of "Learning by Doing" and showcases the positive impact 4-H has on youth across Mississippi. Congratulations, Fenix and Janika, on a job well done!

1170 STARLANDING RD. WEST NESBIT, MS 38651

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Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. ANGUS L. CATCHOT JR., Director

2026 MS STATE FAIR RECAP

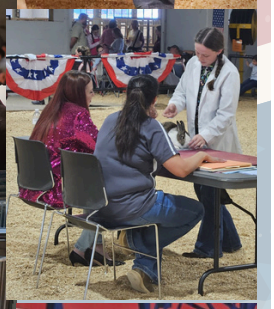
Congratulations to all of our 4H livestock exhibitors!

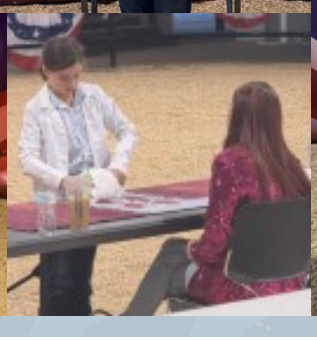
Beef Cattle: Weston Ricker, Easton Ricker, Cheyenne Ricker, Savana Stewart & Morgan Miller

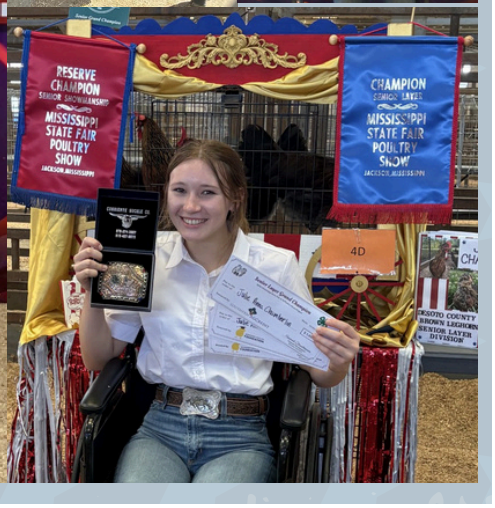
Rabbits: Jasidy, Addilyn, Zandrew Gomes; Lillian, Hazel, and Evie Bemis; Charlotte and Dominick Kouba, Olivia Wofford & Cora Stokes

Poultry: Charlotte Kouba & Julie Chamberlin

Dairy Goats: Anthony & Nathan Bula; Michael, Sidney, Jayden Simpson, Jasidy, Addilyn, & Zandrew Gomes, & Violet Cox







STATE FAIR CONTESTS

DeSoto County 4-H had members competing at the 4-H Day at the State Fair in a variety of contests!

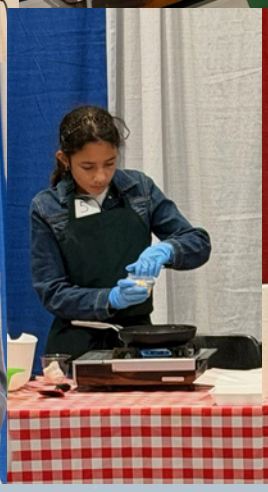
Share the Fun: Dusti, Willow, Robert Cox-Osborne

Public Speaking: Hank Hawkins

Chopped Challenge: Dusti, Willow, Robert Cox-Osborne

Omelet Cook Off: Janika & Fenix Schaffsma

Fashion Revue: Willow Cox-Osborne



well done!

4-H STATE FAIR EXHIBITS

The following 4-Hers had items selected to be on display at 4-H Day at the Fair! They made or grew all of the items that were selected to be showcased!

Charlotte Kouba, David and Leah Angel, Dominick Kouba, Dusti and Willow Cox-Oborne; Fenix, Janika and Maisie Schaafsma; Hank, Hazel & Clara Hawkins; Isabella Hancock & Addilyn Gomes; Maggie Whitten.

4-H Clubs

Lucky Leaders 4-H Club- this is a community club that meets on the 3rd Friday of the Month. They meet at 5:30 p.m. at Emory Indepent Methodist Church.

4-H Horse Club- project group that meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 4:30 p.m. They meet at the DeSoto County Agri-Education Center.

Jr. Master Gardener- project group that meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 4:30 at the DeSoto County Agri-Education Center.

4-H Western Wrangles Club- this is a Western Heritage chartered 4-H Club. Meeting times vary, but typically it's the 1st Thursday of the month. Their next meeting is November 5th at 6:30 p.m. at the DeSoto County Agri-Education Center.

4-H Kits and Kids Club- this is charted 4-H club that meets monthly to explore rabbits and goats. They meet on the 1st Monday of the month 4:30 p.m. at the DeSoto County Agri-Education Center.

4-H Homeschool Sewing Club- is a project group that meets the 1st Monday of the month. Currently, we're at capacity for participants.

4-H Shooting Sports- this is project group/program that kicks off Jan. 12, 2027. Practices and meeting times TBD.

