



BINGHAM COUNTY EXTENSION UPDATE

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND IDAHO COUNTIES COOPERATING

INSIDE THE ISSUE

HORTICULTURE NEWS

Blister Beetles in Hay!

Page 3

LIVESTOCK NEWS

Late gestation nutrition!

Page 4

4-H NEWS

4H Scholarship Info!

Page 5

Hello, Bingham County, 4-H Community:

In order to ensure we are continuously providing the youth of Bingham County a positive, educational, and fulfilling 4-H experience we have established several dates of final opportunity to enroll as leaders, within certain projects, and into the program in general. We want to encourage all leaders to be fully enrolled online, Protecting Minors Training completed, background check if needed and attendance to annual leader training by January 31, 2026. After the leaders have completed all necessary enrollment and training youth will be listed as Activated in their club. This approach will help ensure that all our youth and volunteers are on the same page moving forward into the new 4-H season, helping start off the year with a positive club experience.

Youth will need to be enrolled online at 4h.zsuite.org, enrollment is OPEN now!, and have registration fees paid by the cut off dates listed for the project they are doing. This is required by the University of Idaho for insurance purposes. If you need assistance setting up your Zsuite account, please call the office at 208-785-8060.

Project Registration Cut Off Dates 2025-2026

Leader

Current Leader re-enrollment-
January 31, 2026

Animal Projects

Market Poultry-February 1, 2026
must be ordered and paid through office
Beef-February 27, 2026
Swine-April 10, 2026
Sheep-April 30, 2026
Meat Goats-April 30, 2026

Dog-April 30, 2026
Dairy Goats-April 30, 2026
Dairy Cattle-April 30, 2026
Horse-April 30, 2026
Breeding Poultry-April 30, 2026
Rabbit-April 30, 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS – SAVE THE DATE

2026 Calendar

January	9	DEADLINE - Master Gardener Registration, online, lallen@uidaho.edu
	12	DEADLINE – Preserve @ Home, online registration contact – Franklin Co 208-852-1097
	13	2026 Beef Calving School, Bingham Office, 6-8 p.m. - Carmen Willmore 208-785-8060
	14	2026 Beef Calving School, Idaho Falls, 6-8 p.m. – Carmen Willmore 208-785-8060
	14	12 wk Master Gardener Course, online - contact lallen@uidaho.edu
	15	2026 Beef Calving School, Grace, 10-noon – Sawyer Fannesbeck 208-766-2243
	15	2026 Beef Calving School, Malad, 6-8 p.m. - Sawyer Fannesbeck 208-766-2243
	15	Preserve @ Home online classes begin
	15	DEADLINE - KYG Enrollment, online, 4h.zsuite.org
	16	2026 Beef Calving School, Jerome, 6-8 p.m. - Sawyer Fannesbeck 208-766-2243
	17	4-H Livestock Skillathon, Jerome Co Fairgrounds
	19	Holiday - Office Closed
	31	DEADLINE - Leader Enrollment
February	1	DEADLINE - Market Poultry Enrollment and chicks paid for
	4	East Idaho Cereal Conference, Fort Hall - contact Justin Hatch 208-547-3205
	14-16	(KYG) Know your Government conference, Boise Id
	16	Discoveries in Agriculture, Rexburg - contact Jared Gibbons 208-356-3191
	16	Holiday - Office Closed
March	27	DEADLINE - all Beef Project Enrollment (Breeding & Market)
	2	DEADLINE – EISF Butler Amusements College Scholarship, online https://funatthefair.com/scholarships/
	4	Upper Valley Soil Health Forum, Rexburg - contact Jared Gibbons 208-356-3191
	5	Forage School, Preston - contact Bracken Henderson 208-852-1097
	6	Forage School - Mud Lake & St Anthony - contact Joseph Sagers 208-270-4031
	7	Market Beef Weigh-in, 8-9:30 a.m., Blackfoot livestock Auction Yard
April	11	Pesticide Applicator Training, online - contact Tom Jacobsen 208-624-3102
	10	DEADLINE - all Swine Project Enrollment (Breeding & Market)
	20	Market Swine Weigh-in, 4:30-6:30, EISF Swine Barn – *must bring bill of sale
	30	DEADLINE - all Sheep Project Enrollment (Breeding & Market)
	30	DEADLINE - all Meat Goat Project Enrollment (Breeding & Market)
	30	DEADLINE - all Dog Project Enrollment
	30	DEADLINE - all Dairy Goat Project Enrollment
	30	DEADLINE - all Dairy Cattle Project Enrollment
	30	DEADLINE - all Horse Project Enrollment
	30	DEADLINE - Poultry Project Enrollment (Breeding)
May	30	DEADLINE - all Rabbit Project Enrollment (Breeding & Market)
	18	Market Sheep/Market Meat Goat Weigh-in, 4:30-7 p.m., EISF Goddard Pavilion - *must bring COOL documents
	25	Holiday - Office Closed
June	5	County Rabbit Weigh-in, 8-9 a.m., Bingham Extension Parking lot - *must bring bill of sale
	19	Holiday - Office Closed
July	4	Holiday - Office Closed
	30	Market Poultry Band-in, 8-9 a.m., Bingham Extension Parking Lot
September	1	Holiday - Office Closed
November	11	Holiday - Office Closed
	26-27	Holiday - Office Closed
December	25-28	Holiday - Office Closed

