



## Situation Analysis Report



# Fauquier County 2018

## UNIT Extension Staff

Tim Mize, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent

Lenah Nguyen, 4-H Youth Extension Agent

Tim Ohlwiler, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent

Becky Gartner, Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences (housed in Culpeper)

## UNIT Extension Leadership Council

Diana Graves, Chair

## **Introduction**

**The County of Fauquier is located in the north central Piedmont region of Virginia, approximately 40 miles southwest of the nation's capital and approximately 80 miles northwest of Richmond, the state's capital. The county encompasses a land area of approximately 647.45 square miles. Fauquier County is bordered by the counties of Prince William, Stafford, Culpeper, Warren, Clarke, Loudoun and Rappahannock.**

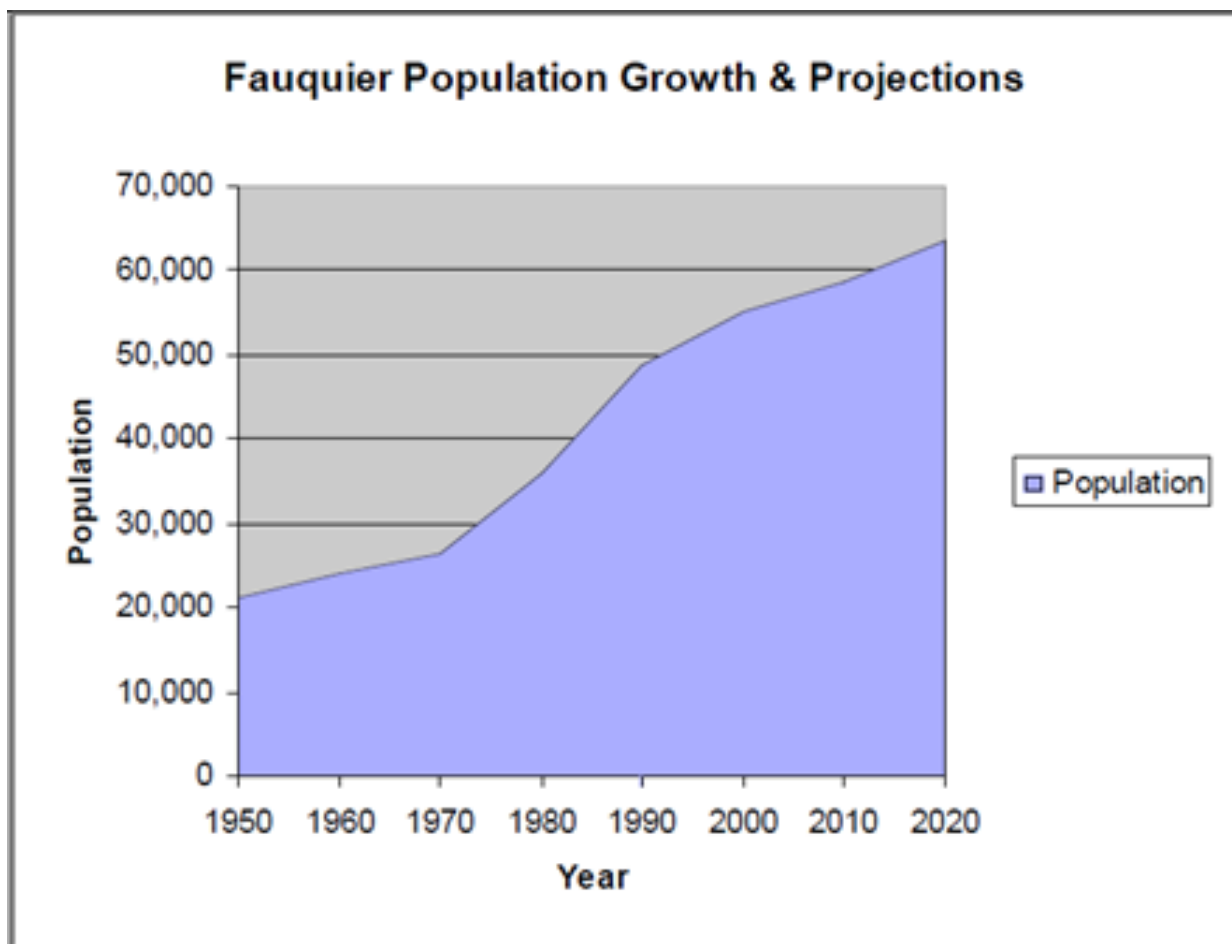
**Agents housed in the Fauquier Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension provide leadership in three program areas: 4-H, Horticulture, and Agriculture. Fauquier County is also serviced by a Family and Consumer Sciences agent in Culpeper County. In addition, there is a part time Unit Administrative Assistant and a county supported youth livestock educator housed in the office.**

