



The Mayo Clover Leaf



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Up-Coming Events

Tuesday June 8-10 Marine Biology 4-H Camp . 8:30-3:00, 4-H Classroom (Full)

Thursday July 17, Corn Field Day, 9:00AM-1:30PM NFREC Suwannee Valley, Live Oak

Wednesday July 30, 4-H Senior Commodity Pickup 1:00-4:00

Tuesday Aug 19, Peanut Field Day, NFREC Suwannee Valley, Live Oak



4-H Celebrates Patriotism, Citizenship, American Values

Shawn Jackson

Lafayette County 4-H youth recently participated in Camp USA, a day camp designed to help young citizens understand and appreciate the freedoms they enjoy as Americans. Through creative projects, hands-on learning, and meaningful discussions, campers explored the values, responsibilities, and history that shape life in the United States.

Camp USA emphasizes that with freedom comes responsibility. Campers learned about the importance of voting, following laws, and understanding how policies and laws are created. The U.S. Constitution and the role of active citizenship were central themes throughout the camp, helping youth recognize that every citizen has the power to influence their community and country.

The week began with campers creating patriotic jewelry—necklaces and bracelets in red, white, and blue—as a fun way to show pride in their country. They also made coasters, painted USA-themed artwork, and crafted "I Love America" door hangers. A highlight of the day was a special presentation from the Lafayette County Health Department on hurricane preparedness. Campers gained valuable safety knowledge and were excited to receive useful emergency supplies, thanks to presenters Kerry Walden, Casey Ditter, Kim Brown, and Beverley Fountain.

Creativity continued on the second day with more patriotic-themed crafts using red, white, and blue pipe cleaners. Campers made new door hangers to display at home and played a lively trivia game led by Mr. Jackson, where they answered questions about American history, symbols, and national pride. One of the favorite art projects of the day was using paint and string to design patriotic flowers, adding color and imagination to the lessons of the day.

The final day of Camp USA featured a memorable field trip with Union County 4-H to Camp Blanding, where campers toured the Camp Blanding Museum and learned about U.S. military history and its connection to the freedoms Americans enjoy today. A special thank you goes to Mr. Daryl Fletcher and Mr. Allen Broughton for sharing their military experiences and helping bring the history of service and sacrifice to life for the campers. The day concluded with a classic American cookout and a refreshing swim in Kingsley Lake, giving campers time to relax and reflect on all they had learned and experienced throughout the week.

Camp USA not only celebrated the red, white, and blue—it helped build a stronger understanding of citizenship, service, and national pride in each camper. Thanks to the many community partners, volunteers, and leaders who made this camp possible, these 4-H youth left with a deeper appreciation of their country and their role in its future. **More Camp USA Photos inside**





4-Hers learned that living in a country with freedoms many can only dream of comes with responsibilities, and to be grateful to those, past and present, who made sacrifices so we could enjoy these freedoms today.

Area Sees Varying Rainfall as Storm Season Approaches

While much of Lafayette County experienced dry conditions early last month, daily showers brought significant rainfall to parts of the western region, with some areas receiving over eight inches. Forecasts suggest that this pattern of frequent rain will continue into the first part of this month. With disturbances forming in the Gulf of Mexico and throughout the tropics, residents are reminded that more severe weather could be on the horizon. Now is the time to prepare for the possibility of tropical storms or hurricanes. As recent years have shown, Lafayette County is not immune to the impact of major storms.

June Rainfall Totals (in)			
	2025	2024	2023
Cooks Hammock	3.36	4.21	3.13
Mallory Swamp	8.92	3.95	2.9
Midway Tower	4.21	4.12	2.52

The Dog Days of Summer: A Hot Time with a Starry Name

The phrase “dog days of summer” doesn’t come from dogs panting in the heat—it actually comes from a star in the sky. Sirius, the brightest star we can see at night, is part of a group of stars called *Canis Major*, which means “Greater Dog” in Latin. That’s where the name comes from.

A long time ago, people in Ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt noticed that Sirius rose and set with the sun during the hottest part of the year. Because Sirius is so bright, the Romans believed it added extra heat to the sun’s rays. Today we know that Sirius doesn’t make it hotter, but its place in the sky is why this time of year is still called the dog days of summer.

According to the stars, the real dog days are from July 3 to August 11. That’s 20 days before and after Sirius lines up with the sun. But in places like North Florida, the hottest stretch of the year is usually a little later—from around July 10 to August 20. That’s when both daytime and nighttime temperatures are usually at their highest.

So, what really causes all that heat? It’s not the stars—it’s the tilt of the Earth. During this time, our part of the world leans more toward the sun, which means longer days and stronger sunlight.