Toxicity Concerns of Blister Beetles in Hay

Blister Beetles in high numbers pose a toxicity threat to our livestock. We must be able to identify contaminated hay sources and prevent them from entering our feed stocks. Blister Beetles are about 1 inch long and have a narrow, elongate, soft body with a narrow area between the head and abdomen (Figure 1). The flexible wing covers are rounded over the abdomen. The color depends on species and varies from black to brown. We had a relatively hot and dry summer during the 2025 growing season. While that was great for putting up high quality hay, it also increased the likelihood of blister beetle contamination. These beetles thrive in hot and dry conditions just like grasshoppers. In fact the two insect populations are intertwined, since blister beetles feed on grasshopper eggs. It is also projected that we will be entering drought like conditions by late summer 2026.

The beetles have a toxin called cantharidin present in their hemolymph (blood). It is toxic to mammals, especially horses. Cattle and sheep are also susceptible to cantharidin poisoning. This toxin is present in live and dead blister beetles. Certain behavioral characteristics of the beetles increase the threat of livestock poisoning. The beetles are attracted to alfalfa blooms just prior to harvest and tend to congregate in the field. This congregation around early flowering alfalfa can also concentrate beetles in just a few bales of hay. The concentration of toxins leads to increased poisoning risk. Cantharidin is a stable compound and will persist in stored hay without much degradation. Do not feed hay bales infested with beetle carcasses. A “safe” level of blister beetle contamination has not been identified, but the consumption of 30 to 50 beetles has

been found lethal to horses. Symptoms of toxicity include sores on the tongue and in the mouth, diarrhea, depression, colic, and sweating. You should also check for blood in the feces and the frequent urination of affected livestock.

Harvest management is one way to reduce the threat these beetles pose. Scout fields prior to harvest. Do not harvest hay in areas where the beetles are congregating. Cut alfalfa prior to blooming (there are usually lowering numbers of beetles prior to bloom). Do not bale raked hay until fully dry, as this may allow beetles to move out of the hay row prior to baling operations. One of the most overlooked management practices for lowering blister beetle infestations is good weed management. Flowering weed species are very attractive to blister beetles. Pigweed, goldenrod, goat head, and puncturevine must be controlled to reduce blister beetles from congregating.



Figure 1. Blister Beetle found in Idaho Hay 2025.

Field work for the WINTER (Ideas adapted from: Bruce Anderson's Hay & Forage Minute)

The last few weeks of December were very warm this year. Many of us took advantage of the warm weather to complete field work. It may be the dead of winter by publication time, but have you thought about what field work you could do before spring? We will surely have at least a few nice days of warm weather and may even have days without snow cover, take advantage of them. There are many activities that we can accomplish during winter months.

One thing we can do is improve our pastures and hay fields. If the ground

isn't frozen, you can spray your alfalfa for winter annual weeds. Make sure to read the label of your herbicides to check when they can be used. Some herbicides can be used in the late winter. You might consider spraying herbicides to control downy brome or wild oats if they are green. You might also think about broadcasting grass seed as a dormant seeding.

Harrowing in the late winter and early spring will smooth gopher mounds and can liven up the pasture. Fence mending in the winter will get it out of the way. In the spring and

summer we may never have time to take care of this important work.

Winter is a great time to take care of book work, go over your goals, make a mission statement, and take care of other farm management decisions. Also remember that there are many commodity schools that you can attend during the winter months. Winter can be a time when we get some of our work out of the way.