## **Unit Profile**

### **Population**

**Fauquier county has a current population of 70,675 representing just less than one percent of the state's residents. This equates to 100.7 people per square mile. The county saw an 8.3% increase in population between 2010 and 2018, a 2.3% increase over the national average. The median age is 41.6 (2017) and the median household income is 94,775 (2017). Residents identifying as white represented 87.2%, well above the state and national average. The minority population is well below the state and national averages: African American 7.8%, Asian 1.7%, and Hispanic 8.9%. Women still slightly outnumber men making up 50.5% of the populace.**

The following graph reflects the current population and the projected growth through 2020. Population projections estimate the 75+ age group will grow to 5,193 in the year



2020 and up to 8,314 by the year 2030. This is largely indicative of the baby boomer generation entering their “golden” years.

## Income and Employment

The median household income continues to rise in Fauquier, increasing from \$93,762 in 2011 to \$94,775 in 2017. This is significantly higher than the state median average of \$68,766 and the national average of \$57,652. Males have a higher average income than females (1.34), however, the income inequality in Fauquier is lower than the national

average. Another positive statistic is a poverty rate of only 5.7%, half that of the national rate. Whites represented the highest racial group living in poverty, followed by Hispanic and Black.

The latest available data (2016-2017) showed a decline in employment, 35,100 down to 34,900, a decrease of 4.64 percent. The most common jobs by county residents are Management, office and administrative support, and sales occupations. Fauquier is unique in that it has a higher number of residents working in farming, fishing and forestry occupations, computer and mathematical occupations, and construction and extraction occupations than other localities in the state.

## **Education**

In 2017, 91.4% of adults 25 and older were a high school graduate or equivalent, slightly higher than both the state and national averages. In addition, 35.3% held a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Currently, there are 11 elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools, and one alternative learning school within the Fauquier County Public school system. In 2018-2019, there were 11,267 students enrolled in the public-school system. The breakdown by race/ethnicity is 79.6% white, 8.6% Black/African American, 2.0% Asian, 1.9% American Indian, 0.3% Hawaiian, and 7.5% Two or More races. The county also has 3 private schools, two of which are K-12. Three libraries are available for county residents (Warrenton, Bealeton, and Marshall) which have more than 400,000 sources in circulation.

## **Housing and Transportation**

Fauquier County has seen solid housing growth over the past 60 years. Between 1960 and 2018, the number of housing units increased from 7,305 to 27,140, an increase of almost 270%. Seventy eight percent of housing was owner occupied while the

remaining 21.6% was renter occupied. 46.7% of the housing units are located inside the incorporated towns and county service districts. Fauquier County's 2017 median home value of \$370,000 is almost double national value and 1.4 times higher than state value, while the County's median gross rent of \$1,229 is 20% higher than the nation's and 5% percent higher than the states. While these values are higher than the national and state averages, the percent difference has actually trended lower than in the 2013 Situation Analysis.

The majority of households own two cars. A large percentage of residents commute out of the county for employment (33,377). The average commute time from the US Census is 39.8 minutes, well above the national average. However, our local paper estimated Fauquier as having the second longest and most expensive commute in the nation, 352 hours annually with cost of \$13,813. Additionally, 8.73% had commutes in excess of 90 minutes. Over 80% of commuters drove alone, with the balance carpooling, utilized public transportation, or utilized flex time working from home.

## **Economics**

Approximately 67.1% of the population 16 years and older is in the civilian workforce. The county provided 17,743 jobs excluding government. In 2012, there were 2,258 women-owned firms, 794 veteran-owned firms, and 692 minority-owned firms. Fauquier County had total revenue of \$162,697,754 in fiscal year 2012, which averaged \$2,487 per capita. This revenue included local, state, and federal monies. Total retail sales were \$920,778,000. The total revenue increased by 20% from data collected in 2001. Fauquier County taxes include a .994% real estate rate and 4.65% personal property rate.

