TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

TEXAS 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

September 1, 2026
MEMORANDUM

TO: District 8 County Extension Agents – FCH
District 8 County Extension Agents – 4-H

FROM: Jay Kingston
District Extension Administrator

Megan Shaffer
Extension Program Specialist
4-H & Youth Development

SUBJECT: 2026 DISTRICT 8 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE & FOOD SHOW

Enclosed you will find the 2026 District 8 4-H Food Challenge & Food Show contest information.

Event Date:	Thursday, December 3,2026 Agents arrive by 8:00 am See attached schedule for details
Location:	Huntington Bank Expo 301 W Loop 121 Belton, TX 76513 (254) 933-5353
Resources:	http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/events/roundup/ https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition/ http://d84-h.tamu.edu/events-and-activities/food-challenge-food-show/
Deadlines:	All entries will be completed through the TX4H system. Open dates: November 2, 2026. All entries should be completed in TX4H system by Wednesday November 18, 2026.
County Approvals:	County offices need to approve registrations on the TX4H system by Monday, November 23, 2026.

Central District 8 | **4-H Youth Development**
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
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The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Entry Fee:	$15 per 4-H member for Food Show $15 per 4-H member for Food Challenge
Late Entries:	Late entries will be permitted with an additional: • $50 up to 72 hours after the closure of the registration period. There will be no late registrations accepted after that.
Participant Information	These contests will be following the Texas 4-H & Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service best practices for conducting 4-H events during COVID-19. **COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS & REQUIREMENTS**. This program will follow any directives by the local/county health officials, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service policies, and State requirements in effect at the time of the event as it relates to COVID-19. Participation in this event requires any attendee to follow those procedures to attend the event. This may include wearing face coverings, social distancing, any other preventative measures mandated or required by this program. A specific set of requirements will be available for your review prior to the event.
Registration Information	Registration information, specifically check-in times and locations will be sent to participants before contest date.
Volunteer & Agent Information	Each county is expected to send: • 4 volunteers who are able/willing to serve as judges or group leaders • County Extension Agents *Should your volunteers become unavailable to volunteer, it is the responsibility of the agent to find a new volunteer to serve in their place.* *Should you not have volunteers, you will be responsible for multiple jobs.* Information should be uploaded to the Google Sheet by Wednesday, November 18th, 2026: • https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1svAGYJqp_wwxP6-RP1P01NsneMhQxlUL/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=102071584667392687574&rtpof=true&sd=true

Please contact the District 8 Office if you have any questions.

D8 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE & FOOD SHOW

Agent Assignments

- **Agent Assignments will be completed after entries are received so a schedule and appropriate assignments can be made. <u>All County Extension Agents for FCH & 4-H will be expected to attend</u>.**
- **Each county is responsible to secure at least two (2) volunteers to serve as Judges & 2 to serve as Group Leaders.**

Responsibility		
Food Challenge/Food Show Committee	Chair- Ashley Cox Co-Chair- Bev Hodges Terry Taylor LeAnne Pollock Christie Keay Emily Brown	Rachel Esquivel Robyn Green Sheryl Austin Jennifer Powell Lindsey Breunig-Rodriguez
Facilities/PA System	Sheryl Long /Beverly Hodges	
Refreshments	Huntington Bank EXPO	*Sheryl Long*
Registration/Information Area – Stationed in Barn C – Check-in teams, judges, group leaders, agents – Communicate with agents in the Assembly Hall – Help answer questions – Direct traffic – Help direct District Council Officers – Other duties as needed		
Tabulation-Assembly Hall – Enter scores in spreadsheet – Cut scores (if needed), organize, place score sheets in county packets – Prepare awards list for awards program		
Awards Presentation-Barn C – Arrange awards for presentation – Fill in blanks within script – Practice reading names – Only a couple officers need to actually be on stage at a time – Assist with presentation and lining up teams for photos		