Optimizing late gestation nutrition for a successful calving season

Cow nutrition remains one of the most important management concerns for producers heading into calving. In the final 75 -90 days before calving, fetal growth accelerates dramatically, research shows that 55 -70% of the calf's birth weight is gained during this period. Because of this rapid fetal development, the cow's nutrient requirements increase substantially. If the cow's diet does not provide enough energy and protein, she begins to draw on her own body reserves. This leads to loss of body condition, weakened immune function, reduced milk production, lower-quality colostrum, poor calf health, and decreased rebreeding rates during the upcoming breeding season.

To mitigate these challenges and protect the productivity of both the cow and her calf, producers should aim to meet or exceed the cow's elevated nutrient requirements. For mature cows in late pregnancy, a ration containing at least 55% Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) and 8% crude protein is required to maintain body condition and support proper fetal growth. However, these values represent the bare minimum, and producers are strongly encouraged to feed forages that test higher than these thresholds or to incorporate supplementation. Using higher-quality roughages, such as good alfalfa or mixed hay, or adding protein and energy supplements helps ensure cows consistently receive the nutrients they need throughout this critical period.

Body condition scoring (BCS) becomes especially important as calving season nears. Mature cows should ideally calve in a BCS 5 - 6, while first-calf heifers should be closer to BCS 6 - 7 due to their continued growth demands. Cows scoring in this range will have a smooth, well-fleshed appearance with noticeable fat cover over the ribs, hips, and tailhead, without prominent bone structure. If you evaluate your cows at least three months prior to calving and find that animals are scoring below a BCS 5, there is still time to modify their ration and help them gain enough

condition to reach the desired BCS by calving. Sorting cows into groups based on condition and feeding thinner cows separately is one of the most effective strategies for improving condition in a timely manner and setting them up for success as calving approaches.

Common methods of supplementation include feeding higher-quality hay, incorporating corn silage, or using commercial protein and energy supplements. It is always good management practice to test your forages for TDN and CP and then make supplementation decisions based on the results rather than assumptions. While commercial supplements typically have a higher cost per unit of crude protein, they can be an efficient and reliable way to increase dietary quality when forage availability or quality is limited. Although these inputs may increase winter feeding costs, proper supplementation improves calving outcomes and strengthens overall herd health and productivity.

With careful planning, through body condition scoring, feed testing, and targeted ration adjustments you can set your herd up for a successful calving season. The final weeks of gestation can be challenging, especially during harsh winter weather, but proactive nutritional management pays long-term dividends in calf health, cow fertility, and overall herd efficiency.



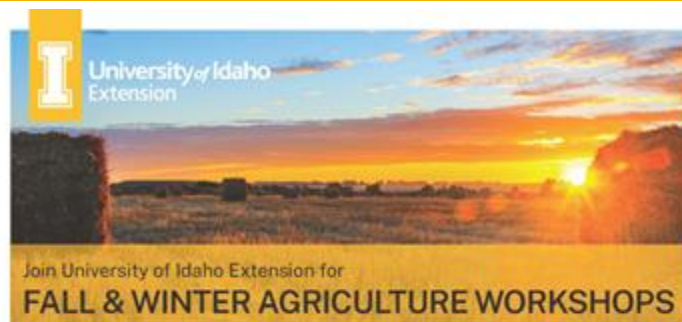


2026 Know Your Government Conference

The KYG (Know Your Government) Conference is offered for 8th and 9th-grade 4-H youth interested in learning more about our government and how it works. Highlights include a Mock Legislative Session or Mock Trial Activities; opportunities to meet and observe members of the legislature at work, meet state elected officials and members of the judiciary, and tour the Capitol.

Youth Delegate: \$225.00

Feb 14th 4:00pm - Feb 16th 5:00pm
Registration Open: 12/1/2025 12:05 AM
Registration Close: 1/15/2026 11:55 PM
 \$250.00