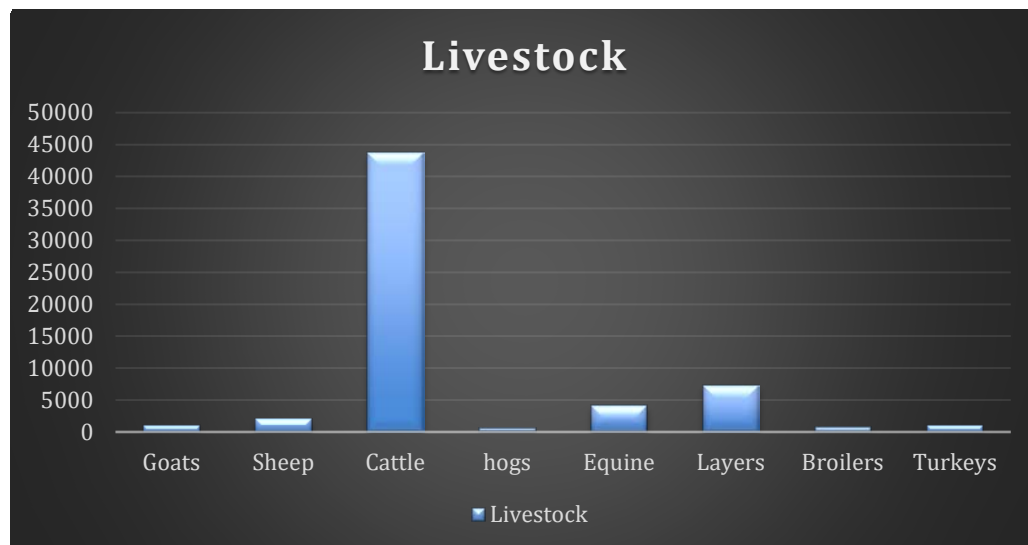
## **Health**

Within Fauquier County there is one hospital and six nursing homes. Life expectancy for females is 81.1 years and 77.6 for males. These are significant increases from 1980

and mirror the state. The county has seen an overall decrease in mortality since 1980, especially in males. Fauquier showed an increase in adult obesity (24.8%, 2001-2011), on par with the state. Another cause for alarm is the increase in mental and substance use disorders mortality. There was a 374% increase from 1980-2014. Thankfully 90% of residents under 65, have health insurance. In Fauquier, about 3,400 households — accounting for 5 percent of the county population — receive SNAP assistance.

## Agriculture

Fauquier County is historically and traditionally a community of significant agricultural production within the region with a total product market value of \$54,812,000. When broken down by percent of sales, livestock and poultry represent 60% of sales with crops making up the remaining 40%. Beef cattle are the number one commodity by



value and number ranking 10<sup>th</sup> in the state. While decreasing significantly, dairy is still ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out the 59 producing counties. Fauquier has a significant

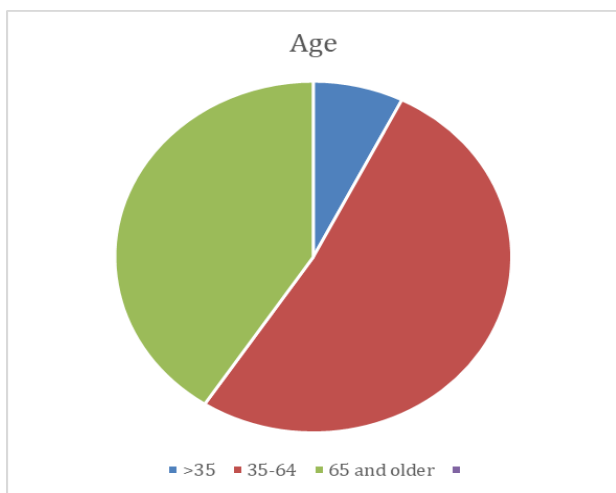
equine population, with over 3,300 animals and second to only Loudoun. With such a large livestock population it is no surprise that 70,000 acres is in forage production (pasture, hay, and silage) with another 85,000 acres in crop production, mainly row crops. Fruit and berry production are significant and increasing. High-value niche crops and enterprises, such as ornamentals, agritourism, produce, community supported agriculture, and value-added production has been increasing over the past

decade, as farms seek to capitalize on Fauquier’s close proximity to the large and affluent population in the Washington D.C. metro region. Twelve percent of producers now sell directly to consumers.