Responsibility	Food Challenge	Food Show
Judge Orientation *In the Assembly Hall* – Judge Orientation will be conducted at the same time Group Leader Orientation is held – Check-in as they arrive at Orientation – Give Judging Folders to each judge – Discuss significant points with judges using orientation checklist – There will be two judges per category – There will be one Group Leader per round/category		
Group Leader Orientation *In Assembly Hall* – Group Leader Orientation will be conducted at the same time Judge Orientation is held – Check-in as they arrive at Orientation – Use checklist to conduct orientation.		
Participant Orientation *In Barn C* – Use checklist to conduct orientation.		
Set Tables/Table Turnover Assembly Hall Between each round: – Wipe down tables with Lysol wipes – Know which foods/bags go on each table – Verify that resource books are still intact – Place new worksheets on each table – Place new colored signs on each table – Help direct traffic when new teams arrive		
Preparation Timekeeper (Assembly Hall) – Will need to pay attention to each heat's time – May need multiple stopwatches to keep it straight		
Presentation/Judging Timekeeper (Assembly Hall) – Keep judging on track – Food Challenge: • 5 minutes for presentation • 3 minutes for judges' questions • 4 minutes for judges to score/write comments – Food Show: • 5 minutes for presentation • 4 minutes for judges' questions • 1 minute to serve judges • 4 minutes for judges to score/write comments		

Responsibility	**Food Challenge**	**Food Show**
Group Leaders – Stay with team from Orientation through completion of judging – Food Challenge: observe for safety; following of rules		
Transition Teams to Judging Location – After each heat, assist teams moving from Barn C to Assembly Hall for judging – Contestants and their dish only need to go to Assembly Hall *Food Show*		
Judges		
Presentation Judges – Junior/Intermediate = Preparation – Senior = Preparation Senior Preparation scores will be added to the Interview/Presentation Scores. Numerical scores must be provided.		

D8 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE & FOOD SHOW

District Contest Information

Event Date: Thursday, December 3, 2026
Agents arrive by 8:00 am
See attached schedule for details

Location: Huntington Bank Expo

301 W Loop 121
Belton, TX 76513
(254) 933-5353

Resources: http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/events/roundup/
https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition/
http://d84-h.tamu.edu/events-and-activities/food-challenge-food-show/

Deadlines: All entries will be completed on TX4H system at
Please see your County Extension Agent for registration requirements and deadline.
https://counties.agrilife.org/

Entry Fee: $15 per 4-H member for Food Show
$15 per 4-H member for Food Challenge

Late Entries. Late entries will be permitted with an additional:

- $50 up to 72 hours after the closure of the registration period. There will be no late registrations accepted after that.

D8 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

Rules & Guidelines

More than 100,000 youth participate in the 4-H Food & Nutrition Project, learning how to prepare nutritious and safe meals and snacks and adopt behaviors that can help reduce their risk for chronic disease. This contest challenges teams of 4-H members to create a dish using only a predetermined set of ingredients. From these ingredients, team members must identify and prepare the dish, then make a presentation about it to the judges.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide opportunities for participants to exhibit their knowledge and skill when preparing and presenting a dish
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn from other team members
- Promote teamwork
- Give participants opportunities for public speaking
- Provide leadership opportunities

RULES

1. **Participation**. Participants must be 4-H members currently enrolled in a Texas 4-H Youth Development county program and actively participating in the Food and Nutrition project.

   4-H members that were part of a first-place team for a category in the Food Challenge at Texas 4-H Roundup are eligible to compete again.

2. **Age Divisions**. Age divisions are determined by a participant's grade as of August 31, 2026, as follows:

Division	Grades	
Junior	3*, 4, or 5	**Must be at least 8 years old*
Intermediate	6, 7, or 8	
Senior	9, 10, 11, or 12*	**Must not be older than 18 years old*

   There will be three age divisions in BOTH Food Show & Food Challenge. Youth may participate in BOTH events.

   In Food Challenge, Juniors may move up to the Intermediate age division when participating on a team that has a true Intermediates (based upon grades listed above) on it. No one may move up to the Senior age division. NO individual may move down to a younger age division. Individuals are not permitted to move up for Food Show.

3. **Teams per county**. Each county may enter a maximum of two (2) Junior teams, two (2) Intermediate teams, and two (2) Senior teams.