Practical Farm Financial Records Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27 Online \$100 per farm unit Contact Ron Patterson: rpatterson@uidaho.edu 208-529-1390.	Winter School Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27 & Feb. 3 Online FREE Contact Shannon Williams: shannonw@uidaho.edu 208-742-6696.
Farm Financial Analysis Oct. 8, 15, 22, 29 Online \$100 per farm unit Contact Ron Patterson: rpatterson@uidaho.edu 208-529-1390.	Idaho Rangeland Livestock Symposium Jan. 8 Grace FREE Contact: scottj@uidaho.edu or jhatch@uidaho.edu.
Beef Quality Assurance Certification & Training Oct. 21 Challis FREE Contact Sarah Baker: sbaker@uidaho.edu 208-879-2344.	Idaho Master Gardener Online Program Jan. 14, 21, 28; Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25; March 4, 11, 18, 25; April 1 Online \$200 Contact rpatterson@uidaho.edu or lallen@uidaho.edu.
Beef School Oct. 27 Mackay FREE Contact Sarah Baker: sbaker@uidaho.edu 208-879-2344.	Discoveries in Agriculture Feb. 16 Rexburg FREE Contact Jared Gibbons: jaredg@uidaho.edu 208-356-3191.
Virtual Pesticide Applicator Training Dec. 3 Online \$100 Contact Tom Jacobsen: tjacobsen@uidaho.edu 208-624-3102.	East Idaho Cereals Conference Feb. 4 Fort Hall Cost TBD Contact Justin Hatch: jhatch@uidaho.edu 208-547-3205.
Introduction to Beekeeping Dec. 3, 10 Online \$25 Contact Jennifer Werlin: jwerlin@uidaho.edu 208-776-8235.	Upper Valley Soil Health Forum March 4 Rexburg \$40 Contact Jared Gibbons: jaredg@uidaho.edu 208-356-3191.
Agriculture Entrepreneurship: Farm and Food Business Planning Jan.-April Online Cost TBD Contact Jennifer Werlin: jwerlin@uidaho.edu 208-776-8235.	Preston Forage School March 5 Preston \$10 Contact Bracken Henderson: bracken@uidaho.edu 208-852-1087.
High-Altitude Idaho Master Gardener Program Jan.-Sept. Hybrid \$175 Contact Jennifer Werlin: jwerlin@uidaho.edu 208-776-8235.	Virtual Pesticide Applicator Training March 11 Online FREE Contact Tom Jacobsen: tjacobsen@uidaho.edu 208-624-3102.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of program information or accessible accommodations should contact the appropriate instructor at least two weeks before the event. The University of Idaho is an equal opportunity institution and educational opportunities. We offer our programs to persons regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, marital status, or disability.



2026 IDAHO BEEF CALVING SCHOOL

SAVE THE DATE!

Join University of Idaho Extension for an educational calving school in January at different locations across the state. Learn from veterinarians and UI Extension educators about a variety of topics dealing with calving out beef cows. The program will include classroom and hands-on components.

DATES & LOCATIONS:

JAN. 12 | CAMBRIDGE | 6-8 p.m.
 JAN. 13 | BLACKFOOT | 6-8 p.m.
 JAN. 14 | IDAHO FALLS | 6-8 p.m.
 JAN. 15 | GRACE | 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
 JAN. 15 | MALAD | 6-8 p.m.
 JAN. 16 | JEROME | 6-8 p.m.

Registration and cost for each location will be announced in December.

QUESTIONS?

208-766-2243 OR SFONNESBECK@UIDAHO.EDU



FFA & 4-H SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Eastern Idaho State Fair, along with Butler Amusements, Inc., is awarding SIX (6) 2026 graduating seniors a \$1,500.00 scholarship. Applicants must be a high school senior from the 16 County Fair District who have in the last five years participated for three years at the Eastern Idaho State Fair. Participation can be in any Livestock, FFA, or Home Arts Exhibits.

Scholarship Applications and Instructions can be picked up at the EISF Main Office or go to <https://funatthefair.com/scholarships/>

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

- **MARCH 2 APPLICATION DEADLINE**
- **NEW! (6) SIX \$1,500.00 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED EACH YEAR**
- **MUST RESIDE WITHIN THE 16 COUNTY FAIR DISTRICT**
- **MUST BE ACCEPTED AT A COLLEGE OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL**
- **HAVE A 4-H or FFA MEMBERSHIP IN GOOD STANDING**
- **ONLINE APPLICATION**

New Idaho 4-H Volunteer Training

Mandatory Civil Rights Training

This training is mandatory for all 4-H volunteers to ensure compliance with federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and inclusivity in our programs. The training is approximately 10 minutes long.



100% Participation Required

Annual Training Requirement

Don't miss out. Complete your training in Clover Academy and ensure compliance today.

- Log into ZSuite
- Click on Clover Academy
- Select Civil Rights training

For support or inquiries please contact your local Extension Office.



What is a 4-H Club?

The definition of a 4-H Club is an organized group of youth who meet regularly with adult volunteers and staff for a progressive series of educational experiences. 4-H Clubs also must meet the required:

Must have five members from no fewer than three families

Must be organized with youth officers

Must meet six or more times per year

Must be supervised by one or more certified 4-H volunteers

Volunteer Certification

Attention!!! All Certified 4-H Volunteer Leaders- Please Read!

