

2016 Middlesex County 4-H Fair Challenges

BEEF CATTLE DEPARTMENT: Educational Poster. Provide educational information about the care, raising or breeding of beef cows. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

BEEF CATTLE DEPARTMENT: Theme Poster "I love my beef cow" photo collage. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

CAT DEPARTMENT: Decorative or Garden Flag. Decorative flags must be between 27" and 32" wide and 37" to 54" long. Garden flags should be between 11" and 15" wide and 15" to 18" long, with a channel along one side so that it can be easily hung. The theme of the flag should be cats. Material should be a durable fabric of your choice. Designs can be cut out and sewn on or painted with fabric paint. Please consider donating your flag to the Cat Department for use at the Fair in the coming years.

CAT DEPARTMENT: Cat demonstration or cat trick to take place at the end of the public viewing from 11:30 a.m. to noon on Sunday.

CRAFTS DEPARTMENT: What to do with all of those 4-H ribbons! This year's challenge is to be creative to produce a keepsake or decorative craft utilizing your 4-H ribbons! Include on the 4 x 6 card what those ribbons were awarded for, and if you would like, what they meant to you!

DAIRY CATTLE DEPARTMENT: Educational Poster. Provide educational information about the care, raising or breeding of dairy cows. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

DAIRY CATTLE DEPARTMENT: Theme Poster "I love my dairy cow" photo collage. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

DAIRY GOAT DEPARTMENT: Papier Mâché animal. Make your favorite animal out of recycled paper. You can use newspaper, stationary, gift wrap or any other paper you might have available. For large items or particular shapes you can make the inside hollow by using cartons, cans, foam or an air filled balloon, then forming your shapes around it. Once you have made your shape using papier mâché, let it dry. Once dry you can paint it with any color or pattern you choose.

DAIRY PRODUCTS DEPARTMENT: Buttermilk Biscuits (Mile High). Using the following recipe, AND using only butter and buttermilk you produced, make, bake and present six (6) biscuits. On a separate red, green or blue plastic 6" plate include at least a 1 inch cube of your homemade butter and a small, clear glass jelly jar of the buttermilk containing a minimum of 1/4 cup of the homemade buttermilk in the jar. Include a printed recipe explaining how you made your butter and buttermilk.

Nonstick cooking spray

Dough:

2 cups (10 ounces) unbleached all purpose flour

1 Tbsp. double acting baking powder

1 Tbsp. sugar

1 tsp salt

½ tsp baking soda

4 Tbsp. cold unsalted butter, cut into ¼ inch cubes

1 ½ cups cold buttermilk

To Form and Finish Biscuits

1 cup (5 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour distributed in rimmed baking sheet

2 tbs unsalted butter, melted

Place oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 500 degrees.

Spray 9" round cake pan with nonstick cooking spray; set aside. Generously spray inside and outside of ¼ cup dry measure with nonstick cooking spray.

For the Dough:

In medium bowl combine flour, baking powder, sugar, salt and baking soda with whisk. Feel free to use a food processor for this part if you are used to it. Scatter cold butter cubes evenly over dry ingredients and cut butter into flour mixture until mixture resembles pebbly, coarse cornmeal. Add buttermilk to dry ingredients and stir with rubber spatula until just incorporated. Dough will be very wet and slightly lumpy.

To form and Bake Biscuits

Using ¼ cup dry measure and working quickly, scoop level amount of dough; drop dough from measuring cup into flour on baking sheet. If dough sticks to cup, use small spoon to pull it free. Repeat with remaining dough, forming 12 evenly sized mounds. Dust tops of each piece of dough with flour from baking sheet. With floured hands, gently pick up piece of dough and coat with flour; gently shape dough into rough ball, shake off excess flour, and place in prepared cake pan. Repeat with remaining dough, arranging 9 rounds around perimeter of cake pan and 3 in center. Gently brush rounds with hot melted butter, taking care not to flatten them. Bake 5 minutes, then reduce oven temperature to 450 degrees; continue to bake until biscuit are deep golden brown, about 15 minutes longer. Cool in pan for 2 minutes then invert biscuits from pan onto clean kitchen towel; turn biscuits right-side up and break apart.

