4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project
Event Description

The 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project provides an opportunity for Arkansas 4-Hers to demonstrate their skills with preparing, establishing, maintaining and observing a small wildlife food plot using provided seed for the purpose of food and cover establishment for wildlife. Participants submit both a written and video report of field activities. All Junior and Senior 4-H members ages 9 to 19 are eligible.

The top five (5) food plot projects in each district receive recognition. One project will be awarded the state winner. The state winner from the previous year is not eligible to win the current project year, but is encouraged to participate.

4-Hers entering in the 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Contest must meet these guidelines:

- The 4-H member must register for the Wildlife Food Plot Project by May 1 on 4-H Online. A registration fee is charged to cover program costs.

- The 4-H member is responsible for equipment, materials and supplies associated with the project with the exception of provided seeds. At least one exclusion cage is suggested for placement inside the plot to observe plant growth. (A limited number are available on loan from the county office upon request to the state coordinator.)

- The project plot will be approximately 1/8 acre in size. Thus, the plot should cover around 5,445 sq. ft. Plots less than 4,628 sq. ft. or more than 6,262 sq. ft. are not eligible for competition.

- The 4-H member will complete a food plot record book and a 2 – 3 minute video used for judging projects. Both are due February 1.

- Youth should expect at least one site visit from their County Extension Agent or someone on their behalf. Visits will be scheduled by your County Agent. The score sheet from this visit is included in the project record book. The 4-H member is required to attend the site visit.

- Periodically a 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Newsletter will be emailed to the address provided through 4-H Online and to County Offices with youth enrolled in the project. Youth who prefer receiving a paper copy by postal mail should notify their County Office for delivery of the newsletter.

- Contest winners will be announced in March and recognized at the Arkansas Wildlife Habitat Education Program (WHEP) State Contest, typically held the last Friday in April. Check the 4-H Calendar of Events for date and location.
4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project Guidelines

Who: Junior and Senior 4-H members ages 9 to 19 years

What: Preparing, establishing, maintaining and observing a food plot using provided seed for the purpose of food and cover establishment for wildlife

When: Deadline to register is May 1 through 4-H Online

Why: To educate youth on the proper techniques of food plot establishment to benefit game animals and other wildlife species

How: Contact your local County Extension Agent for more information or to register for the contest

Registration: For a registration fee of $20, youth will receive enough seed to establish approximately 1/8 acre (5,445 square feet) food plot and a year’s membership to the Quality Deer Management Association’s (QDMA’s) Rack Pack youth program.

Rules:
- Youth must be enrolled as a 4-H member and register for the 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project by May 1 through 4-H Online.
- Youth will prepare, establish, maintain, and observe a food plot that meets specified requirements (see plot requirements below). If the participant does not have access to a space that meets food plot requirements, every effort will be made by the County Extension Agent to provide a space.
- Youth prepare and submit a project record book and video to their County Extension Office (due February 1) to receive credit for participation.
- Youth must plant the seed they are given. **No additional seed may be added.** Participants will be contacted by the local County Extension Agent to schedule a time to pick up seeds.
- Plots must be planted no later than October 20.
- Youth will be allowed to hunt over project plots.
- All plots should be protected from livestock.
- The state winner from the previous year is not eligible to win the current project year, but is encouraged to participate.

Timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Deadline to register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April - May</td>
<td>Collect soil sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 15</td>
<td>Seed available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>Deadline to plant food plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November – January</td>
<td>Site visit from local County Extension Agent or someone on their behalf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Project record book and video due to County Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Announce district and state winners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>end of April</td>
<td>Recognize project winners at 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program (WHEP) State Contest</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Plot requirements:
- The plot must be approximately 1/8 acre in size. Thus, the plots should cover around 5,445 sq ft.
- Seed is not to be split between multiple plots.
- Plots should be situated close to natural cover such as woods, fencerows, or brush piles with consideration to adequate sunlight.
- Plots should not be located very close to houses or other human activities. However, if there is no alternative, this is permissible.
- At least one exclusion cage is suggested for placement inside the plot to observe plant growth and the effect of grazing pressure or disturbance from deer and other wildlife. Participants can construct their own cage, or a limited number are available on loan from the county office upon request to the state coordinator.
- Using a trail (game) camera is optional to observe wildlife usage of the food plot.
- Further suggestions will be included in periodic 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project newsletters.