   The first and second place teams in both age divisions should advance to the district contest. At the county contest, this will require that all teams within one age division be judged against each other and placed (not judged and placed according to food category).

   Teams Advancing to Texas 4-H Roundup. Only Seniors may advance to state. Each district may advance four (4) teams (first-place team in each category at District). Teams advancing to state will not automatically be assigned to the same category as they were at district. The state Food Challenge is scheduled for Wednesday, June 9th , 2027 in College Station.

4. **Members per team**. Each team will have at least three (3) and a maximum than four (4) members. Also, see rule #2.

5. **Substitution of Team Members**. Substitution of team members should only be made if necessary. Only the same number of 4-H members qualifying at the county level will be eligible to participate at the district level. No more than two team members may be substituted, up to the day of the Food Challenge. ***The substitute 4-H member must have participated in the county foods contest to be eligible.***

6. **Entry Fee**. Each individual will be required to pay a registration fee of $15 through the TX4H system by the deadline.

7. **Food Categories**. There will be four food categories in each age division: Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, and Healthy Dessert. Teams will be randomly assigned to a category, which will not be announced until the day of the contest.

8. **Preparation.** Each team will create an entire dish/recipe (not a full meal) using the provided key ingredient and grocery store items. Teams must select and use at least two items and will be provided the maximum number of items they can select during orientation. Dishes/recipes created should include two or more servings. Teams should present the entire dish/ recipe to the judges and communicate during their presentation what an individual serving size should be. Teams will be responsible for determining the number of servings their dish provides. Teams should not create side or multiple dishes with their ingredients/grocery store items

9. **Attire**. Each team will have the option of wearing coordinated clothing and/or aprons. Team members must wear closed-toe shoes and hair restraints. No electronic devices or jewelry (except for medically required) are allowed in contest. This includes cell phones, smart watches, or other communication devices.

10. **Resource Materials provided at contest**. Resource materials will be provided for each team at the contest. These include: The Science and Function of Ingredients and Cooking Fact Sheet, Fight Bac - Fight Food Borne Bacteria Brochure, Know Your Nutrients, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and Food Safety Fact Sheet. **No other resource materials will be allowed. Teams may not use their personal copies of the resources during the contest. ****

11. **Supply box**. Each team must supply their own equipment for the challenge. Boxes are limited to 40" x 24" x 40". Teams may bring only the supplies listed in the supply box section. The contest committee may measure any and/or all boxes to determine compliance to size. If boxes are out of compliance, teams may be disqualified. Large, moving type dollies may not be used to transport boxes. Smaller rolling dollies that can remain under the supply box in the preparation area may be used.
An EMPTY tub for dirty dishes may be placed on top of the supply box.

12. **Pantry Ingredients.** Each team may include in their equipment box the following "pantry" ingredients which they may use when preparing their dish if desired. There is no requirement to use these items, nor is it mandatory that teams include these in their supply box. These items must be in their original purchased or picked form. (Boxed, canned, stalks/stems, etc.)

- Salt
- Pepper
- Oil (up to 17 oz)
- 1 jar chicken bouillon
- 1 medium onion
- 2 (up to 16 oz) cans vegetables and/or fruit – team choice
- Rice (white or brown) or pasta (up to 16 oz) – team choice
- Cornstarch (up to 1lb) or Flour (up to 1lb) – team choice
- 3 dried herbs and/or spices (up to 3 oz each – team choice)

13. **Awards**: The top five high scoring teams in each food category will be recognized with awards during the in-person awards program. Any awards not picked up during the awards program, will be the responsibility of the County Agent to collect and distribute at their office. No awards will be mailed.

14. **Participants with disabilities**. Any competitor who requires auxiliary aids or special accommodations must contact the District Extension Office at the time of registration. Those accommodations will need to be inserted into the appropriate boxes in the registration process.

15. **Contest References & Forms.** Refer to the following website for additional rules, scorecard, and forms: http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/events/roundup/. All district scoresheets and forms can be found here: http://agrilife.org/d84h/events- and-activities/food-challenge-food-show/.