DOG DEPARTMENT: Educational Poster. Develop a poster that will educate the public about dogs. Be sure your theme is clearly and concisely explained. Ideas: dog anatomy; how to greet a strange dog, grooming, etc. The poster should be freestanding (trifold or have a stand). Submit entries on Thursday night to the K-9 Club tent area. This class will receive Danish ribbons only.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS DEPARTMENT: There are 59 US National Parks created between the years of 1890 and 2000. Do you have a favorite National Park? Maybe you have been or would love to go to one in particular. Let's hear about it! When and why it was founded, its location, special features, etc. Is it a highly visited park? Are there any special plans for its future? How has it changed over the years? Make us want to go and visit the Park! A tri-fold display poster would be best but is not required.

FIELD CROPS DEPARTMENT: Create an eye-catching scarecrow. This scarecrow must also contain features you think most likely to be effective in scaring garden/field crop invaders away!

FLOWER DEPARTMENT: Adding a piece of fabric as a base to compliment your selected color scheme, create an arrangement from cut and/or hot house flowers. Other natural horticultural items may be added. Be sure to keep your arrangement in proportion with your container. Be creative!

FLOWER DEPARTMENT: Using a square of fabric no larger than 8"x8", select a vase to compliment its colors, create an arrangement from cut and/or hot house flowers using your selected color scheme. Artificial items may be added. Keep in proportion height to base. Be creative and have fun.

FOOD DEPARTMENT: Date Nut Bread. Use the following recipe to make one loaf of date nut bread.

1 ½ cups flour	2 eggs
1 cup sugar	1 cup cut up dates
1 ½ teaspoons of baking soda	¾ cup of chopped walnuts
½ teaspoon salt	¾ cup boiling water
3 tablespoons shortening	1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix walnuts, dates, baking soda, salt, shortening and boiling water. Let stand for 20 minutes. Beat together eggs, vanilla and sugar. Ad to previous mixture and mix in flour. Put mix in loaf pan and bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees.

FOOD PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT: Applesauce. Using the following recipe, preserve and exhibit 2 pint jars of Applesauce:

20 large apples
4 cups water
2 cups sugar

Wash apples. Quarter, core and remove all bruises or decayed parts. Add water and cook until soft. Press through sieve or food mill to remove skins. Add sugar and bring to a boil. Pack while boiling hot into standard, clear canning jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Put on lid, crew band firmly tight. Yield: About 4 pints. Process pints for 25 minutes in a Boiling Water Bath.

HONEY AND BEEKEEPING DEPARTMENT: Honey-Sweetened Almond Chocolate Chip Granola Bars. Chewy, no-bake, gluten-free granola bars made simply with oats, almonds, almond butter or peanut butter and chocolate chips. Using the following recipe, make and present your six best bars. Remember to attach a copy of the recipe to your entry.

1¾ cups quick-cooking oats	½ teaspoon salt
1⅓ cup sliced almonds	1 cup creamy almond or peanut butter
¾ cup mini dark chocolate chips	½ cup honey
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon	1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Line an 8 to 9-inch square baker with two strips of crisscrossed parchment paper, cut to size. In a mixing bowl, combine the oats, almonds, chocolate chips, cinnamon and salt. Whisk to combine.
2. In a 2-cup liquid measuring cup, measure out the nut butter. Top with ½ cup honey and the vanilla extract. Whisk until well blended. If you must, you can gently warm the liquid mixture on the stovetop or in the microwave, but make sure it's cool before you pour it into the dry mixture (the chocolate chips will melt).
3. Pour the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients. Use a big spoon to mix them together until the two are evenly combined and no dry oats remain. The drier the mixture, the more firm the bars will be, so stir in extra oats if the mixture seems wet.
4. Transfer the mixture to the prepared square baker. Use your spoon to arrange the mixture fairly evenly in the baker, then use the bottom of a flat, round surface (like a short, sturdy drinking glass), covered in a small piece of parchment paper to pack the mixture down as firmly and evenly as possible.
5. Cover the baker and refrigerate for at least one hour, or overnight. Use a sharp knife to slice the bars. Bars keep well for a couple of days at room temperature, Yield: 14 to 16 bars.

MAPLE DEPARTMENT: Chewy Maple Bars. Using the following recipe, make and present your six best bars. Remember to attach a copy of the recipe to your entry.

