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## 2017 Middlesex County 4-H Fair Challenges

**BEEF CATTLE DEPARTMENT:** Educational Poster. Provide educational information about the care, raising or breeding of beef cows. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

**BEEF CATTLE DEPARTMENT:** Theme Poster "I love my beef cow" photo collage. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

**DAIRY CATTLE DEPARTMENT:** Educational Poster. Provide educational information about the care, raising or breeding of dairy cows. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

**DAIRY CATTLE DEPARTMENT:** Theme Poster "I love my dairy cow" photo collage. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

**DAIRY GOAT DEPARTMENT:** Barnyard Replica. Build a replica of your barnyard made of cardboard, wood or a material of your choice. Replica should be mounted to a board no larger than 2' by 2' and include buildings and animals.

**CRAFTS DEPARTMENT:** Use your creativity to transform Mason jars to a beautiful and useful item.

**DOG DEPARTMENT:** "My Dog's Eye". Photograph your dog's eye in a creative and artistic way. Showcase it's unique color, shape, or look. The photograph should be at least 75% the eye, leaving only about 25% background. Photographs can be color or black and white. They must be 4x6 in size and mounted on plain white poster board measuring 5x7. All Photographs should be in a clear plastic ziplock bag. Submit entries on Thursday night to the K-9 Tent area.

**DOG DEPARTMENT:** First Aid Kit. Create a usable first aid kit for your dog. The kit should have a sturdy carrying case and include: latex gloves, gauze pads, roll bandage, scissors, leash, thermometer, hydrogen peroxide, saline wash, styptic powder, emergency numbers (vet, owners), tweezers, band-aids, and triple-antibiotic ointment. Other useful items may be included. The 4-H member should also include a short, typed write up about how the different items in the kit can be used. The kit will be judged the contents and the carrying case along with the write-up about the contents. Submit entries on Thursday night to the K-9 Tent area.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS DEPARTMENT:** Create a poster proposing to the Department Chairmen next year's challenge lot that you'd like to see for the Environmental Department. Include topic title, why it relates to the environmental department & why you would like to see it as the Challenge Lot for 2018 and any other information you think is necessary.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS DEPARTMENT:** Fire – Friend or Foe: Managing Wildfires. Sometimes a controlled fire in a wild land is prescribed. Tell us how these controlled fires benefit both the wild and mankind. Use examples of both controlled burns and out of control fires and what happens with both. Include information on the increased danger of wild fires during a drought like we had last summer. Information is available at <http://www.nwcc.gov/> or at <http://www.symbols.gov/> and other places.

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**FLOWER DEPARTMENT:** Have you ever grown an avocado from seed? Planted a pineapple top and watched it grow? What about mangos? Lemons? Limes? Grapefruit? Would you like to try? Instead of throwing those seeds away, liven up your home and challenge your skills and patience – supermarket produce can be tricky to germinate.... Enter one plant grown exclusively by you from grocery store produce. No greenhouse plants here: let's have fun and see what we can grow. Open to any size plant, so if you have one you've already started, bring it in! Entries will be judged on health, cleanliness – *keep those pots clean!*, vigor, and general appeal. If you have any questions, please contact the Department Chair at [toweymarcia@yahoo.com](mailto:toweymarcia@yahoo.com).

**FOOD DEPARTMENT:** Drop Shortbread Cookies

2 sticks of butter at room temperature (no substitutes)  
¼ cup of sifted cornstarch  
½ cup of confectioners' sugar  
1 ½ cups of flour

Beat sugar, butter and cornstarch until it looks like whipped cream. Add flour ½ cup at a time. Beat until fluffy and light. Drop by teaspoon or roll in balls and push down top slightly on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

**FOOD PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT:** Apple-Maple Jam. Using the following recipe, preserve and exhibit 2 half-pint jars of Apple-Maple Jam:

|                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6 pounds mixed apples, chopped | ½ teaspoon allspice      |
| 6 cups sugar                   | ½ teaspoon nutmeg        |
| 1 cup maple syrup              | ½ teaspoon ginger        |
| ½ teaspoon cinnamon            | ½ teaspoon ground cloves |

Combine all ingredients in a large 8-quart pot. Bring to a boil over medium low heat. Stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves.

Cook rapidly over medium-high heat to gelling point (220 degrees F), stirring to prevent sticking. Remove from heat. Skim off foam if necessary.

Ladle hot jam into standard, clear canning jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Clean jar rim. Put on lid, screw band firmly tight.

