



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

September 1, 2025

MEMO TO: County Extension Agents

FROM:

Seth Hall
Extension Program Specialist 4-H

SUBJECT: 2025-2026 ROLLING PLAINS DISTRICT 3 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

DATE OF CONTEST: November 12, 2025

REGISTRATION: September 1, 2025 – October 27, 2025
\$10 Registration Fee per Participant

LATE REGISTRATION: *No late registration.*



LOCATION:

JS Bridwell Agricultural Center

111 N Burnett St.

Wichita Falls, TX

District 3 4-H Food Challenge Guide

New/Modified Guidelines in 2025 are indicated below:

- **LOCATION:** JS Bridwell Agricultural Center, 111 N Burnett St, Wichita Falls, Texas
- **SINGLE HEAT SCHEDULE:** Our new location is able to accommodate enough space for us to run a single-heat for our contest this year!
- **BUILDING ACCESS:** Parents/4-H Leaders (unless assigned as group leaders) will not be allowed inside the building. Participants will be dropped off at check-in on the south west side of the building – through the double red doors between two roll-up garage doors. Participants will be directed to wait in an assigned area of the building until food challenge begins. Participants will be dismissed at the completion of their judging time.

If bathrooms are needed by parents/leaders, we ask that you please enter through the double doors at the front. Restrooms are immediately inside the building.

You are welcome to bring your own chairs and hang out in the parking lot during the Food Challenge and Food Show.

Unless excused for medical reasons, absolutely NO FOOD is allowed inside the Bridwell Agricultural Center. It is inexcusable to bring snacks or packed lunches onsite. All outside food must remain outside of the Bridwell.

- **SUPPLY BOX UPDATES:** Additions to Supply Box Pantry: 3 dried herbs and/or spices (up to 3 oz each – team choice). No other items were removed.

BOXES MUST BE CHECKED AND CERTIFIED BY AGENT BEFORE ARRIVAL

- **RULES OF PLAY REMINDER:** Clarification for Intermediates and Seniors regarding items selected from the “grocery” store: Teams must select and use at least two items and will be provided the maximum number of items they can select during orientation.
~Teams will not be required to analyze the cost of their recipe, nor will this be included in the presentation and scoring of the contest.
~This year Intermediates will use the same rules as the Seniors. They will be given one item and must add at least two additional items from the “grocery store”. The maximum number of items that they can select will be given to them during orientation.
- **ADDITION TO RESOURCES:** Function of Ingredient Fact Sheet – this fact sheet is designed to help teams better understand the role and functions of ingredients in a recipe.

District 3 4-H Food Challenge Guide

District 3 4-H Food Challenge

November 12, 2025

JS Bridwell Agricultural Center, 111 N Burnett St, Wichita Falls, Texas

The District 3 4-H Food Challenge is an opportunity for participants to participate and compete in an innovative food and nutrition competition. The 4-H Food Challenge brings fun, learning, application of knowledge and skills, and group competition together at one event.

Deadline: Food Challenge Entries will be entered on 4-H Online.

- Each team member will be charged a **\$10 entry fee per 4-H'er** to cover the cost of ingredients/supplies between **September 1, 2025 - October 27, 2025**. There is **NO Late registration for the 2025 contest. Due to contest costs no refunds will be given.**

Parents/4-H Leaders (unless assigned as group leaders) will not be allowed inside the building. Participants will be dropped off at check-in on the south west side of the building – through the double red doors between two roll-up garage doors. Participants will be directed to wait in an assigned area of the building until food challenge begins. Participants will be dismissed at the completion of their judging time. If bathrooms are needed by parents/leaders, we ask that you please enter through the double doors at the front. Restrooms are immediately inside the building.

Food Challenge Schedule

If Food Show runs long, times can change.

12:45 pm Agents Arrive

1:15 pm Volunteers and Leaders Arrive
Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Team Registration & Box Check

1:30 pm Judges Orientation & Leader Orientation

1:45 pm Food Challenge Contestant Orientation

2:00 pm Contestants Begin Cooking

***Announcement of awards will follow tabulation.**

District 3 4-H Food Challenge Guide

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.

