Now that the school year is over and 4-H club meetings wind down, we can turn our attention to summer fun, specifically, the 94th annual Mercer County 4-H fair! I’m sure you are looking forward to displaying or demonstrating all you have learned over the past months. However, before we move into fair season, please enjoy this newsletter which has many of the highlights sent to us during the 2012 4-H year as well as information leading up to our fair! Thank you to all the club reporters, secretaries, historians, leaders and parents who sent in club updates and meeting minutes as well as photos to the office. Wishing you all a fantastic summer!

Chad Ripberger
County 4-H Agent

Altaira Bejgrowicz
4-H Program Assistant

Inside this issue:
- 4-H Fair Info 2
- 4-H Events 3-6
- Club Updates 7-9
- Upcoming Events 10

Congratulations to Mercer County 4-H Member Emily Dallas for being selected to represent New Jersey at the 2012 National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, Georgia this November.

Contest Winners for 4-H Fair Artwork

The Fair Tee shirt design winner this year is Clever Clovers member Keanu Ortiz. His design was chosen for its simple style. It will look nice on our natural cotton tees!

Adeline Ripberger’s design will be on the 4-H Fair program/map. Her design is both colorful and inclusive of the 4-H program. Adeline is a member of the Snip & Stitch sewing club.

Our 2012 Exhibitor’s catalog cover is designed by Meredith Dauphars of the Boltin’ Colts. Her design is representative of the fair theme this year…

4-H: Belong, Believe, Achieve.

Congratulations to our 4-H Artists!
It’s about one short month until fair day! The following is information you will need in order to be best prepared for the fair weekend.

Project Record Books - Please remember to bring your record book to the fair. You may place it in the collection box located in the Fish Barn at Howell Farm. Remember, a completed record book is one of the criteria to be considered a Member in Good Standing.

Member in Good Standing Criteria:
- Must submit a record book (Mastery)
- Attend a minimum of 70% of club meetings (Belonging)
- Do a public presentation at the club level or higher (Independence)
- Participate in a 4-H sponsored community service project at club, county, regional or state level (Generosity)

4-H Exhibits and Club Booth Displays - An exciting part of the fair is seeing all the wonderful projects completed by our members as well as the general public. This year the Exhibit Catalog has been revised. Please take some time to check it out on our website:

http://mercer.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/fair

There is a new division for Video and Computer projects and some new classes have been added within divisions we have had in the past. Also, you will notice that “judging criteria” has been added to the catalog. Please review this section so you will know the standards the judges will be looking for on Saturday morning!

Keep your schedule handy to be sure you get to enjoy the events sponsored by the 4-H Office this year!

Friday Evening - 6:00 pm, Potluck Dinner (members contribute) and beverages provided by the 4-H office, as well as utensils and S’mores after the night hike.

Saturday Evening - 6:30 pm, Pizza Dinner. Movie and popcorn (Howell Farm popcorn!) 9:00 pm in the big tent.

Sunday Morning - 8:00 am, Pancake Breakfast (Howell Farm syrup!)
Always an exciting night, the 2012 presentation night did not disappoint. There were topics ranging from the importance of composting to the long history of the 4-H program. Our 4-Hers competently answered many questions from the audience and judges alike! It was truly an evening in which everyone could be proud of themselves.

If you did not participate this year, please consider joining us next year as the reward in doing a public presentation will pay off far into your future.
Kristie VonThun of the Clever Clovers 4-H club, attended the State Agricultural Convention Delegates’ Dinner on January 18, 2012, in Atlantic City as Mercer County 4-H Ambassador. She participated in a long-standing tradition, the presentation of the agricultural youth leaders to the convention delegates.

She is pictured with (L to R) NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher and Henry DuBois, President of the State Board of Agriculture.

Thank you Kristie for representing Mercer County!

4-H Program Associate, Sharon Gore, has fun with some of the Teens who attended the Teen Winter Camp held in late January at the Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp in Branchville, NJ.

Mercer County 4-H had participants at the New Jersey 4-H Equine Art show this year. Sadia Vaughn, Sunah Nash, and Meredith Dauphars, all members of the Boltin’ Colts club had some creative entries.

Congratulations to these 4-Hers for doing their best!
Mercer County had two clubs, the Clever Clovers and the Boltin’ Colts, with members attending the Junior Breeder Livestock symposium. Some attended for sheep and goats, some rabbits, some horses. In these photos, Clever Clovers parent Eric Sortore is teaching a workshop on how to build a milking stand for goats. Eric’s design is foldable and has wheels, making it easily transportable. It can also be used as a cart for hay or tack.

