

4-H through TV interviews, talking at commissioner's court, working a Hemp Conference at MSU, volunteering at the Farm and Ranch Expo, and teaching the community about 4-H and livestock at the Home and Garden Show. Working rabbit and goat/lamb validations and the county show also gave me the opportunity to meet and talk to many 4-Hers in my county. My job as an officer is to encourage, help, promote and mentor all 4-Hers as often as I can. You have to practice what you preach. If you want others to do more community service, you need to be seen doing it too. If you want our clubs to embrace One Day 4-H, then you need to be excited and participate too. Being an officer at any level requires dedication, responsibility and the knowledge that the younger youth are looking at you for guidance, on how to act and treat others. Being an officer has also given me the opportunity to make the acquaintance of different people involved in the agricultural industry, political arena, and the business world. Meeting different types of people and advocating and representing the importance of 4-H has led to more support from the community as a whole, not just agricultural businesses.



Working at county show rabbit check-in



Speaking at the Hemp Conf.



One Day 4-H, collecting donations for animal shelter

My initial goals for this year were to attend more majors, jackpots, and have more breeding does to show. This was a lean year for my family and we had to make cuts in our program. I was only able to afford two goats to show, we attended less workshops, clinics, and jackpots to save some money. I also re-evaluated my feeding program to see if I could save money by switching feeds and changing supplements. What I learned was there are some supplements I really didn't need and others that I wanted to keep. It made me really study and pay attention to what exactly I was feeding, for example proteins, fiber, fat, and mineral percentages. I now have a better understanding of how I want

to feed my animals next year. My goals changed, and that happens, from being totally focused on showing just my animals to spending more time helping others getting started with their projects. Raising, training, and fitting two quality goats was still important to me, even though I only had two goats. With only having two goats, it allowed me more time to help younger showmen raise, train, and fit their project animals.

Goats can be annoying, stubborn, and cantankerous. Although they are all these things, they have taught me valuable life lessons. My goats have taught me not to cut corners or try to take the easy way out. If you want a goat to lead, you have to put in the hours of preparation beforehand. You sit with them at first to get them used to you and build some trust. Next introduce the halter, put it on, then ask to move a foot and so on. Each step takes time and patience to build that mutual trust so they will be willing to work for you. Patience is the biggest lesson I have learned from my goats. Before goats, new activities came easy to me. I did not have to work that hard to be successful, then came goats. At first, I was frustrated with how much time and energy they required for very little progress. I would get mad if they did not learn fast enough. My mom was always there helping and she would tell me to put that goat up and take a walk to cool down, and come back with a better attitude. It used to make me mad, because I thought the goats were the problem. As I matured, and worked harder, I realized that how my goats acted depended on my attitude. It took a couple of years to learn that, but now working with my goats is still challenging, but fun. I don't take misbehavior personally anymore; I enjoy the challenge of figuring out what I need to do to get the results I want. Each goat has a different personality and I need to find the best method to use for each individual goat to achieve success. Once I do that then training and fitting get easier. There is no free ride if you want to raise a quality product. Thomas Edison said, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." I believe this means you have to get sweaty, dirty, get stepped on, drug, catch a horn in the leg, and get up every morning to do it all again. Then when you put on your starched jeans and button shirt and head into the show arena you can be proud of the animal you raised regardless of your placing.