16. **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is not chaperoning this event. The individual parent/guardian or their designee that brings the youth to the event is the chaperone and expected to stay at the event location.**

D8 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

Supply Box

Each team will bring an equipment box containing **only one** each of the following items, unless a different quantity is noted:

- Bench Scrapper
- Bowls (up to 4-any size)
- Calculator
- Can opener
- Colander
- Cookie Cutters (up to 2 – team choice)
- Cutting Boards (up to 4)
- Disposable tasting spoons (no limit)
- Dry measuring cups (1 set)
- Electric skillet
- Extension cord (multiple outlet or strip style)
  (Teams should be certain the extension cord is compatible (2-prong/3-prong) with the plugs on their electrical supplies.)
- First aid kit
- Food thermometer
- Fork
- Gloves
- Grater
- Hand sanitizer
- Hot pads (up to 5)
- Kitchen shears (1 pair)
- Kitchen timer
- Knives (up to 6)
- Liquid measuring cup
- Manual pencil sharpener
- Measuring spoons (1 set)
- Meat Tenderizer
- Non-stick cooking spray
- Note cards (1 package – no larger than 5x7)
- Paper towels (1 roll)
- Pancake turner (up to 2)
- Pencils (no limit)
- Plastic box & trash bag for dirty equipment (An empty tub for dirty dishes may be placed on top of supply box)
- Pot with lid
- Potato masher
- Potato peeler
- Rolling pin
- Sanitizing wipes (1 container)
- Serving dishes/utensils
  1 plate/platter, 1 bowl, 1 utensil
- Skewers (1 set)
- Skillet with lid
- Spatulas (up to 2)
- Stirring spoon
- Storage bags (1 box)
- Tongs (up to 2)
- Toothpicks (no limit)
- Two single-burner hot plates OR one double-burner plate (electric only!)
- Whisk

Pantry Items:

3 dried herbs/or spices(up to 3oz each-team choice)
Salt, Pepper, Oil (up to 17 oz)
1 jar chicken bouillon
1 medium onion
2 (up to 16 oz) cans vegetables and/or fruit (team choice)
Rice* (white or brown) or pasta* (up to 16 oz) (team choice)
**must be uncooked/dried*
Cornstarch (up to 1lb) or Flour (up to 1lb((team choice)

Rules of Play

1. **Check-in**. Teams will report to assigned registration area (Assignments will be given prior to contest)
2. **Orientation**. An orientation will be provided for all participants.
3. **Stations and Grocery Store.** Each team will be directed to a cooking/preparation station. Each team will receive an information sheet with their contest category and "key" ingredient for that category (no ingredient amounts, recipe, or instructions will be provided at the station). The "key" ingredient will be representative of one of the following categories: Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, Healthy Dessert.

   Teams will have access to a "grocery store" of additional ingredients which can be combined with the team's "key" ingredient to create an original recipe/dish during the contest. The "grocery store" will include items commonly found in grocery stores such as produce, canned goods, crackers, dairy products, etc.

   Teams must select and use at least two additional items from the "grocery store" and will be provided the maximum number of items they can select during orientation. Teams will not be required to analyze cost of recipe, nor will this be included in the presentation or scoring of the contest.
4. **Resources and Instructions**. General guidelines, resources and instructions will be located at each station to assist the team.
5. **Time**. Each team will have 40 minutes to select grocery store items, prepare the dish, plan a presentation, and clean up the preparation area.
6. **Participants only**. Only participants and contest officials will be allowed in food preparation areas.
7. **Preparation**. Each team will create an entire dish/recipe (not a full meal) using the provided key ingredient and grocery store items. Dishes/recipes created should include two or more servings. Teams should present the entire dish/ recipe to the judges and communicate during their presentation what an individual serving size should be. Teams will be responsible for determining the number of servings their dish provides. Teams should not create side or multiple dishes with their ingredients/pantry items.
   a. Teams are challenged to be creative and develop an original recipe with the ingredients provided.
   b. Teams will determine the exact amount of each ingredient used based on their original recipe.
   c. The key ingredient and/or grocery store ingredients selected should be used to garnish the dish.
   d. Note cards and the Food Challenge Worksheet may be used to write down the recipe that the team creates, along with notes related to nutrition, and food safety. Teams should be exact on ingredients used, preparation steps, cooking time, temperature, etc.
8. **Food and Equipment Safety**. A safe and sanitary working environment must be maintained during the contest. Each station will have food and kitchen safety resources. Teams should follow the steps listed to ensure proper food and equipment safety is followed. Judges will be scoring teams on food and equipment safety during the preparation phase of the contest. Teams should also discuss safety steps used during the presentation phase of the contest.