Like most counties in Virginia, Fauquier has seen a reduction in the number of farms (-8%) but an increase in average farm size. However, 95% of farms are still family owned.

## Characteristics of Farm Operators

The vast majority of producers identified as white (93%), with African American being the largest minority followed by Hispanic and Asian. The majority of producers (51%) are between 35 and 64. One troubling statistic is the fact that 41% of farmers are 65 or older. New and beginning farmers now number 553 while 333 producers have military service.



## Community and Resident Perspectives

Based on timeline and results from previous situation analysis work a community survey was prepared to define and evaluate needs and issues of local residents in the county. The survey was administered electronically to email lists of each program area as well as to the list of cooperating agencies and associations such as John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District, Fauquier Master Gardeners, local 4-H club leaders, etc. Due to a low response from the agriculture sector, Key stakeholder

interviews were conducted with local producers selected from a diverse group of agriculture enterprises selected by the County Agriculture Committee.

## **Priority Issues**

Based on the unit profile and community survey, the following top priority issues were identified for Fauquier County. These priority issues are not in order of standing, but are grouped according to commonality and programming response.

### **Issue 1: Agriculture Production Profitability, Sustainability, and Preservation**

Once again, profitability of agriculture operations and enterprises is a concern. It is important to note that this was identified as an issue from the majority of respondents from the survey and interviews regardless of occupation or background. Maintaining Fauquier's heritage and viewsheds is a priority to local taxpayers. One respondent stated "Agriculture and Fauquier are synonymous. If we do not support agriculture in our county we will permanently change Fauquier's unique character and precious way of living". This issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources. While optimism for the viability of agriculture in the county has improved since the last situation analysis, recent changes in international markets and political interference has dampened the near-term financial outlook for many producers.

The local dairy sector has been especially hard hit and Fauquier has seen an exit of many dairy farms. This has also had a direct effect on beef producers as cows have flooded the market and driven down prices for all.

Again, commonly cited areas of concern are the reduction of choices in the farm service sector in the region (equipment dealers, mechanics, veterinarians, etc.), the increasing costs of production, the reduced opportunity for expansion due to high land values, and suburban encroachment on rural areas. Farm profitability and the volatility of prices are other commonly cited concerns. While net cash farm income has improved since the 2012 ag census, Fauquier farms had, on average, a net loss of \$5,846 per farm.



Lack of processing is still a concern. This ranges from lack of ability to process and preserve (according to market access requirements) fruits and vegetables to acquiring slaughter slots for livestock.

This issue is being addressed through:

- 1) Farm Succession Programming
- 2) Beef 20/20 programming
- 3) Fruit production, vegetable production, forage production, and livestock programming.
- 4) Marketing groups
- 5) Northern Piedmont New and Beginning Farmer Course
- 6) Fauquier Education Farm programs and partnerships
- 7) Development of processing/preservation/storage opportunities. This currently revolves around working with producers to coordinate resources and examination of partnerships that can facilitate funding opportunities.
- 8) Partnerships with community associations and other governmental organizations to address land use trends, environmental impacts, and land preservation.
- 9) Support training to landscape and commercial horticulture industry on pesticide and fertility management.

## Issue 2: Water Quality/Quantity

This issue continues to be a concern of county residents and local government. Parts of this/these issue is currently being addressed with current unit VCE resources. Because the county is located on a ridge between the Potomac and Rappahannock River watershed, almost all of the drinking water for Fauquier originates within the county. Future residential development, especially in the Northern half of the county, is a major concern. The county has acknowledged that certain service districts are or will experience water quality issues in the near future. While VCE is cognizant of the impact

**this will have on the citizens of Fauquier, our ability to address this issue is limited. However, VCE can and has taken a leadership role on water quality issues.**