Even though the name comes from old star stories, the heat during the dog days is very real. Whether you’re trying to stay cool or looking up at the stars, this time of year is a reminder of how people long ago used the sky to explain the world around them—and how their ideas still influence us today.

Lafayette 4-H Clover Buds Enjoy Fun-Filled Summer Camp

Shawn Jackson

Lafayette County's 4-H Clover Bud Day Camp was full of fun, learning, and hands-on activities. Campers spent three exciting days creating, exploring, and making great memories together.

The first day started with a boost of imagination as campers used floam and play dough to build creative sculptures. Some made volcanoes, snowmen, and even a snowman praying. After that, everyone made beautiful sun catchers using glass stones and glue. Each one was colorful and unique!

Campers then visited the local library to see a fun show by Captain Character. He taught the kids how books can take you on different adventures. Every camper left with a balloon sword, two race cars, and a sweet treat—cotton candy!

Next, Ms. Kathy Bland from the Red Cross taught the group about fire safety. Campers learned why it's important to have an escape plan in case of a fire at home. She shared this lesson through a fun story featuring a penguin character.

Later, Ms. Amy Herring led a nature scavenger hunt, and the kids had a great time exploring the outdoors. Campers also spent time at learning centers, where they worked together and practiced good communication skills. To end the day, everyone decorated picture frames and added a photo of themselves to take home.

On day two, Ms. Amy taught the Clover Buds what each "H" in 4-H stands for—Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Campers gave examples of each one and how they use them in their lives.

Jacob and Molly brought their show hog, Bubbles, for a special visit. Campers learned how to care for a pig and even fed Bubbles marshmallows—what a treat! Later, the group talked about butterfly habitats and made colorful butterflies to go along with the lesson.

Ms. Sharon from Flight of the Rapture brought rescue animals for the campers to meet. The children were excited to see the animals up close and ask lots of questions.

The last day of camp was a big adventure! Campers traveled to the Gulf Specimen Marine Lab, where they got to touch and learn about sea creatures. Afterward, they took a boat tour at Wakulla Springs. Everyone was amazed to see a manatee, alligators, turtles, and birds in the wild.

It was an amazing camp filled with learning, laughter, and fun. Thanks to the hard work of the 4-H team, volunteers, and chaperones, the Lafayette Clover Buds had a summer experience they will never forget.



Clover Buds were 'hog wild' about 4-H and the fun had at Camp Clover Bud!



Lafayette 4-H Campers Explore the Journey from Farm to Table

Shawn Jackson

The Lafayette County 4-H Farm to Table Day Camp gave local youth a hands-on look at how food moves from the field to the plate. Through fun and meaningful experiences, campers learned to appreciate the value of agriculture, the joy of preparing meals, and the importance of sharing food with others.

Campers got busy early in the week as they prepared to host a special Rotary Appreciation Luncheon. They shelled peas, grated cabbage, shucked corn, and even made banana pudding for dessert. To make the event extra special, they created beautiful flowers out of makeup pads to use as table decorations.

The excitement continued as they baked home-made biscuits and hoe cakes, prepared more fresh vegetables, and added finishing touches to their luncheon menu. They also designed a large 4-H-themed mural, took part in a nature scavenger hunt, and enjoyed the opportunity to sit down and share the meal they had prepared with their Rotary guests.

The final day of camp brought exciting field trip adventures. Campers visited the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center, where they explored how scientists use research and testing to improve how crops are grown. The tour introduced campers to real-world agricultural science and showed how important variables and testing are in increasing food production.

After the tour, the group enjoyed a delicious lunch and ice cream treat at Dairy Queen, where the staff and atmosphere made for a great experience. Then, the campers toured the Super-Pufft snack food warehouse in Perry, Florida. They learned about food production, safety rules, and quality control, all while watching the steps involved in bringing packaged snacks to store shelves. As a special treat, campers received drawstring backpacks filled with goodies, including chips, a water bottle, fun socks, and snacks to enjoy all summer long. This year's Farm to Table Day Camp was an amazing journey from the farm fields to factory floors, kitchens, and community tables. Thanks to the support of many dedicated partners and volunteers, 4-H campers left with new skills, lasting memories, and a deeper understanding of where their food comes from.



Farm to table camp activities.

Lafayette 4-H Campers Step Back in Time at Homesteaders Camp

Shawn Jackson

Lafayette County 4-H youth recently took part in Homesteaders Camp, where they explored early farm life through hands-on projects and outdoor experiences that highlighted self-sufficiency, agriculture, and simple living.