   Gloves: Gloves do not have to be worn throughout the contest; however, there should always be a barrier between your hand and any food touched. A barrier includes gloves and/or cooking utensil. When wearing gloves, they must be changed between handling raw meats/seafood; handling cooked items; and ready to eat items or raw vegetables to prevent cross contamination.

   Hair Restraint: Each team member must wear a hat, hair net and/or other type of hair restraint during the food preparation part of the competition. Examples of acceptable hair restraints include hairnets, bandana with hair completed pulled back, Chef hat with hair restrained inside, or cap with hair completely tucked inside.

9. **Electricity**. Teams should be prepared to only plug in one piece of equipment at a time to reduce the risk of electrical malfunction. Contest officials will announce if this is necessary during participant orientation. If electricity goes out during the preparation phase of the contest, teams are asked to immediately notify their Group Leader or other contest official. Teams will be asked to turn away from the table immediately. Contest officials will stop the clock so that no preparation time is lost.
10. **Nutrition**. Each station will have a variety of nutrition resources/references. Each team should name key nutrients in their dish and their functions.
11. **Clean-up**. Teams must clean up their preparation areas. Clean-up time is included in the 40-minute preparation allotment. Teams should plan to not have access to a kitchen facility; therefore, dirty dishes should be placed in a plastic container, bag, or box to be cleaned at home. Left-over food should be disposed of properly.
12. **Hot equipment**. If you have a hot plate or other items cooling, it may be the only thing out on the table other than the food you are presenting to the judges.
13. **No talking or writing after preparation**. After time is called for the 40-minute preparation period, no talking and no writing is allowed among any team members. Team members caught talking and/or writing will receive a warning. The second time the team will be disqualified and asked to leave the contest facility. Team members should not have pens or pencils in their possession while waiting to give their presentation.
14. **Presentation**. When time is called, each team will present their dish to the judges. Team presentations should include the criteria outlined on the scorecard. The following also pertains to team presentations:
    a. All team members, or at least a majority, should participate in the presentation.
    b. Judging time will include:

       5 minutes for the presentation
       At the end of 5 minutes, time will be called – additional time will not be allowed
       3 minutes for judges' questions
       4 minutes between team presentations for judges to score and write comments

    c. Teams are allowed the use of note cards during the presentation, but should not read from them, as this minimizes the effectiveness of their communication.
    d. To earn maximum points, teams must use the 5-minute presentation to address the following areas of the presentation scorecard: Knowledge of Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Nutrition Knowledge, Food Preparation, Safety Concerns, and Serving Size.
    e. Judges will not ask questions related to what teams should have covered during the presentation. Judges questions will be related to general nutrition, health, chronic disease prevention or others relevant to food and nutrition.
15. **No tasting of food**. Judges are not allowed to taste the foods prepared. No left-over food should be shared with any participant or the audience and must be disposed of before exiting the contest area. Pictures will be taken of each team prior to disposal and exit.
16. **Finished Dishes**. Finished dishes MAY NOT leave the preparation/judging areas. Dishes must be discarded after teams complete the judging process to ensure teams in following heats do not see what ingredients are available to gain an advantage.
17. **Rankings**. Placing will be based on the scores provided to each team by the presentation judges and added to the scores provided by the preparation judges. Judges' results are final.
16. **Awards Program**. Awards will be held in Barn C at the conclusion of Food Challenge judging.