**This issue is being addressed through:**

- 1) Green Grass Program- Urban Nutrient Management, this program was developed with John Marshall soil and Water Conservation District but in now solely administered by this office. This programs goal is reduced nutrient runoff by providing data and training on proper fertilizer and pesticide use. As of 2019, over 500 plans have been written. The plans are used by the county to aid in compliance with Fauquier's MS4 permit.**
- 2) Pesticide Use Education; The office will continue to offer pesticide certification and re-certification trainings for producers, businesses, and employees. This office will continue to utilize the Pest Management Guide for extension recommendations and volunteer training.**
- 3) Provide training to landscape and commercial horticulture industry on pesticide and fertility management.**
- 4) Best Management Practices; Continue our partnership with local Soil and Water Districts to enhance implementation of BMP's through cross programming and support.**
- 5) Soil health and cover crop educational program; With an increase in funding to JMSWCD, we are partnering to increase no-till and cover crop utilization.**
- 6) 4-H Junior Master Gardeners and Envirothon; ongoing.**
- 7) Master Gardner Education; ongoing.**
- 8) 4-H agriculture clubs and events; Hiring a youth livestock specialist.**
- 9) Farm Tour; increase educational programming during tour to highlight water BMP's utilized by farmers.**

**Issue 3: Drug addiction and obesity.**

**This is the biggest change in an issue since our last situation analysis, especially drug addiction. There are currently organizations that address the issue through programming to increase awareness, use recognition, and rehabilitation. This office lacks the resources to tackle this problem outside of youth activities and education. We will continue to partner with outside organizations were beneficial.**

**Adult and youth obesity do fall within the scope of our programming and is addressed through youth training and activities, Family consumer science (FCS), as well as being a component of our horticulture and agriculture programming.**

**This issue is being addressed through:**

- 1. 4-H youth school and afterschool programming.**
- 2. 4-H programming, such as food challenge.**
- 3. Master Gardener training and their outreach efforts.**
- 4. Beginning farmer training.**
- 5. Food safety and preservation training through FCS programming.**

#### **Issue 4: Agriculture Startup/Small Business/Entrepreneurs**

**This has been a priority for the past decade. It is also part of issue one. Fauquier, like many counties that surround urban areas, has seen an influx of residents that are interested in agriculture production. There is also an interest in current producers that are utilizing more direct marketing opportunities afforded by location to increase profitability. As stated in priority one, agriculture profitability, sustainability, and**

preservation are important to community members. Comments in the survey as well as interviews expressed the need for:

Produce and meat storage, development of more food hubs, support for CSAs, increase in available processing facilities, and marketing/business education to compete with large retail operations and wholesalers.

This issue is being addressed to a limited extent, mainly through agriculture.

This issue is being addressed through:

1. **Piedmont Beginning Farmer Course**
2. **Partnerships and alliances with community groups such as Piedmont Environmental Council to avoid duplication of programming and wasting of resources.**

**Issue 5: Livestock/Agriculture teaching Facility and youth agriculture curriculum and training.**

This is a common theme in the Survey and was also mentioned in the key informant interviews. While this has been discussed in local and regional extension planning, this subject is relatively new to the situation analysis. This priority is also relative to suggestions made on youth leadership training, STEM education, youth activity opportunities, as well as hands on training in agriculture and job training.

The survey requested training for youth to enter agriculture. Many youths are uninterested or unable to attend college. Survey participants suggested more emphasis on vocational training. There is also an interest in the county to provide a livestock teaching facility, provide community kitchen(s), cold storage, etc.

Extension was instrumental in forming a vegetable demonstration farm that now operates independently as the Fauquier Education Farm. There has been feedback from the community and local government to replicate this with livestock. As the county transition to a population of youths with no agricultural background, the agents have

identified that an interest in agriculture does exist for this group. Replicating the success of non-livestock ownerships clubs (Fairfax County) would provide an opportunity to address this issue and increase participation in 4-H and FFA clubs. There has also been interest in the local school system as well our local community college to provide hands-on educational opportunities for their students.

This issue is being addressed through:

- 1) Partnership with local Non-Governmental Organizations. This has begun already. A committee made up of local lenders, producers, local government, equine groups, and NGO's was formed and met monthly to investigate opportunities for partners and funding.
- 2) Partnership with local government to provide financial assistance for infrastructure. One specific priority that extension and Livestock teaching committee are pursuing is long-term financial support for our youth livestock educator.
- 3) Currently developing curriculums for students interested in livestock enterprises.