Project documentation:
- The project record book can be downloaded on-line from the 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project’s website at www.uaex.edu, or contact your local County Extension Office.
- The project record book is to be prepared by the 4-H member, completed throughout the course of the project, finished, and turned in to the County Extension Office no later than February 1. The project record book can be either hand written or typed.
- A brief video (3 minutes maximum) will be submitted on-line. Youth are judged based on their (1) description of work and accomplishments, and (2) presentation skills. The video should feature:
  - the 4-H participant stating name and county,
  - a view of the food plot, and
  - the 4-H participant providing a description of project work and accomplishments.
  The entire video should be shot in the field at the food plot site. Special video graphics, manipulations, or enhancements will not be considered in judging and should be avoided.

Judging:
- Youth are to conduct all food plot activities except those which safety is of concern, for example driving a tractor for plot preparation. Adult assistance is expected and should be noted in the record book.
- Youth should expect at least one site visit from their County Extension Agent or someone on their behalf. A local County Agent will coordinate the site visit date. Youth will need to be present for this site visit. The County Agent Score Sheet from this visit should be included in the project record book.
- If seed fails to produce a crop, the 4-Her will remain eligible for recognition and awards. Many “native” or “natural” food plots are a valuable source of food and cover for wildlife.
- The record book, video, and actual food plot (as seen in person by the County Agent and on video) will be taken into consideration upon judging.
- The County Extension Office will submit the project record book as a PDF to the state office; therefore, report covers are not recommended.
- Youth who complete all project requirements (including record book and video) will receive a certificate of project completion.
- Juniors and Seniors will be judged together. Five will be recognized in each district and one will be named state winner.
4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project
Record Book

Name (as enrolled in 4-H Online): ____________________________________________________

County of enrollment: ______________________________________________________________

Date: _________________________

[Make this report your own!
Add project photo or creative illustration here.]

Has the participant submitted a video for this project? _____ Yes _____ No
(A brief video can be uploaded on-line at the project’s website to be viewed by judges of the Arkansas 4-H Food Plot Project, www.uaex.edu)

By signing below, you state that you have completed this record book yourself and to the best of your knowledge, this information is correct.

Participant Signature: _____________________________________________Date:_________________

By signing below, you state that you are familiar with this work and to the best of your knowledge, the youth participant completed this book and the information is correct.

Parent Signature: _________________________________________________Date:_________________

4-H Agent Signature: ______________________________________________Date:_________________

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Instructions for County Extension Office: Please scan and email this document in a PDF format to the project coordinator, Becky McPeake, rmcpeake@uaex.edu. Final deadline for receiving project materials is February 5.
Preparing Your Plot

1-1. Where did you decide to put your food plot? (e.g., at a neighbor’s property, on a farm, on a power line right-of-way, in the backyard, etc.) (2 pts)

1-2. Sketch a map of your food plot, or paste a computer-generated map (e.g., Google Earth). Show the shape of the food plot and its surroundings. Include a rough measurement of the dimensions of the plot. (4 pts)

1-3. What type of habitat is around your food plot? (Check all that apply.) (2 pts)
   ____ Fields
   ____ Woods
   ____ Tree line
   ____ Home site
   ____ Fence row
   ____ Other (please describe):

1-4. Why did you choose this particular site? (2 pts)

1-5. When did you take a soil sample? (2 pts) *(Remember to attach soil test results to project book.)*

1-6. What did you do to prepare your plot? (disking, herbicides?) (2 pts)

1-7. What soil test recommendations did you follow and why? (2 pts)

1-8. What type of soil amendments (fertilizer, lime) did you use, if any? (2 pts)
Planting Your Plot

2-1. On what date did you plant your plot? (2 pts)

2-2. What estimated size is your plot? (2 pts) ___________________ x ___________________

2-3. How many square feet? (2 pts) (Area = Length x Width) ___________________________