Rules & Guidelines

The goal of the Texas 4-H Food Show is to provide an opportunity for 4-H members to highlight their culinary skills while also improving their presentation and interview skills. More than 100,000 youth participate in the 4-H Food & Nutrition Project, learning how to prepare nutritious and safe meals and snacks and adopt behaviors that can help reduce their risk for chronic disease. This contest challenges members to create a dish using healthy ingredients in addition to learning in-depth information related to their dish and its nutritional value.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop healthy eating habits to reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- Develop food preparation, safety, and nutrition skills.
- Provide leadership and public speaking opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for participants to connect MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines to their daily lives.
- Learn about nutrients and the health benefits they provide to your body.

1. **Participation**. Participants must be 4-H members currently enrolled in a Texas 4-H Youth Development County program and actively participating in the Food and Nutrition project.

2. **Age Divisions**. Age divisions are determined by a participant's grade as of August 31, 2026, as follows:

Division	Grades	
Junior	3*, 4, or 5	**Must be at least 8 years old*
Intermediate	6, 7, or 8	
Senior	9, 10, 11, or 12*	**Must not be older than 18 years old*

3. There will be three age divisions in BOTH Food Show & Food Challenge. Youth may participate in BOTH events. Students will not be permitted to participate in any other age division other than the one in which they are enrolled as. (i.e. no moving up in age division).

4. **Entries per county**. Each county may enter one 4-H member per Food Show category per age division.

5. **Categories**. There are four Food Show categories: Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, and Healthy Dessert. The 2025-2027 Food Show Theme is "Food Truck Favorites". From gourmet tacos to sizzling stir fries and mouthwatering health inspired desserts, food trucks bring bold flavor and innovative dishes to the streets-now it's your turn to bring that energy to the kitchen!

    - Appetizer – Traditionally an appetizer is a small dish or food that is eaten prior to the main course. When selecting recipes for this category, contestants should consider foods that are lower in fat, sodium, and calories to not ruin one's appetite.

    - Main Dish –The main dish is usually the heaviest, heartiest, and most substantial dish in a meal. In a meal consisting of several courses, the main dish is served during the main course and is the featured dish of the meal. The key ingredient is usually meat or another protein food, but they may contain other foods.
    - Side Dishes – Side dishes are foods that are usually served along with a main dish or as accompaniments to the main course. Suggested dishes may include salads, cooked vegetables, cooked fruit, pasta or rice dishes, and/or combination vegetable dishes.

- Healthy Desserts – Healthy can still mean delicious when it comes to desserts. Dishes in this category should be served at the end of the meal or for special occasions. Contestants should modify traditional recipes with healthy substitutions and consider MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines when selecting recipes for this category.

6. **Advancing to Texas 4-H Roundup**. The first-place entry in each Senior category will advance to state. The same recipe entry that was used at County and District level must be used at the State level. The same recipe cannot be entered more than once to the Food Show at Texas 4-H Roundup. The Texas 4-H Food Show is set for Tuesday, June 8th, 2027, in College Station.

7. **Recipe**. When selecting a recipe for competition, please remember:
   - Recipes should be written in the standard recipe format using the included Recipe Submission Checklist.
   - Oven time limit is 75 minutes in each category.
   - No alcohol or ingredients containing alcohol may be used.
   - Keep in mind what ingredients will be available or in season for all levels of competition: county, district, and state. Additionally, please consider if ingredients will be available in local grocery stores as needed for competition.
   - Contestants are only allowed to enter one recipe (no multiples).
   - Contestants must not use any copyrighted recipes.
   - Contestants must enter the same recipe at district that they qualified with at the county level. Seniors must also enter the same recipe at state that they qualified with at the district level.

8. **Garnishes**. Only edible garnishes are allowed. Participants will be asked to remove any other material besides a serving utensil, napkin, and edible garnish from the serving tray.

9. **Rules & Guidelines**. Contestants will follow all State Food Show rules.
   - ***Please note***. The state rules are written for Seniors who have qualified for the Food Show at Texas 4-H Roundup. The state rules discuss preparation at a contest site. For the District 8 Food Show, contestants will bring their prepared dish to the contest. Contestants should prepare their own dishes at home; parents may supervise but should not be preparing the food.