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Tate DeSoto Forestry Association

DEER MANAGEMENT

NOVEMBER 19TH | 5:30 PM

DeSoto County Agri-Ed Center, 1170 Starlanding Road West, Nesbit, MS 38651
Register by calling the DeSoto County Extension Office by November 16, 2027 at 662-469-8480.

Guest Speaker: Chandler Strickland, Private Land Biologiest, MDWFP

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

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DeSoto County

MASTER GARDENER
Face-to-Face Training

Spring 2027
1170 Star Landing Rd. West
Nesbit, MS 38651
8:30am - 12:30 pm

For more information, contact the DeSoto County Extension Office.

662-469-8480
mt+52@msstate.edu

MASTER GARDENER MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

DESOTO COUNTY MASTER GARDENER

MISSISSIPPI MASTER GARDENER 35

Lunch and Learn

Wednesday Nov. 11th

12:15pm - 1:15pm
1170 Star Landing Road W Nesbit, MS

GUEST SPEAKER: LARA ANGEL

TOPIC: GETTING STARTED WITH SOURDOUGH

COST: $10 A MEAL WILL BE PROVIDED

TO RSVP OR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS CALL:
DESOTO COUNTY EXTENSION AT 662-469-8480

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

WHITE CHILI

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound lean beef, turkey, or chicken, cut into small pieces or ground
- 1 medium onion, chopped; 1 (4 oz) can green chilies, drained and chopped
- 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon OR 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons chili powder, ½ teaspoon garlic powder (or our MSU salt-free Taco Seasoning Blend - as much as you like - it's salt-free)
- 3 (15 oz) cans great northern beans, undrained
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup water

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. In a large, heavy saucepan, brown the beef, chicken, or turkey with the onion until nearly done.
3. Add the chilies, bouillon or broth, chili powder, and garlic powder. Stir to mix.
4. Simmer for 10–15 minutes.
5. Add the beans, salt, pepper, and additional water if needed.
6. Heat until very hot, but do not boil. Simmer for 20-30 minutes and enjoy!

A Pretty Pest? Spotted Lanternfly

Have you ever spotted an unusual insect and thought, "That's a pretty butterfly?" One insect that often gets mistaken for a butterfly is the spotted lanternfly, an invasive pest that Extension specialists are asking Mississippians to watch for. While it has not yet been found in Mississippi, it continues to spread throughout the Southeast and could become a problem for homeowners, gardeners, and small-scale fruit growers.

If you grow grapes, have maple trees in your yard, or enjoy spending time outdoors on your patio or deck, this is an insect worth knowing about. Spotted lanternflies feed on plant sap and can gather in large numbers on trees and vines. They are especially attracted to grapevines, but they also feed on maples, Virginia creeper, and the invasive tree-of-heaven.

For homeowners, the biggest issue is often the mess they leave behind. As they feed, they produce a sticky substance called honeydew that can coat outdoor furniture, vehicles, patios, and plants. Honeydew can also lead to the growth of black sooty mold and may create an unpleasant odor when it begins to ferment.

What Should You Look For?
Adult spotted lanternflies are easy to recognize once you know what to look for. They have tan-gray wings with black spots and bright red hind wings that are visible when they fly. Young lanternflies, called nymphs, start out black with white spots and become red and white as they mature. They are very active and will quickly jump when disturbed.

Another important sign is the insect's egg masses. These look like small smears of dried mud and can be found on tree trunks, fences, outdoor equipment, grills, bricks, vehicles, and other smooth surfaces. Because the eggs can hitchhike on almost anything, they are one of the main ways the pest spreads to new areas.

How You Can Help
Take a few minutes now and then to inspect trees, grapevines, fences, outdoor equipment, and vehicles around your home. If you travel to states where spotted lanternflies are known to occur, be sure to check your vehicle, trailer, camper, or equipment before returning to Mississippi. This is especially important from July through October when the insects are most active.

If you think you've found a spotted lanternfly or its egg masses, take a photo and contact your local Extension office for help with identification. Early detection is one of the best ways to keep this pest from becoming established in Mississippi.

Why Early Detection Matters
Mississippi's homeowners and gardeners can play an important role in protecting our landscapes and small fruit plantings. The sooner a new pest is found, the better chance we have of slowing its spread and reducing its impact. By learning what spotted lanternflies look like and reporting suspicious sightings, you can help protect both your backyard and Mississippi agriculture.

For additional information, visit the USDA Spotted Lanternfly Resource Page.

Four Balance Exercises to Prevent Falls

Falling and sustaining a significant injury, such as a broken hip or concussion, is a serious concern as we age. The good news is that by building leg, ankle, foot and core muscles now, we can reduce our risk of falling. Walking, yoga and tai chi can help improve your overall stability. You can also try some simple balance exercises at home. For safety, be sure to do these while standing near a sturdy surface, such as a counter, table or heavy chair so you have something solid you can hold onto if needed.