2-4. Why did you plant your plot in this layout? (2 pts)

Maintaining Your Plot

3-1. During the course of this project, how much estimated total rain/precipitation did your plot get each month? (6 pts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Rainfall (inches)</th>
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<th>Rainfall (inches)</th>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
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<td>September</td>
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<td>January</td>
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3-2. How did you come up with this estimate? (rain gauge, weather data from which website?) (2 pts)

3-3. What pest, weed, or disease problems, if any, did your plot have? (2 pts)

3-4. How did you manage these problems? (2 pts)

Observing Your Plot

4-1. Which of the plants identified on your seed label or in the newsletter grew in your plot? (2 pts)
4-2. Place a photo or sketch of two plants found in your food plot in the space below. Write the name of the plant next to the photo or sketch. If you don’t know its name, look in a field guide or on-line at a plant database. You can also ask your local County Extension Agent for assistance. (4 pts)

4-3. Do you think your plant (above) is native or non-native? Why? (2 pts)

4-4. What evidence of wildlife did you observe using your plot? (tracks, scat, feathers, scrapes, game camera images). Place photos or sketches of two different items you found in the space below. Write what animal you think it is next to the photo or sketch. (4 pts)

4-5. Based on your observations, how were animals using your plot? (feeding, passing through, bedding, etc.?) (2 pts)

4-6. If an exclosure cage was used, how is what’s inside the cage different from what is outside the cage? (2 pts)
Financial Records

5-1. List any expenses you had during the project (registration fee, soil additions, herbicides, pesticides, rain gauge, etc.). (4 pts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Expense</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
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**Total Expenses for 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project**

5-2. Did you have any means of making money on this project? (trapping, visitors?) If so, how was this accomplished and how much did you earn? (2 pts)
Community Outreach

What effort did you make to promote your 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project? Did you use tracks and feathers as a show and tell project at school? Did you give a presentation at a local meeting or your 4-H club? Did you allow visitors from your school or 4-H club to visit your plot? (10 pts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Outreach</th>
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Project Story (30 points)

Make a brief (3 minutes maximum) video about your 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project. You can use any device like a cell phone or video camera. The video doesn’t need to be fancy or formal. Just stand in front of your food plot and talk as if you were telling a friend about your project.

- Start by telling your first name and county.
- Show us what your food plot looks like.
- Tell us about your experiences in preparing, planting, maintaining, and observing your food plot. What did you learn? Were there any interesting visitors in your plot?

Either take your video to your local County Extension Office or upload it on the 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project website. Please title the video’s file name with the following format: “County_FirstLastinitial,” e.g. Saline_BeckyM. This will help judges with organizing the videos.
Pictures (20 points)

Include pictures taken from throughout your project showing what you did and how your food plot turned out. For example, show a picture of you taking a soil sample, planting seeds, a deer track, or a time-series from day one of the food plot and at intervals of two or three weeks; or take a picture of the exclosure cage compared to what’s outside the cage. Provide up to 10 photos with captions. Add pages as necessary.
Soil Test Report (10 points)
Don’t forget to include a copy of your soil test report here in your project book.
County Agent Score Sheet
Assessment of Wildlife Food Plot
[TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY AGENT]

Directions: Evaluate the field using the following parameters, and sign the sheet below. Feel free to add pages if necessary. Include this scorecard in the 4-H member’s project book.

Plot Parameters

• What you will need: You will need a way to roughly measure the dimensions of the plot. A measuring wheel or a 100 foot tape measure will work well, but if you know your “pace,” that is a much easier way to measure in the field. Alternatively, use an app or computer program to estimate area of the plot.

1. Shape of Plot (please check the most applicable): (1 pt)
   _____ rectangular or square
   _____ linear
   _____ triangular
   _____ circular
   _____ other: if irregular in shape, sketch an outline:

2. Estimated Size of Plot (in feet): (4 pts)
   Length: ______________
   Width: ______________
   Area (length x width): ______________

Distance to Cover

• Cover is considered any place an animal can use for living space or provides the ability for an animal to hide. For the purposes of this project, cover can be defined as “non-open areas” lacking livestock including woods and thickets such that a person may have difficulty walking through. Components of cover include all forms of vegetation, forest, and any physical entities such a brush piles, fallen logs, snags.