All returning certified 4-H Volunteer leaders from last year will need to re-certify for the 2025-26 4-H year. Volunteer Leaders cannot begin club meetings, activities until certification is met. As a reminder, the certification process includes:

- Re-enrollment into your family profile on 4h.zsuite.org (use the same login and password you use for record book purposes). Sign all waivers and update all personal and club information as needed. If you are combining with another club or changing your club name, please let us know, ASAP!
- Complete the "Protecting Minor's Training" (required every 3 years) located in the Clover Academy on the left side of the screen. Choose the "Protecting Minor's Training". This alerts staff of your

completion.

- Update the background screening every three years. Volunteers that need to update their screening will be notified and sent the link to do so.
- Complete Civil Rights Training every year.
- Insurance fee for volunteers will be paid by Bingham County 4-H.

Once the above steps are completed and verified, volunteer leaders will receive a certification letter via email.

It's time to enroll for the 2025-2026 year at 4h.zsuite.org

There is a payment drop box (GRAY box) now available in the breezeway at the Extension Office. Please feel free to use that to drop off 4-H enrollment fees after hours. We can , also, accept payment by card over the phone or in person. There is a \$3 or 3% service charge that will apply.

Regular Enrollment:

Ages 8-18 (by Jan. 1,2026)

Idaho 4-H Fee- 15.00

B.C. 4-H programming- 4.00

Member insurance- 1.00

Total: \$20 (each up to 3 children
- In family, then \$5 each)

Clover Bud:

Ages 5-7 (by Jan.1, 2026)

Idaho 4-H fee- 15.00

Member Insurance- 1.00

Total: \$16.00 (each up to 3 children
In family, then \$1 each)

Horse Project Members:

Ages 8-18 (by Jan.1,2026)

Idaho 4-H fee- 15.00

B.C. 4-H programming- 4.00

Eastern District 4-H horse

activities participation fee- 4.00

Member Insurance- 2.00

Total: \$25.00 (each up to 3 children, then \$10.00 each)

Zsuite Record Books

You can start entering information into your record books .

All market animal projects will create a new record book for this year's project.

Please label your record book the type of project you are doing. For example Market Beef or Breeding Beef, Poultry, or Dairy Goat. Do not label them the animal's name.

Everyone is required to complete an involvement report along with their project record book. If you completed one last year, just unarchive it and change the dates to current year and add to it. If you are new to 4-H this year just title it involvement report.

If you have any questions or need assistance with record books, please call the 4-H office to schedule an appointment to go through it with you. 208-785-8060.



UPCOMING DAY CAMPS

**ALL DAY CAMPS ARE LOCATED AT THE
OFFICE UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED**

**You MUST be completely enrolled on 4h.zsuite.org and have enrollment fees paid at the office
PRIOR to being added to any day camp lists.**

Registration for day camps are **NOW** on 4h.zsuite.org in the
events sections of your family profile. **Register online. Limited space!**

**ALL FEES MUST BE PAID AT THE OFFICE 1 WEEK
PRIOR TO DAY CAMP IN ORDER TO ATTEND!.**

We are able to accept cards over the phone or at office with a \$3 service fee.

Feb 20 Sewing Day Camp, TRADITIONAL ages 8-18, \$7

The Bingham County News is published by the
Bingham County Extension Office. All
comments should be directed to
Carmen Willmore.
UI Extension Office, Bingham Co.
412 W. Pacific St.
Blackfoot, ID 83221
(208) 785-8060
bingham@uidaho.edu

Extension Educators:

Abby May, Family & Consumer Sciences
Reed Findlay, Forages/Horticulture
Carmen Willmore, 4-H/Livestock

Staff:

Krista Cernyar, Office Manager
Heather Strupp, 4-H Coordinator
Abigail Shipley, 4-H Secretary

Web Site:

<https://www.uidaho.edu/bingham>

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information or reasonable accommodations to any programs listed in this newsletter need to contact the Bingham County Extension Office two days prior to the event at 412 West Pacific St., Blackfoot, ID 83221, phone 208-785-8060, email bingham@uidaho.edu.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM
UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO
BINGHAM COUNTY
412 WEST PACIFIC
BLACKFOOT ID 83221

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BLACKFOOT ID 83221
PERMIT No. 291



To keep current and up-to-date!

UI Extension, Bingham County