Thanks, Eric, for sharing your talent at the symposium again this year!
State shotgun invitational shooters from the Mercer County 4-H Hot Shots were Zach Helm, Sam Ryder, Nathaniel Tettermer and Khalid Vaughn. The event was held at Redwing Sporting Clays in Port Republic, NJ and was made up of trap, skeet and sporting clays - of which the "rabbit" station was the most challenging. All shooters enjoyed the day shooting with other clubs from Sussex, Atlantic and Hunterdon counties.

By: Mary Catherine Shea

The 2012 State 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Competition was held in March 2012 and Mercer County had some worthy participants! Alex Byrnes, Kristie Von Thun, Katie Elliot, Renee Stillwell, Nate Byrnes and Keanu Ortiz, all of the Clever Clovers Club, were there to test their dairy knowledge. Congratulations to all of you for demonstrating your effort and skill!
Club Updates

4-Leaf Clover club co-leader, AnnMarie Potts shared photos of her club members making arrangements in tomato cans. AnnMarie said, “Claudia Sutton (co-leader) got the cans last summer (they are Jersey Fresh tomatoes and were found primarily at farm stands)...but they were really cool cans...so she saved them and we made arrangements in them to exhibit at the fair. Each member chose their own flowers, fruits, or vegetables to put in their arrangements.”

Above and right, members are making crafts using colored and printed duct tape. Left, a Cloverbud member, constructs a silk wreath.

We are looking forward to seeing the results of your creativity at the fair!

This spring the Shades of Pemberley 4-H Club put together a 2-month beginners’ workshop in “Colonial Dance.” Here is a photo with some of their new dancing friends at the “Colonial Tea.”
Treasuring the Trash club members, leaders and parents attended the Mercer County Master Gardener Plant Expo held at the Mercer Educational Gardens in Pennington on May 5, 2012.

Members took the time to talk with the public about the benefits and methods of composting at their homes. Posters and samples were used to help illustrate facts and procedures for composting success.

Terrific Community Spirit 4-Hers!

Hot Shots Shooting Sports club members got together at Clover Rod and Gun Club for a community service project. Members, leaders, and parents planted about 250 seedlings to provide a visual break in one of the large fields and to provide habitat and improve the environment.

Great job Hot Shots!

The Clever Clovers club performed a much needed community service project by painting horse stalls at the New Jersey Horse Park. They painted all the outward facing walls on all three of the barns! The crew went through 11 gallons of paint.

Way to “roll” Clever Clovers!
Earth Keepers 4-H Club (formerly known as Critter Cove)

The Earth Keepers club had a busy year constructing conservation projects and preparing their public presentations! They also took club field trips together to Bowman’s Wildflower Preserve, Washington Crossing Park and a tour of the Mercer County Library System!

Cloverbud members Joy Leone and Jack LeMasney (right) give their club presentations

The Nifty Knotters 4-H Club had a busy year learning some of the many techniques of fiber arts. Members were taught Kumihimo, a type of Japanese braiding. They used wheels made of foam to construct the red, white, and blue braids. Members also created embroidered star shaped Christmas ornaments and tried their hand at sewing as they made their own stuffed pig creations. We hope to see some of their creations at the fair this year!

Below, members recycled two types of plastic bottles to create table-top terrariums
Upcoming Events

Fair Set-up ~ Thursday, July 26, 5:30 pm ~ Howell Living History Farm

Exhibit entry, pot-luck dinner, night hike/campfire, camping ~ Friday, July 27, Howell Farm

Mercer County 4-H Fair ~ July 28 & 29 ~ Howell Living History Farm

State 4-H Goat Show ~ Thursday, August 23 ~ Hunterdon County Fairgrounds

State 4-H Horse Show ~ August 24 - 26 ~ Horse Park of NJ, Allentown

NJ Teen Leadership Camp ~ August 24 - 26 ~ Nomoco Family Campground, Freehold

National 4-H Week ~ October 7 –13 ~ Show your 4-H pride this week!

4-H Staff

Chad Ripberger, County 4-H Agent
Miss Harmon, Program Associate
LouAnn Mastromarino, Program Assistant

Sharon Gore, Program Associate
Altaira Bejgrowicz, Program Assistant
Adele Dinges, Secretary