10. **Theme**. This year's 4-H Food Show theme is "Food Truck Favorites" … From gourmet tacos to sizzling stir-fries and mouthwatering health inspired desserts, food trucks bring bold flavors and innovative dishes to the streets-now it's your turn to bring that energy to the kitchen! Whether it's a globally inspired street food dish, a classic American favorite with a twist, or a fusion creation all your own, this gives you a chance to be creative and make it your own!

11. **Contest Resources**

    Participants are encouraged to use the following resources as a foundation to learn nutrition, food safety, and food preparation knowledge. Participants should not solely rely on these resources but seek other credible resources to expand their knowledge and expertise.

12. Nutrition Resources

- MyPlate
  http://www.choosemyplate.gov/
- Food Safety
  https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition/
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans
  http://health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/
- Preparation Principles & Function of Ingredients
  https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Preparation-Principles-and-Function-of-Ingredients.pdf
- Know Your Nutrients
  https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Know-Your-Nutrients_FINAL.pdf
- Nutrient Needs at a Glance
  http://fcs.tamu.edu/food_and_nutrition/pdf/nutrient-needs-at-a-glance- E-589.pdf

13. Theme Resources

- Dinner Tonight
  - https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/
- USDA
  - https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/05/27/usda-provides-food-safety-tips-grilling-pros-and-beginners
  - https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/grilling-food-safely

14. **Contestants Bring to District 8 Contest**:

- ***District 8 4-H Food Show Recipe Form & Project Experiences Form***.. **Paperwork for all age divisions needs to be uploaded at registration. Only PDF files will be accepted. Those with incomplete or incorrect paperwork will not have paperwork to be judged.** Judges will be provided copies of each contestant's paperwork.
  i. ***Juniors & Intermediates*** – Junior and Intermediate paperwork only includes the District 8 4-H Food Show Recipe Form.
  ii. ***Seniors*** – Senior paperwork includes the District 8 4-H Food Show Recipe Form and Project Experiences Form. **(Seniors. Please note that if you qualify for state you will need to use the state forms, however, do NOT use the state forms for this contest.)**
- ***Prepared dish***. 4-H members are encouraged to bring a single serving or a small dish rather than the whole recipe, so there will not be as much waste if the food needs to be thrown away. The dish should be presented to the judges as if it were about to be placed on a table for a family dinner.
- ***Presentation:***. Serving of the entry dishes will not occur. Contestants will need to be prepared to explain what the serving size of their dish is. Contestants will present their knowledge on serving sizes to the judging panel. Judges will not taste the dish.
- ***Serving Tray***. Contestants must bring their own serving trays if needed to safely transport the dish. Fancy or elaborate placemats, linens, centerpieces, candles, etc. are not to be included with the dish as it is presented for judging interviews. Contestants should only use dishes and utensils appropriate and necessary to present their dish.

15. **Orientation.** Participant orientation for Food Show will be conducted the morning of the contest.

16. **Preparation**. Food must be prepared prior to arrival at the District Food show. There will be tables in the Assembly Hall for participants to set their dish as they wait to be judged. They can put the finishing touches on the dishes in that area immediately prior to judging. Participants will have only about 10 minutes for preparation time, clearing their area quickly, and move their dish to the waiting area. There will be no timers. There will be LIMITED prep time. Parents are not allowed in the waiting or judging area in the Assembly Hall.

17. **Five Minute Presentation**. All contestants should prepare a maximum five-minute oral presentation to introduce themselves and their dish. To earn maximum points, participants must use the 5-minute presentation to describe their inspiration in choosing your recipe, how recipe relates to the current food show theme, and the following areas of the scorecard: Knowledge of Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Nutrition Knowledge, Food Preparation, and Food Safety Concerns.

18. **Four Minute Question & Answer**. Judges will have the opportunity for a maximum four-minute interview asking questions applicable to the attached scorecard. It includes, but is not limited to, basic nutrition, food safety, food preparation, chronic disease prevention, age-related nutrition, or other areas of health, as well as project experiences. Judges may ask additional questions related to general food and health, food systems, food safety, or food/health issues.