3. Distance from center of food plot to the nearest cover:
   _____ Greater than 500 feet (0 pts)
   _____ 250 feet to 500 feet (1 pt)
   _____ Less than 250 feet (2 pts)

4. Percent of food plot within 250 feet of dense woody cover, escape cover or ungrazed woodland:
   _____ 25% or less (0 pts)
   _____ 26 – 50% (1 pt)
   _____ 51 – 75% (2 pts)
   _____ Greater than 75% (3 pts)
Health and Vigor of Plants (15 points)

5. From your knowledge of local conditions, describe what factors influenced the health and vigor of plants that could not be controlled (e.g., abundant rainfall yielding optimal growing conditions, drought, feral hog damage).

6. From your knowledge of local conditions, describe what factors influenced the health and vigor of plants that could have been prevented by using proper practices. (e.g., improper fertilization, excessive shade from trees.)

7. Considering these factors from Questions 5 and 6 above, rate the health and vigor of the food plot. (For example, if drought conditions affected the plot but practices were followed, a score of 15 is possible in this assessment.)

   RATING: ___________ (1 = poor, 15 = best)

   1 = plants displayed poor health and vigor because of food plot practices, not local conditions.
   8 = plants displayed moderate health and vigor given local conditions and food plot practices.
   15= plants displayed optimal health and vigor given local conditions.

Other Miscellaneous Features (tie-breaker bonus)

8. If the participant goes above and beyond to ensure the success of their food plot, we want to give credit. Check features or practices they conducted, or describe.

   _____ exclosure cage(s): how many? ________
   _____ trail (game) camera: how many? ________
   _____ agronomic practices in addition those recommended (please describe):

   _____ installed nest boxes near food plot
   _____ constructed brush piles near food plot
   _____ other habitat improvements near food plot (please describe):

   _____ other features (please describe):
I visited a wildlife food plot prepared by 4-H member (print name) _______________________________

who was present during the site visit. I believe this assessment accurately reflects the work of the 4-H member.

County Agent Name (Printed): __________________________________________________________

or someone on their behalf

County Agent Signature: _________________________________________________________________

Date of site visit: _________________________________________________________________
4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project Checklist

_____ Review project record book and write information as collected

_____ Location picked out

_____ Soil sample taken

_____ Plot preparations (e.g., fertilizer, herbicide, disked)

_____ Seeds picked up from County Extension Office

_____ Plot disked for planting (depending on establishment method & erosion concerns)

_____ Plot planted

_____ Rain gauge set out (optional)

_____ Exclosure cage placed (optional)

_____ Pictures taken:
  - Before planting, during planting, after planting
  - Any wildlife that may have visited, or signs they left
  - Youth working on the plot
  - Youth educating others about the plot

_____ Visit from County Agent scheduled

_____ Turn in project record book at County Extension Office
  - Include pictures
  - Include County Agent assessment
  - Include soil test results

_____ Turn in project video either at County Extension Office or upload on 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project website
## 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project
### SCORING “Rubric”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Directions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q &amp; A pages</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>each question has maximum points assigned; partial credit if question not answered completely; for questions about plant and animal id – 1 pt per photo/sketch and 1 pt per correct identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0 if no outreach completed; rate outreach effort on a 1 to 10 scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>one point per unique (non-redundant) photo, one point per caption; 10 photos maximum; do not judge any photos exceeding 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Test Report</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0 if no soil test report; 10 points if soil test report included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Agent Assessment</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0 points if no county agent assessment in project book; each question has points assigned; the last question about extra efforts will be used only to break a tie; participant cannot win district or state if no assessment is turned in, or if food plot is 15% lower or higher than 1/8 acre in square footage (4628 sq ft to 6262 sq ft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Story</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10 points if turn in a video; additional 0 – 10 points for description of food plot activities; additional 0 – 10 points for presentation skills; do not judge video quality, format, graphics, etc. – emphasis is on content &amp; presentation; do not watch video beyond 3 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>155</strong></td>
<td></td>
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