

## 4-H testimony

Hello, my name is Tasha Pond from Bowman County. I am a 17-year-old junior at Bowman County High School. 4-H has played a major role in my life. This program is very valuable to me because I have been a member and involved in 4-H for almost 10 years. My summer schedule is packed full preparing for the county fair, horse shows, and rodeos. When I started showing, I only showed sheep. I, along with my siblings, now show sheep, goats, horses, cattle, swine, and rabbits. I also do many indoor projects such as wood working, photography, and vet science.

Without 4-h I would not have had the opportunity to be involved in so many things. Growing up, I livestock judged. This allowed me to start talking in front of crowds and having a different view of livestock. I learned the dos and don'ts of how to care for them and what the ideal market or breeding animal is. This helped me significantly when it came to my own herd because I knew what quality of animals I wanted on my place that would allow me to be successful in the arena and the sale ring. It helped me expand my knowledge for animals and made me realize how important quality is over quantity.

4-h gave me responsibility and made me accountable for my actions. It gave me a reason to try my hardest. It's a strong emotion when you have the feeling of accomplishment because you put in the hard labor and hours to care and raise the livestock and to watch them be successful, whether it is me or another kid showing that animal or if that animal produces strong, healthy offspring which in turn will make you money.

My goal is to go to college to be a veterinarian. Being in 4-h has made me realize how much animals mean to me and how important they are to the world. I now understand what it takes to raise healthy livestock. I gained the confidence I need to fulfill my dream in the livestock industry all because of the countless opportunities 4-h offers.

Nine out of the ten years that I have been involved in 4-h, I have been an officer. Without 4-h meetings, I would never have learned Roberts Rules of Order. Knowing these allowed me to be more successful in FFA and everyday life. I have learned what it's like to be in a leadership position. I know how to conduct a meeting, speak aloud when its needed, and how to communicate with the public. Knowing the proper meeting room order is an important detail when it comes to the real world. No matter what job I am associated with, I'll always have a meeting of some kind that I must attend.

Learning this at a young age makes me seem more mature, less childish, and more professional knowing the proper ways.

I personally have grown because of the 4-h program. It has helped me become a more rounded individual who knows how to work hard and accomplish anything I put my mind to. It has allowed me to learn to be more organized and how to manage time and money. I have met many people along the way and made connections that are inseparable. Whether the connection is between animals or the people I have met.

I have said many times that 4-h was the first thing that got me started in my speaking experiences. I now can compete in speech meets, speak in a formal voice, and talk comfortably to anyone I may run into. And this all started because of 4-h. I found something I loved to do when I was young, and I continued it. Like me, there are plenty of children in this country and area, that are or were only involved in 4-h, FFA, or other agricultural activities. To some, this was their way of staying out of trouble and keeping busy. I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger services, and my health to better living. For my club, my community, my country, and my world. I personally know what this means because of 4-h.

I have learned many technical skills such as proper showmanship and interview judging. I learned how to carry myself and present myself inside and outside of the arena. Being able to speak and explain to judges and other people why you deserve that award or position is a major part of growing up and being successful in this hard world.

If this budget cut prevents my county from having an extension agent or office, I will not be able to be involved in 4-h. I speak for many people in my area who would not be able to travel to be involved. When I started 4-h, if there was not a local extension, I would have not started because the lack of money. It was not something that would have allowed me to travel to the meeting or any other activities.

I, myself believe that if we don't have a local extension agent or office that many kids will have to quit 4-h. these kids would not experience or grow as much if they don't have 4-h. Children are the future of our world and agriculture and without them, farming and ranching will die. Our world isn't getting any smaller. It continues to grow which means we need more food and supplies to support our ever-growing population. By taking this money away, it is preventing college students' scholarships, limiting the future of agriculture, and ruining family traditions. I want my future children to be involved as much as I was. I want to volunteer and support the 4-h as much as my parents and the people I know have.

Thank You  
Tasha Pond