

Aubrey Helmick
Doña Ana County
Ft. Selden 4-H Club
Senior

My name is Aubrey Helmick, I am 16 years old, and a Junior at Mayfield High School. I have lived here in Las Cruces all my life, and I am excited to go to college to earn a degree in large animal veterinary science. I have been involved in 4-H since I was 7 years old; and loved every minute of it. I have tried many projects, including market goat, pygmy goat, rabbit, shooting sports, sewing, and my personal favorite, market lambs. I have held many offices in the past, all the way up to club president, and county ambassador. Being a part of 4-H has taught me too many skills to count, leadership, public speaking, lending a hand to those in need, and so many more. If it wasn't for 4-H, I am confident I would not be the same person I am today.

A few times this year, I thought to myself, "maybe I bit off a little more than I can chew" with 5 lambs, a full-time job at a feed store, a year of completely virtual school, and a very active social life. But that is just the way I like it, always staying busy with lots of stuff to do, and if I manage my time right, then it all works out! I am an extremely outgoing person, and I love it. Meeting people at state events, and then remembering them 2 or 3 years down the line makes me so happy, thinking that I have had the opportunity to form so many friendships and create so many amazing memories, much of which is thanks to 4-H. This summer, I went to a jackpot show in T or C, and during showmanship, the judge threw us for a loop when he explained that he was going to trade places with us, taking our

lamb and handing the microphone over to us, so we could explain to everyone in the show barn why exhibiting livestock is so important to us. After a few seconds of panic, I nervously took the microphone from the judge, and went on about a two-and-a-half-minute long speech about why exactly I think showing and raising livestock is such an important thing for my peers to experience. I'll be honest, I only remember a tiny fraction of what my speech consisted of, but what I do remember was that I explained how raising livestock teaches kids, (and adults too), so many important life skills, patience, empathy, and how to get back up even after you feel have been thrown on the ground by an animal sometimes twice your size. I was nervous to speak in front of so many people, but I was excited to have the chance to talk to so many people with an impromptu speech on something so meaningful to me. Although I didn't win that show, it is still one of my favorite memories from the past year with lambs, and something I can always look back on to remember just how much I love public speaking. Growing up in 4-H has a big part to do with that. When I was younger, I used to recite speeches over and over until it was burned into my brain for days before I needed to give it, but now I am confident in speaking with purpose and talking directly to the audience.

4-H has taught incredible life experiences and skills to many people, and I wouldn't trade my time in 4-H with my friends and family right next to me, for anything in the world.