General Rules- Food Challenge

1. **Participation:** A District 3 Food Challenge contestant must be enrolled in 4-H and have actively participated in a 4-H Food and Nutrition educational project.
2. **Age Division:** Age divisions will be the participant's grade level as of August 31, 2025 (current 4-H year):
Junior- Grades 3 thru 5
Intermediate- Grades 6 thru 8
Senior- Grades 9 thru 12
3. **Teams per county.** Each county may enter a maximum of **two** Junior, a maximum of **two** Intermediate teams and a maximum of **two** Senior teams. The first and second place teams in each 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).
4. **Members per team.** Each team will have at least three and no more than four members. Up to two Juniors per county may move up to compete on an intermediate team. See rule #2.
5. **Substitution of team members.** Substitution of team members should be made only 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 Food Challenge to be eligible.
6. **Entry fee.** There is a \$10 entry fee per 4-Her to cover the cost of ingredients/supplies and will be done on 4-H Online. Checks will be payable to **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**. Submit to your local county extension office who will mail a county check to Texas 4-H Connect Office 4180 Highway 6 College Station, TX 77845. We will not accept late entries for District 3 2024 Food Challenge Contest.
7. **Food Categories and Preparation.** 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, but assignments will not be announced until check-in the morning of the contest.

Preparation:

Seniors & Intermediates: 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

District 3 4-H Food Challenge Guide

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.

Juniors: Each team will be provided with a set of ingredients reflective of the assigned category and will create an entire dish using them. The AMOUNTS of ingredients based upon a recipe will be at each station to assist the team. Teams are challenged with being creative and developing their own recipe with the ingredients provided. Each team will create an entire dish/recipe using the provided ingredients. Dishes/recipes created should include two or more servings

8. **Attire.** Each team will have the option of wearing coordinated clothing, aprons or hair coverings. Team members must wear closed-toe shoes and hair restraints. 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 completely pulled back, Chef hat with hair restrained inside, or cap with hair completely tucked inside.
9. **Resource materials provided at contest.** The following resources will be provided to teams at the Food Challenge. All are available online at: <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition/>
- Resource 1: MyPlate Mini-Poster
 - Resource 2: Fight Bac – Fight Foodborne Bacteria Brochure
 - Resource 3: Know Your Nutrients
 - Resource 4: Food Safety Fact Sheet
 - Resource 5: Function of Ingredient Fact Sheet
- *No other resource materials will be allowed. Teams may not use their personal copies of the resources during the contest.

10. **Supply box.** Each team must supply their own equipment for the challenge. * **The Junior Division team's supply box will not include the pantry ingredients listed** or items that are used in heating food. Teams may bring only the supplies listed in the supply box section. Supply Boxes will be certified by County Agents before arriving at the contest. Random spot checks will be done the day of the contest. Any extra equipment will be removed from the team's supply box. Supply boxes are limited to the following dimensions 40"x 24"x 40". If box is on wheels, the height of the wheels is not included in the dimensions. The contest committee may measure any and/or all boxes to determine compliance to size. If the boxes are out of compliance, teams may be disqualified. An EMPTY tub for dirty dishes may be placed on top of equipment box.

11. **Pantry Ingredients** - Each Senior and Intermediate team may include in their equipment _____

District 3 4-H Food Challenge Guide

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.

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

12. Awards. The top five high scoring food challenge teams in each food category will be recognized with “place ribbons” during the awards program. The top Senior Division team in each food category will advance to state competition but may not be automatically assigned to the same category as they were at district. Banners will be given to the top 3 places.

13. Participants with disabilities. Any competitor who requires auxiliary aids or special accommodations must contact the District Extension Office at least 2 weeks before the competition.

14. Suggested Resources that will assist 4-H leaders/agents in preparing 4-Hers for Food Challenge: Participants should not limit themselves to studying only the resources provided at the contest (see general rule #5). Resources that may be helpful include (but are not limited to):

- MyPlate - www.myplate.gov
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015
<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>
- Fight Bac! www.fightbac.org
- Nutritional Concepts
- Cooking Basics for Dummies, 3rd edition
- Function of Ingredient Fact Sheet

District 3 4-H Food Challenge Guide

SUPPLY BOX

Each team will bring an equipment box (40"x24"x40) containing **only one** each of the following items, unless a different quantity is noted:

Bench Scraper
Bowls Dip Size (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
First aid kit
Fork
Gloves
Grater
Hand sanitizer
Kitchen shears (1 pair)
Kitchen timer
Knives (up to 6)
Liquid measuring cup (2 cup size)
Manual Pencil Sharpener
Measuring spoons (1 set)
Meat Tenderizer
Non-stick cooking spray
Note cards (no larger than 5 X 7, 1 package)
Paper towels (1 roll)
Pancake turner (up to 2)
Pencils (no limit)
Plastic box or trash bag for dirty equipment
Potato masher
Rolling Pin
Potato peeler
Sanitizing wipes (1 container)
Serving platter or plate
Serving dishes/utensils
• 1 plate/platter
• 1 bowl
• 1 utensil

Skewers (1 set)
Spatulas (2)
Stirring spoon
Storage bags (1 box)
Tongs (up to 2)
Toothpicks (no limit)
Whisk
EMPTY tub for dirty dishes may be place on top of equipment box.

Int & Sr Division Only

- Electric Skillet
- Extension cord (Teams should be certain the extension cord is compatible (2- prong/3-prong) with the plugs on their electrical supplies)
- Food thermometer
- Hot pads (up to 5)
- Hot plate (two single burner or one double burner, electric only)
- Pot with lid
- Skillet with lid

Pantry Items

- 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 (16 oz) (team choice)
- Cornstarch (up to 1 lb) or Flour (up to 1lb) (team choice)
- 3 Dried herbs and/or spices (up to 3 oz each)

DISTRICT 3 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

Junior Scorecard - Preparation



Team Name: _____ Team #: _____

Entry Category: ___Appetizer ___Main Dish ___Side Dish ___Healthy Dessert

Team Observation	Rating				Comments
	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement	
Teamwork: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of communication among team members Each team member played a key role in the preparation phase, whether cooking or preparing presentation 					
Safety concerns and practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibited knowledge of how to use equipment safely (utensils, sharps, etc.) Handled ingredients appropriately to avoid cross contamination Personal Hygiene (hair, nails, jewelry, etc.) 					
Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practiced correct cooking procedures based upon ingredients provided Completed tasks efficiently and in a logical order 					
Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used workspace efficiently Effective use of time Preparation table was clean at the conclusion of the preparation period 					
Additional Comments: (Based on observation)					

DISTRICT 3 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

Junior Scorecard – Presentation



Team Name: _____ Team #: _____

Entry Category: ____Appetizer ____Main Dish ____Side Dish ____Healthy Dessert

Team Presentation	Rating				Comments
	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement	
Knowledge of MyPlate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Food Groups according to MyPlate How MyPlate is represented in the dish prepared 					
Nutrition Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows key nutrition in prepared dish Basic functions of nutrients Healthy substitutions and modifications 					
Food Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained key steps in how dish was prepared 					
Safety Concerns and Practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained food safety according to Fight BAC 					
Serving Size Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated knowledge of serving size for prepared dish 					
Food Appearance/Quality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food is appealing and appetizing Appeared to be cooked properly Attractive and appropriate garnish 					
-Creativity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used ingredients in a creative way Incorporated grocery store items into dish or garnish 					
Effectiveness of Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displayed effective communication skills Poise and personal appearance 					
Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately and appropriately answered questions 					
Additional Comments:					

DISTRICT 3 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

Intermediate Scorecard - Preparation



Team Name: _____ Team #: _____

Entry Category: ___Appetizer ___Main Dish ___Side Dish ___Healthy Dessert

Team Observation	Rating				Comments
	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement	
Teamwork: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of communication among team members Each team member played a key role in the preparation phase, whether cooking or preparing presentation 					
Safety concerns and practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibited knowledge of how to use equipment safely (heat, utensils, sharps, etc.) Handled ingredients appropriately to avoid cross contamination Personal Hygiene (hair, nails, jewelry, etc.) 					
Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practiced correct cooking procedures based upon ingredients provided Completed tasks efficiently and in a logical order 					
Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used workspace efficiently Effective use of time Preparation table was clean at the conclusion of the preparation period 					
Additional Comments: (Based on observation)					

DISTRICT 3 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

Intermediate Scorecard – Presentation



Team Name: _____ Team #: _____

Entry Category: ____Appetizer ____Main Dish ____Side Dish ____Healthy Dessert

Team Presentation	Rating				Comments
	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement	
Knowledge of MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of MyPlate Knowledge of Dietary Guidelines for Americans 					
Nutrition Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows key nutrition in prepared dish Knowledge of nutrient functions, effects, and deficiency risks Healthy substitutions and modifications 					
Food Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained key steps in how dish was prepared Role of main ingredients in dish 					
Safety Concerns and Practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained food safety according to Fight BAC 					
Serving Size Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated knowledge of serving size for prepared dish 					
Food Appearance/Quality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food is appealing and appetizing Appeared to be cooked properly Attractive and appropriate garnish 					
Creativity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used ingredients in a creative way Incorporated grocery store items into dish or garnish 					
Effectiveness of Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displayed effective communication skills Poise and personal appearance 					
Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately and appropriately answered questions 					
Additional Comments:					