1. Stand on one leg. This helps train and strengthen your muscles. Simply stand with your legs hip-width apart and lift one leg off the floor for about 30 seconds. Then switch legs. Try this while you brush your teeth as a way to remember to practice! Once standing on one leg is no longer challenging, try holding your leg out to the side or try doing bicep curls with a light weight.
2. Side steps. Stand with your feet together, then take a step to one side with one foot. Move your other foot to join it. Take 5-10 steps in one direction, then go in the other direction as your space allows. Once this gets easier, you can add hand claps as you move from side to side or add light weights.
3. Heel-to-toe walking. Put one foot in front of the other, with the heel of one foot touching the toe of the other. Take 10-20 steps forward in a straight line with your eyes forward. Use a wall for support if needed.
4. Sit to stand. Sit near the front of a sturdy chair that will not slide. With your feet flat on the floor, lean forward slightly by bending at your hips. Push through your feet to stand up without using your hands. Then slowly lower yourself down to a seated position. Repeat 5-10 times. Build up to two sets of 10 twice a day, three to five days a week as you gain strength.

For additional tips on avoiding falls, check out this list of ideas for preventing falls and fractures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/falls/prevention/index.html.

Food Safety for Meal Prepping

Preparing meals in advance can increase the likelihood of making healthy food choices, reduce money spent on fast food or restaurant meals and reduce food waste. However, preparing food in advance still requires following proper food safety guidelines.

While many social media influencers recommend organizing meals for an entire week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends eating prepared foods within three to four days. Why? Because refrigerating food slows down bacterial growth but doesn't stop it. Foodborne bacteria and pathogens, including Salmonella and Listeria monocytogenes, can cause food poisoning and grow even in cold temperatures.

The solution? Change your strategy. Split your food prep into two sessions each week to maintain the three-to-four-day window. Freeze portions of food for later in the week. This can also prevent boredom.

Follow these tips to keep your prepared food safe!

1. Clean. Start with clean utensils, surfaces and hands. Tidy and clean your work area and tools as you cook to reduce the spread of bacteria.
2. Separate. Keep raw meat, poultry and eggs separate from your other ingredients, especially foods that won't be cooked later in the process.
3. Cook. Use a food thermometer to be sure you have cooked meat andpoultry to a safe internal temperature to kill bacteria.
4. Chill. Keep perishable foods at or below 40 degrees F. Do not leave cooked foods out on the counter for more than two hours. It's best to cool hot foods quickly. Freeze unused portions within three to four days. Remember to label containers with the date and contents!

November

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 DWD **4-H Homeschool Sewing Club** **4-H Kits & Kids**	3	4	5 **4-H Western Wranglers**	6	7 Vermiculture Program @ Southaven Library
8	9 DWD	10	11 **Lunch and Learn** **MG Board Meeting**	12 **4-H Shooting Sports Instructors Meeting**	13	14
15	16 **4-H Horse Club @ 4:30** **Pick-Up 4-H Cooking Kit**	17 **4-H Awards Banquet**	18 **MG Monthly Meeting**	19 **Forestry Meeting** Floral Program @ Horn Lake Library	20 **Lucky Leaders 4-H Club**	21
22	23	24 **Jr. Master Gardener @ 4:30**	25 **Closing at Noon**	26 **Thanksgiving Office Closed**	27 **Office Closed**	28
29	30	DEC 1 December **Dining with Diabetes @ Hernando Library**	2 Wreath Making for Adult with Lara @ Olive Branch Library	3 **Cattlemen's Meeting**	4	5
6	7 **4-H Kits & Kids** **4-H Homeschool Sewing Club**	8 **MG Annual Luncheon & Awards**	9 **MG Board Meeting**	10 **Office Closed NW District Meeting**	11	12

FYI our office will be closed December 23rd - January 4 Office Closed Christmas Break

Protect Your Pecking Order

As we move into the cooler months, this is a good time to think about flock health and biosecurity. With migratory birds moving through the region, poultry owners should stay aware of avian influenza and other diseases that can affect both backyard and commercial flocks.

The good news is that a few simple precautions can go a long way in reducing risk. Keep feed and water sources protected from wild birds, limit unnecessary visitors around your birds, and clean and disinfect boots, equipment, and vehicles that may have come into contact with other poultry. If you add new birds to your flock, consider keeping them separated for a period of time before introducing them to your existing birds.

One of the most important things you can do is simply pay attention to your flock. Watch for changes in feed or water consumption, a drop in egg production, respiratory issues, swelling around the eyes or head, or unexplained illness and death. These can be signs that something isn't right.

Whether you have a few hens in the backyard or a larger poultry operation, early detection is key. If you notice unusual symptoms or increased mortality, don't wait. Contact your veterinarian of the MS Animal Board of Health.

Mississippi State University Extension offers several resources to help poultry owners keep their flocks healthy. Publications on poultry production, biosecurity, flock management, and disease prevention are available through the MSU Extension Service website. Producers can also find timely updates, fact sheets, and educational programs offered by Extension specialists and county agents throughout the state.
Taking a few extra steps now can help protect your birds and support the health of Mississippi's poultry industry. As always, we are here to help answer questions and connect you with research-based information.

A little prevention today can go a long way toward keeping your flock healthy and productive throughout the winter months.

MSU Extension Poultry Resources:
https://bit.ly/4jLOWGi https://bit.ly/4svHtNN