1/2 cup sugar	½ teaspoon baking powder
1/2 cup shortening	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup maple syrup	1 cup rolled oats
1 egg	1 cup chopped walnuts
2/3 cup all-purpose flour	

In a mixing bowl, cream sugar and shortening. Add syrup and egg and beat well. Combine flour and baking powder; add to creamed mixture. Add vanilla and mix well. Stir in oats and walnuts. Pour into a greased 9-in. square baking pan. Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes. Cut into squares while warm. Cool on a wire rack. Yield: 12 servings

NEEDLEWORK DEPARTMENT: Color challenge. Create an item knitted or crocheted incorporating at least three different colors or three different shades of the same color.

NEEDLEWORK DEPARTMENT: Using any stitching technique(s), create an item that has a theme in the same amount of years as your age. (Example: If you are 13, create a pillow with 13 different flowers. If you are 17, create a framed picture with 17 different cross-stitched cats).

NEEDLEWORK DEPARTMENT: 12” hand-stitched 9-patch pillow using 2 different complementary fabrics. Pillow may be stuffed or a pillow-form may be used. Kits are available, as are written instructions, if you would like to use your own fabric.

PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT: Food Preparation and Cooking. Enter a **color** photo that you took that you believe would fit into this category. Show us your creative side! A single **color** photograph should be entered, following the rules specified in the Photography Department.

POULTRY DEPARTMENT: Raising a Buff Orpington bird. If you are interested, please contact John King at (978) 597-5804. You will raise 6 pullets and bring your best to the fair. Birds may be purchased for \$25 for 6 birds payable in advance. There may be an opportunity to work out a deal with the supplier to reduce the cost. Refunds will be given if the cost gets reduced. Anyone who wishes to raise and show them at the Fair must pre-order them in early spring.

RABBIT AND CAVY DEPARTMENT: Rabbits and cavy are curious animals that need toys to challenge and entertain themselves. Design and make a creative toy that is fun and safe and will help you bond with your pet. Please use only non perishable materials that do not contain any food.

RABBIT AND CAVY DEPARTMENT: Design a piece of rabbit or cavy agility equipment. All agility equipment must be built sturdy and safe for the normal use of how the equipment was designed to function. The agility equipment must be made the appropriate size for rabbits or cavy and be painted or treated in a way that it can be easily cleaned. Wood items must be painted or shellacked and sanded so that there are no sharp edges.

SEWING DEPARTMENT: Ribbon Fun. Sew an item using some of your 4-H award ribbons. Feel free to cut them to create a design using one or more colors of ribbons. The item may contain only ribbons or be used in coordination with fabric and other notions. Ribbons must be machine sewn using good sewing technique.

SWINE DEPARTMENT: Educational Poster. Provide educational information about the care, raising or breeding of dairy cows. Maximum poster size is 22” x 28”. Posters may be brought to the Swine Department on Thursday night, August 27 between 5:30 – 9:30 p.m. Posters will not be accepted at any other time. Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

SWINE DEPARTMENT: Theme Poster - “I love my swine” photo collage. Maximum poster size is 22” x 28”. Posters may be brought to the Swine Department on Thursday night, August 27 between 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Posters will not be accepted at any other time. Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

VEGETABLE DEPARTMENT: Create an “Urban Garden,” focusing primarily on edible items, using at least two different vegetables. Examples: salad greens and tomatoes, potatoes, carrots and onions, or green beans, beets and peas. Plant in a single container no larger than 2 feet tall by 3 feet long or in diameter (round pots). Imagine your garden for a balcony, patio or small yard in an urban area. Containers can be something recycled to continue the theme.

WORKSHOP DEPARTMENT: Build and finish a small animal carrying box. The box must be large enough for a small dog, cat, rabbit, chickens or pocket pets. It must have a latchable door for easy access, air holes for ventilation and be light enough for a child to carry. The box should be finished (if it is a wooden box) so that it does not retain odors and can be easily cleaned out. It can be made of wood, metal, plastic, screening in any combination. A drawing of the design and a written description of the construction must be included in the entry.

CREATIVE WRITING DEPARTMENT: Write a 50-word story. Write a story using 50 words or less. It must contain all of the elements of a short story. It must be one page, double-spaced, on 8½" x 11" white paper and in a folder with a clear cover. No illustrations. Choose your words carefully.