Campers began by creating personalized buckets from recycled gallon cans, which they later used to plant blueberry bushes and fig trees. With Mayhaw berries donated by Stanley and Jeanette Ash, they made homemade Mayhaw and corn cob jelly, gaining valuable kitchen and food preservation skills. Ms. Kim from the Department of Health shared tips on healthy eating and helped the group plant seeds for edible produce.

Campers also crafted drink coasters and candles while learning about their historical uses. Planters were decorated and filled with succulents during a lesson on plant growth, led by Mrs. Emily. A visit from Ms. Sharon of Flight of the Rapture brought rescue animals to camp, allowing for hands-on learning about animal care. Campers capped off the day by making their own ice cream.

The camp wrapped up with a field trip to Dudley Farm, where youth experienced traditional homesteading tasks like washing clothes, pumping water, feeding chickens, and observing blacksmithing in action.

More than just fun, Homesteaders Camp gave youth a deeper appreciation for early homestead life, along with practical skills in gardening, crafting, and healthy living. Thanks to volunteers and community partners, this unique 4-H experience left a lasting impression on all who participated.



Youth learning self-sufficiency, to be less wasteful, and the brilliance along with work ethic of previous generations.

Lafayette 4-H “Build It” Camp Teaches Practical Skills

Shawn Jackson

Lafayette County’s 4-H Build It Camp continues to empower older youth with valuable hands-on skills in construction, design, and teamwork. Now in its fourth year, this highly anticipated camp provides participants with the opportunity to learn real-world building techniques while working on a project with lasting community value.

Under close adult supervision, 4-H campers learn to safely operate hand tools such as drills and circular saws, as well as properly use measuring and layout tools like tape measures and speed squares. These skills form the foundation of the camp’s main project: building a tiny house from the ground up. More than just a learning activity, the tiny house becomes a functional structure that can serve as a utility shed, garden shed, or even a play-house.

Each year brings a new design challenge, and this summer was no exception. While previous tiny houses featured a charming cottage look, this year’s project took a more rustic turn. Responding to requests from local hunters, the 2024 Build It Camp design was inspired by nature and crafted to blend into wooded landscapes—ideal for use as a hunting blind or woods hideaway. The structure features natural forest colors like deep greens, handmade wooden shutters, and a custom-built door, all finished with natural wood stain to complement the surrounding environment. The result is a unique blend of outdoor simplicity and tasteful craftsmanship.

Though the tiny house was still under construction at the time of this article, completion is expected soon. Once finished, the structure will be raffled off to the public, with tickets available in advance and the winner to be announced during Pioneer Day in October in Mayo, Florida.

4-H Build It Camp not only teaches useful trade skills but also instills pride, responsibility, and a strong work ethic in participating youth. With guidance from skilled mentors and the support of the community, these young builders are creating something lasting—both in wood and in life skills.



Youth learning safety first, building skills, and how to work as a team.

2026 SVYLSS COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

March 23-27, 2026

Online Registration Deadline	Sunday; November 16, 2025 at 10:00 pm
Entry Fee Deadline	Sunday; November 16, 2025 at 10:00 pm
Initial Tag-In/Weigh-In	Saturday; November 22, 2025 at 8:30 am
MANDATORY Parent/Exhibitor Meeting	DATES TBA but there will be 2 options
Record Book Due	March 16, 2026 by 5:00 pm (at Extension Office) ***Record Books only apply to Market Animals***
Swine Weigh-In	March 23, 2026 at 7:00-10:00 am
Cattle & Sheep Weigh-In	March 23, 2026 at 12:00-2:00 pm
Swine Showmanship	March 23, 2026 at 6:30 pm
Swine Show	March 24, 2026 at 6:30 pm
Steer and Heifer Show	March 25, 2026 at 6:30 pm
Sheep Show (Breeding & Market)	March 26, 2026 at 6:30 pm
Sale	March 27, 2026 at 9:00 am ***Lunch for Buyers will be provided during the sale at the fairgrounds***

Remember to start prepping for hurricane season now by checking trees on your property for damaged or weak branches!



Lafayette 4-H Senior Commodities



<u>Day</u>	Date	Time
<u>Wednesday</u>	July 30, 2025	1:00pm – 4:00pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	August 27, 2025	1:00pm – 4:00pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	September 24, 2025	1:00pm – 4:00pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	October 29, 2025	1:00pm – 4:00pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	November 19, 2025	1:00pm – 4:00pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	December 17, 2025	1:00pm – 4:00pm

Program for Lafayette County seniors 60+ Call 386-294-1279 for registration and details.

IFAS Extension is an equal opportunity Institution. We encourage all races, religions and ethnicities to attend our summer programs. There are scholarships available for minority and underprivileged children. Please contact our office for more information.

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UF IFAS Extension Lafayette County 4-H.