Additional priorities and solutions.

In the last Situational Analysis, a focus session was held to address youth issue. While this was not directly replicated for 2018 the information is relevant and is an on-going priority and programming directive.

*Outcome Strategic Planning Session with Fauquier County 4-H Volunteers:*

*The four priority issues facing the Fauquier County 4-H Program identified were education about 4-H, parental involvement, time management and disconnect. They were ranked by order of importance in the order below. These broader issues are outlined to include problems within that issue.*

1. ***Education about 4-H***
  - a. ***Lack of marketing of 4-H programs***
  - b. ***Legislature, teachers, and non 4-H community have a skewed view of 4-H don't realize that 4-H is more than just livestock programs***
  - c. ***Businesses don't prioritize sponsorships for 4-H because they can get more advertising from sports sponsorships***
2. ***Parental Involvement***
  - a. ***Lack of Parental Supervision***
  - b. ***Drug and alcohol use tied to lack of parental supervision***
  - c. ***Some youth aren't involved in activities because of lack of parental involvement***
  - d. ***Unproductive use of technology and social media drama as a result of a lack of parental involvement***
3. ***Time Management***
  - a. ***Youth and parents are busier***
  - b. ***Youth have so many activities especially sports***
  - c. ***School is more demanding***
  - d. ***Transportation is challenging for parents working longer hours and with longer commute times***
4. ***Disconnect***
  - a. ***Disconnect between clubs***
  - b. ***Lack of meeting locations because 4-H not connected within community***
  - c. ***Socioeconomic/cultural divide within the county that makes kids reluctant to talk with their peers about 4-H participation***
  - d. ***Little connection between schools and 4-H decreases marketing opportunities.***

***Potential solutions to the top four prioritized issues are outlined below:***

***Education About 4-H***

1. ***Farm Tours***

2. ***Flyers in Animal/Feed Stores***
3. ***Participation in Local Festivals (Warrenton Day, Fire Station Carnivals)***
4. ***Marketing through Boys and Girls Club***
5. ***Partnerships with schools – connecting 4-H to school curriculum, marketing to principals***
6. ***Share success stories in newspapers and magazines***
  
7. ***Recruit teens to do outreach***
  - a. ***college resume builder***
  - b. ***provides positive social opportunities for teens***
  - c. ***support with social media campaigns***
8. ***Afterschool clubs***
  - a. ***Intramural clubs***
  - b. ***Partnership with FFA***
  - c. ***Junior Leadership Program – train teens to lead afterschool programs***
9. ***Community Service***
  - a. ***Shows 4-H known for good work***
10. ***4-H'ers soliciting sponsorships should reach out to non---agricultural businesses and be armed with materials to education the business community about 4-H***
11. ***Information about 4-H in Good Times***

#### ***Parental Involvement***

1. ***Educate parents about how to be involved.***
2. ***More programming for the whole family***
  - a. ***Family entries at the Fair***
  - b. ***Fauquier Scavenger Hunt***
  - c. ***Family Nights***
  - d. ***Cooking Classes***
  - e. ***4-H discounts***

### ***Time Management***

- 1. Encourage clubs to meet at a regular time/date***
- 2. Ensure that leaders and club presidents are prepared to run effective and productive meetings***
- 3. Educate the schools about the value of 4-H programming that requires absence from school***
- 4. Study groups and/or tutoring in conjunction with club meetings***
- 5. Parents need to help youth prioritize and limit activities***
- 6. Rotation of meeting locations***
- 7. Encourage carpooling***
- 8. Combine meetings with activities or events***
- 9. Spread activities out throughout year***
- 10. Provide opportunities for parents to get to know one another so that they feel comfortable carpooling and sharing other responsibilities of having active children***

### ***Disconnect***

***Targeting Life Skills Program – makes obvious the end goal of 4-H programming (not just about agricultural aspects)***

- 1. County Facebook Page***
  - a. Club info***
  - b. Calendar***
  - c. Events***
  - d. Meeting Locations and Times***
- 2. Club Booths at Banquet***
- 3. Quarterly County Newsletter or Blog***
- 4. Countywide community service projects***
- 5. Fun events for kids from different clubs to meet***
- 6. 4-H displays at Fair***