19. **Serving**. At the conclusion of the question-and-answer period, the participant will have one minute to cover how much a serving portion on their dish is. This will allow the participants to share their knowledge of serving size but not have to serve the judges. Judges will not taste the food.

20. **Skills Showcase.** There will not be a Skills Showcase. Those seniors who qualify for the state contest will need to get with their FCH agent to work on this piece of the contest.

21. **Judges' Comments**. Judges will have four minutes to write comments and score participants.

22. **Knowledge Showcase.** There will not be a Knowledge Showcase. Those seniors who qualify for the state contest will need to get with their FCH agent to work on this piece of the contest.

23. **Awards**. The top five scoring individuals in each category will be recognized. Awards will be held in Barn C, at the conclusion of the Food Challenge contest. .

24. **Contest References & Forms**. Refer to the following website for specific rules, score sheets, and forms: http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/events/roundup/.

25. **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is not chaperoning this event. The individual parent/guardian or their designee that brings the youth to the event is the chaperone and expected to stay at the event location**

D8 4-H FOOD SHOW

Recipe Submission Checklist

Recipes for 4-H Food Show should adhere to the guidelines below. Please use this checklist to ensure recipes are correctly written. This form does not need to be submitted at the Food Show. This form is for guidance only.

DOES YOUR RECIPE HAVE ALL OF THESE PARTS?	**YES**	**NO**
Name of recipe		
Complete list of ingredients		
Size cans, number of packages, cans, etc. given		
*EX: 10 oz box chopped frozen spinach NOT Spinach, box of spinach or frozen spinach		
Description for combining all ingredients		
LIST OF INGREDIENTS		
Ingredients are listed in order in which they are used in directions		
Ingredients listed as they are measured. *EX: ¼ cup chopped onion, not ¼ cup onion chopped. *EX: 1 green pepper, chopped, not 1 chopped green pepper		
Measurements given in common fractions		
*Ex: 1/4 cup, 2 tablespoons, 1 teaspoon		
All measurements are spelled out, not abbreviated. *Ex: cup, teaspoon, tablespoon, size can, etc. *Ex: 4-ounce can		
No brand names are used.		
Complete description of ingredients is included		
*EX: low-fat; packed in syrup; reduced fat; etc.		
DIRECTIONS		
Clear instructions used for every step of combining and cooking the ingredients		
Short, clear sentences used		
Correct wording used to describe combining and cooking processes		
Size and type of pan stated		
Oven temperature and cooking times given		
Number of servings or how much the recipe would make included		

D8 4-H FOOD SHOW

Sample Questions

1. How do you balance your daily menu to ensure that you get proper amounts of food from the food groups?
2. Name food groups and amounts that are required from each food group each day.
3. What function does each ingredient perform in the recipe?
4. What are the basic preparation principles involved in preparing this dish?
5. What food safety practices did you use during preparation?
6. What is considered a serving of your dish?
7. If substitutions are possible, what are they?
8. What and what amount of important nutrients are found in your dish?
9. What is the function of the nutrients found in your dish?
10. What change have you made in your dietary habits as a result of your 4-H food project?
11. Tell about your community service and leadership through the year's food project?
12. What were your goals for your foods project and what are some activities you did in this project?
13. What do you consider your most important learning experience in this year's food project?
14. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your project?

These are sample questions. Judges are free to ask any question related to the 4-H Food & Nutrition Project.

D8 4-H FOOD SHOW

2026 District 8 4-H Food Show
Recipe Form – All Age Divisions

Name: **County:**

Age Division ____ Junior ____ Intermediate _____ Senior

Category ____ Appetizer ____ Side Dish _____ Main Dish _____ Healthy Dessert

Name of Recipe:

Type recipe here: *(Check the Texas 4-H Food Show Guide for Recipe Submission Checklist and Example format.)*

D8 4-H FOOD SHOW

2026 District 8 4-H Food Show
Project Experiences – Seniors Only

Name:			**County:**	
Age Division			__x__ Senior	
Category	____ Appetizer	_____ Side Dish	_____ Main Dish	_____ Healthy Dessert
Name of Recipe:				

Limit to current year's experiences, including project activities, community service, and leadership. Limited to space below.