



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LOCAL 4-H PROGRAM CELEBRATES PENNSYLVANIA AG LITERACY WEEK

Uniontown, PA – Agriculture is a leading industry, locally as well as in Pennsylvania, and the Fayette County 4-H program makes educating the public about it a priority. In observance of Pennsylvania Ag Literacy Week, which took place March 17-21, local 4-H educators hosted several programs, both in and out of schools, to spark students' interest in agriculture.

Fayette County 4-H Educator Jennifer Deichert and 4-H Program Assistant Jenna Tinkey said they attended the March 20 Fayette County Commissioners' meeting and were presented with a proclamation for Ag Literacy Week.

Deichert said 4-H made its annual visit to classrooms to read a book to students and do an agriculture-related project with them.

"The book this year was *The Soil in Jackie's Garden*," Deichert said, noting 4-H members visited nearly 80 classrooms of students in kindergarten through second grade, "We talked a lot about compost this year and soil health."

To tie into that, Deichert said, students were given jars of soil and earthworms. Teachers would then add scraps of food items, and students would monitor the results.

"We also did a poster contest at Uniontown Mall," Tinkey said. "We just asked the kids what they like about 4-H and the different opportunities in 4-H."

One topic Deichert and Tinkey did not get to explore with students was embryology.

"We were kicking off our embryology project in schools, but we couldn't get fertile eggs," Deichert said.

She explained the 4-H's usual supplier, an Elizabethtown-based hatchery, is currently under quarantine due to the H5N1 (bird flu) virus. Deichert approached local farmers but found it was a bit too early for them.

"We're postponing until after Easter," she said.

Even with the embryology project on hold, 4-H members have quite a bit to look forward to in the coming weeks.

“We are working with many of the school districts on an engineering design challenge,” Deichert said. “The kids are doing small, problem-solving and engineering designs where they’re creating Rube Goldberg-like machines.”

Contestants will submit video entries of completed projects in May.

Deichert said the challenge is open to all 4-Hers of any age, though Laurel Highlands School District is entering about 120 middle school students. Other districts, she said, are entering the challenge with “one or two” classrooms, and Albert Gallatin has chosen to aim it toward the district’s elementary students.

On May 17, the robotics club will hold a Race Day at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, inviting clubs from other counties to join the fun. Deichert said the event is aimed at upper elementary and middle school students, with older 4-H members running the program. Club members will use Spike Prime STEAM kits from Lego.

“All the clubs are active (right now),” Deichert said. “We’re getting ready for tagging in our small livestock animals.”

Creative Arts club members also are working on their fair projects.

Deichert said anyone interested in joining Fayette County 4-H can visit the Facebook page by searching “Pennsylvania 4-H - Fayette County”, call the extension office at 724-438-0111, or email Tinkey at jmt6881@psu.edu.

To learn more about Fayette County 4-H, visit www.extension.psu.edu/programs/4-h/counties/fayette.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

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