Good Morning Gator Nation!!!

WELCOME BACK!!!  With a new year comes a fresh start and a great number of fresh opportunities. More so than normal, we have a great deal going on, please allow us a second to catch everyone up:

* **New Teacher Welcome**
* **Ear Tag Order Deadlines**
* **Barn Construction Update**
* **Barn Contract Meetings (Important Application Link within)**
* **Barn Rules**
* **Barn Cleanliness**

**Activity Calendar**

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**New Teacher Welcome**

We are excited to announce that Ms. Alyson Ball, Ms. Lauren Murphy, and Mr. Lucas Edenfield have all joined the Dickinson FFA Family. You will be seeing some new faces around the halls and at the barn. Welcome to all of our new Advisors!

**Ear Tag Order Deadlines**

It is already that time of year. If you/your student are planning on showing at any Texas Major Show (Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Austin-Star of Texas, or San Angelo) You must order your animal’s ear tag on your own through the county extension website. Here are the respective deadlines, as well as a link to place your order.

Major show early tag orders for Spring 2024 sheep, goat, heifer, and now swine are all open. Please notice that swine tag order dates are different than the other species.

**ORDER** [**HERE**](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/galveston-county-2024-major-show-validation-heifer-sheep-goat-swine-tickets-685764659557)

Tag Order Deadlines:

Sheep/Goat/Heifer Early: **August 30**

Sheep/Goat/Heifer Late: **October 8**

Swine Early: **September 28**

Swine Late: **October 31**

Validation Dates:

Sheep/Goat/Heifer Validation: plan for the week of October 23-27

Swine Validation: plan for the week of November 27-30

Sheep/Goat:

* Sheep/goats validated during June 2023 WILL BE ELIGIBLE for 2024 Spring Major Shows. Market sheep/goats validated for the 2023 State Fair will carryover for 2024 Spring Major Shows. The validated animal MUST stay in the care of the exhibitor who validated it. If the exhibitor chooses to sell the project to a new exhibitor, the new exhibitor MUST REVALIDATE the project within the next validation period (October 2023).
* Previously Major Show validated breeding animals (registered, wether/commercial) do NOT need to be validated again UNLESS ownership has changed.
* **NEW: If a TGBA/TLBA tag is added, the animal must purchase a new tag and revalidate.**
* Original registration papers for breeding animals must be in exhibitor’s name by October 1, 2023.

Heifer:

* All Major Show heifers will now be tagged. Previously validated heifers will NOT be required to get tagged unless they have changed ownership or breed.
* Original registration papers must be in exhibitor’s name by November 1, 2023

Swine:

* Registered gilt registration papers must show ownership by November 30, 2023 and they must also be registered (litter registration, bottom left hand corner) by December 1, 2023.

<https://galveston.agrilife.org/4h/major-show/>

These dates have also been added to our FFA Activity calendar for your convenience. The calendar can always be accessed at: <https://dickinson.ffanow.org/AETcalendar.aspx?ID=72461> , or by visiting the Dickinson FFA Website and clicking here:

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**Barn Construction Update**

After speaking with our construction superintendent we have been advised that some very significant progress has and is being made on our Barn(s).

According to him the renovation in the new barn is at about 95% complete. There is some fire cabling, duct work, and fans left to work on before new pens are installed.

The new barn is at about a 70% completion rate. Its lacking the internal fire sprinkler system, some walls, and obviously pens and paint.

The projected completion date is 10/31. Good news, we should not have to move any of the arena penned cattle around anymore for electrical work, but please remain to be flexible if we are asked to do so.

We greatly appreciate everyone’s patience and candor through this time of construction. There have been some hardships, but we have no doubt that the good will far outweigh them once the facility is complete.

**Barn Contract Meetings**

We have already had a handful, and there are definitely more on the horizon. Please remember, Barn Contract Meetings are only scheduled once all requirements are met at the ESC. They will notify me that keys are ready for pick up, and I will contact you.

If you have submitted your application and are waiting, possible delays in processing are:

* Non-payment of stall fees
* Expired Background Checks

If you are needing to apply for admission into the barn, please do so by completing the following paperwork. This will go directly to Mrs. Schoen and get the process moving for you:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSda_vnc_KRMPzUvw4BFGx-Gu8h-Ul5G0kFnjNPbxDLQIrctgA/viewform>

**Barn Rules**

We have a recurring issue that cannot continue to happen. Everyone currently on a contract has been individually briefed, and those of you that do not yet have contracts will be at the time of your meeting:

No guests are allowed IN the barn facility. (Remaining in a car in the parking lot is acceptable, but only authorized are allowed within the barn facility.)

This means, anyone not in an exhibitor’s immediate family, and that is not on their barn contract. Do not bring friends from school, relatives not on contract, or members from other chapters under any circumstances unless there is documentation permitting this.

We do not wish to start the year off with discipline issues, but if this continues we will.

**Barn Cleanliness**

We have two major barn issues that need to be immediately addressed. Working with livestock in conjunction with the amount of construction activity we have going on is not easy, but we need to tighten up what we are doing when animals are out of their pens and when we are cleaning their pens.

1. We are starting to notice some trash ending up in the shavings bunk. THIS MUST STOP! Only old feed/shavings/and manure are allowed to be disposed of here. Keep twine, feed bags, and general trash out of the shavings bunk!
2. We have got to tighten up the cleaning up after your animal outside of its pen. Manure left in walkways, wash racks, scales, etc. must be cleaned up after. There is no excuse for leaving this behind.

Let’s do our respective parts and lumber through this last bit of construction until we can expand out into our new barns.

There is a great deal of information we will be pushing out over the coming weeks. We will try to keep this as concise and efficient as possible, but as always if there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out and let one of us know.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Have a great weekend, & Welcome Back!!!!

**GO GATORS!**

A cartoon of a crocodile

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Very Respectfully,

Mitch Robinson

Mitch Robinson

Ag. Teacher / Barn Manager

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“A farmer never plowed a field in his mind.”

~Unknown

**Mitch Robinson**

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