

# Quarterly Report

First Quarter FY21



**BE BOLD.** Shape the Future.  
**College of Agricultural, Consumer  
and Environmental Sciences**  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Otero County Extension Office



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## **Virtual 4-H Meetings**

Otero County 4-H continues to operate monthly 4-H Club and County Council meetings via Zoom. Youth engage in team-building or fun exercises and ice breakers while receiving monthly county updates and providing project updates/presentations themselves.

## **Agriculture Questions- Answered!**

This year, we have experienced above normal temperatures, drought and new circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic which has led to an increased number of people staying home. As a result, 2020 has been an active summer for Otero County's agriculture agent with growing interest in at-home agriculture and gardening projects. To address these calls, the ag agent has continued to make farm and home calls while adhering to COVID-19 safe practices. Ag calls have dealt with multiple issues related to the drought and heat, but disease and insects remain a large source of inquires as well. In addressing local agriculture-related questions, the ag agent will often send samples to NMSU's laboratory. In addition, livestock and farm calls have continued as local producers seek out advice on production and death of livestock.

# Fair Season

2020

The Fair season looked different this year due to COVID-19. But thanks to the efforts of many volunteers and staff, several opportunities were offered all while adhering to COVID-19 safe practices and public health orders. Youth and adults in Otero County participated in both county and regional virtual exhibits and limited in-person shows.



The Otero County Junior Livestock Show is the primary event for county 4-H and FFA youth to exhibit their projects and grow as individuals. Although the County Fair was not held this year, we were able to provide a junior livestock show for Otero County youth in September. Only exhibitors and their immediate families were allowed to participate in the event. By having this event (following COVID-19 protocols), we provided an opportunity for youth to show and sell their animals. The sale results were over \$191,500, up \$35,000 from last year making this event a huge success. Funding for this activity comes from proceeds from the fair itself and numerous contributions from individuals and businesses across the county.



In addition, to help keep the Otero County Fair spirit alive, a virtual exhibit show was offered in September for the quilting, creative crafts, jewelry, spinning, weaving, food preservation, photography and fine arts divisions. Entries were accepted by appointment and following judging, photos of entries were posted to the Otero County Fair website and Facebook page for public viewing.



Even though in-person viewing of indoor 4-H projects was not possible this year at both the county and state fairgrounds, 4-H members had an opportunity to enter photos of their 4-H project exhibits in the 2020 Virtual State 4-H Exhibit Showcase. In October, indoor 4-H projects created by youth were judged and also photographed for a Southern New Mexico State Fair virtual show that was shared via Facebook.



Local 4-H horse project youth participated in a horsemanship clinic hosted in September by Otero's 4-H and ag agents. Participants practiced horsemanship, gaining experience in training and handling their project horses.



4-H members interested in completing a record book for the 2019-2020 4-H year attended a workshop at the Extension Office and received materials and information to assist in the completion of record books.

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# 4-H Workshops

*Otero County 4-H agents hosted summer workshops for youth following COVID-19 protocols outlined by NMSU and Governor Lujan Grisham.*

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On Tuesdays in July, the 4-H agents held workshops at the Extension office to assist 4-H members with creating project exhibits for 4-H Achievement Day. Youth completed exhibits in leathercraft, jewelry making, sewing, housing and interior design and Uniquely New Mexico. In August, a virtual 4-H Achievement Day was hosted for Otero County 4-H. Indoor 4-H project exhibit entries increased by nearly 8% when compared to previous year's entries.

The following quote was received from a parent of a 4-H member participating in workshops:

“ *She made a couple of items that I don't think she would have tried on her own. She also benefited by having something out of the house to do!* ”



Youth attended showmanship workshops with steers, pigs, lambs or goats to help prepare their livestock for the county junior livestock show. Participants received feedback on condition, fitting and showmanship techniques while also receiving ribbons and fitting/grooming prizes for participation.







## Food Preservation

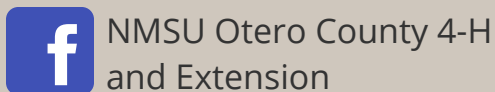
In August and September, the ideas for cooking and nutrition (ican) educator developed two videos on how to dry fruits and vegetables safely and for the best quality. The videos can be viewed on the NMSU ACES YouTube channel.

Extension has a long history of providing safe food preservation recommendations that date back to the early 1900s. Backed by the research of USDA and NMSU the fcs agent is able to offer residents of Otero County with up-to-date, credible directions and procedures for safely preserving foods in the home kitchen. In September, the fcs Agent conducted a virtual presentation on how to prepare and process foods safely in a boiling water bath canner. The format of the presentation consisted of 30 minutes for lecture, 45 minutes for hands-on canning demonstration, and 15 minutes for questions and answers. The demonstration included canning tomatoes and salsa.



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