DISTRICT 3 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

Senior Scorecard - Preparation



Team Name: _____ Team #: _____

Entry Category: ___Appetizer ___Main Dish ___Side Dish ___Healthy Dessert

Team Observation	Rating				Comments
	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement	
Teamwork: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of communication among team members Each team member played a key role in the preparation phase, whether cooking or preparing presentation 					
Safety concerns and practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibited knowledge of how to use equipment safely (heat, utensils, sharps, etc.) Handled ingredients appropriately to avoid cross contamination Personal Hygiene (hair, nails, jewelry, etc.) 					
Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practiced correct cooking procedures based upon ingredients provided Completed tasks efficiently and in a logical order 					
Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used workspace efficiently Effective use of time Preparation table was clean at the conclusion of the preparation period 					
Additional Comments: (Based on observation)					

DISTRICT 3 4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

Senior Scorecard – Presentation



Team Name: _____ Team #: _____

Entry Category: ____Appetizer ____Main Dish ____Side Dish ____Healthy Dessert

Team Presentation	Rating				Comments
	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement	
Knowledge of MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of MyPlate Knowledge of Dietary Guidelines for Americans 					
Nutrition Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows key nutrition in prepared dish Knowledge of nutrient functions, effects, and deficiency risks Healthy substitutions and modifications 					
Food Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained key steps in how dish was prepared Role of main ingredients in dish 					
Safety Concerns and Practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained food safety according to Fight BAC 					
Serving Size Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated knowledge of serving size for prepared dish 					
Food Appearance/Quality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food is appealing and appetizing Appeared to be cooked properly Attractive and appropriate garnish 					
Creativity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used ingredients in a creative way Incorporated grocery store items into dish or garnish 					
Effectiveness of Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displayed effective communication skills Poise and personal appearance 					
Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately and appropriately answered questions 					
Additional Comments:					

District 3 4-H Food Challenge Guide

District 3 4-H Food Challenge Supply Box Certification Form

Team Name _____

The following is a list of supplies for a 4-H Food Challenge Supply Box. Teams may choose to have less than what is listed below, however, any additional items may not be included in the supply box.

Bench Scraper	Hand Sanitizer	Plastic Box or Trash Bag for Dirty Equipment
Cookie Cutters – (Up to 2)	Hot Pads (up to 5) <u>Intermediate and Sr. Division only</u>	Pot with Lid
Bowls (up to 4, any size)	Hot Plate (Two single-burner or One Double Burner, Electric Only) <u>Intermediate and Sr Division Only</u>	Potato Masher
Calculator	Kitchen Shears (1 pair)	Potato Peeler
Can Opener	Kitchen Timer	Rolling Pin
Colander	Knives (up to 6)	Sanitizing Wipes
Cutting Boards (up to 4)	Liquid Measuring Cup (2 cup size)	Serving Utensil/Dishes 1 plate/platter 1 bowl, 1 utensil
Disposable Tasting Spoons (no limit)	Manual Pencil Sharpener	Skillet with Lid <u>Intermediate and Sr. Division Only</u>
Dry Measuring Cups	Measuring Spoons (1 set)	Skewers
Electric Skillet <u>Intermediate and Sr. Division Only</u>	Meat Tenderizer	Spatulas (2)
Extension Cord – long/heavy duty <u>Intermediate and Sr Division Only</u>	Non-stick Cooking Spray	Stirring Spoon
First Aid Kit	Note Cards – 1 package (no larger than 5X7)	Storage Bags (1 box)
Food Thermometer <u>Intermediate and Sr. Division Only</u>	Paper Towels (1 roll)	Tongs (up to 2)
Fork	Pancake Turner (up to 2)	Toothpicks (no limit)
Gloves	Pencils (no limit)	Whisk
Grater	Pantry items (Int and Sr only) Refer to p. 6 for list of items	

Agent _____

County _____

Date _____