Process half-pints for 10 minutes in a boiling-water bath.

Yield 8 half-pint jars

**HONEY AND BEEKEEPING DEPARTMENT:** Honey-Sweetened Almond Chocolate Chip Granola Bars. Chewy, no-bake, gluten-free granola bars made simply with oats, almonds, almond butter or peanut butter and chocolate chips. Using the following recipe, make and present your six best bars. Remember to attach a copy of the recipe to your entry.

|                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1¾ cups quick-cooking oats      | ½ teaspoon salt                      |
| 1⅓ cup sliced almonds           | 1 cup creamy almond or peanut butter |
| ⅔ cup mini dark chocolate chips | ½ cup honey                          |
| 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon      | 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract         |

Line an 8 to 9-inch square baker with two strips of crisscrossed parchment paper, cut to size. In a mixing bowl, combine the oats, almonds, chocolate chips, cinnamon and salt. Whisk to combine.

In a 2-cup liquid measuring cup, measure out the nut butter. Top with ½ cup honey and the vanilla extract. Whisk until well blended. If you must, you can gently warm the liquid mixture on the stovetop or in the microwave, but

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make sure it's cool before you pour it into the dry mixture (the chocolate chips will melt).

Pour the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients. Use a big spoon to mix them together until the two are evenly combined and no dry oats remain. The drier the mixture, the more firm the bars will be, so stir in extra oats if the mixture seems wet.

Transfer the mixture to the prepared square baker. Use your spoon to arrange the mixture fairly evenly in the baker, then use the bottom of a flat, round surface (like a short, sturdy drinking glass), covered in a small piece of parchment paper to pack the mixture down as firmly and evenly as possible.

Cover the bars and refrigerate for at least one hour, or overnight. Use a sharp knife to slice the bars. Bars keep well for a couple of days at room temperature, Yield: 14 to 16 bars.

**MAPLE DEPARTMENT:** Chewy Maple Bars. Using the following recipe, make and present your six best bars. Remember to attach a copy of the recipe to your entry.

|                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1/2 cup sugar             | 1/2 teaspoon baking powder |
| 1/2 cup shortening        | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 1/2 cup maple syrup       | 1 cup rolled oats          |
| 1 egg                     | 1 cup chopped walnuts      |
| 2/3 cup all-purpose flour |                            |

In a mixing bowl, cream sugar and shortening. Add syrup and egg and beat well. Combine flour and baking powder; add to creamed mixture. Add vanilla and mix well. Stir in oats and walnuts. Pour into a greased 9-in. square baking pan. Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes. Cut into squares while warm. Cool on a wire rack. Yield: 12 servings

**NEEDLEWORK DEPARTMENT:** Using any stitching technique(s), create an item that has a theme in the same amount of years as your age. (Example: If you are 13, create a pillow with 13 different flowers. If you are 17, create a framed picture with 17 different cross-stitched cats).

**NEEDLEWORK DEPARTMENT:** 12" hand-stitched 9-patch pillow using 2 different complementary fabrics. Pillow may be stuffed or a pillow-form may be used. Kits are available, as are written instructions, if you would like to use your own fabric.

**NEEDLEWORK DEPARTMENT:** Color Challenge. Create an item knitted or crocheted incorporating at least three different colors or three different shades of the same color.

**PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT:** Food Preparation and Cooking. Enter a **color** photo that you took that you believe would fit into this category. Show us your creative side! A single **color** photograph should be entered, following the rules specified in the Photography Department.

**POULTRY DEPARTMENT:** Raising a Buff Orpington pullet. If you are interested in this challenge lot, please contact John King at (978) 597-5804. You will raise 6 pullets and bring your best two to the fair. The Townsend Farmers Exchange is supplying the chicks at cost, to help support this challenge. Anyone who wishes to participate in this challenge must buy, raise and show them at the Fair, and they must be pre-ordered in early spring. The order for chicks will be delivered on March 2. Also please remember that birds need to be tested in order to go to the fair. Testing should be scheduled in June or July and can be set up with Ester Wegman at (617) 626-1795.

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**RABBIT AND CAVY DEPARTMENT:** Make a banner to be hung on the hay wagon during the fair to attract attendees to the Rabbit and Cavy Barn. Minimum banner size is 4' x 2' and maximum size is 6' x 3'. The banner should be made of fabric—no paper or poster board please. The banner must include a means for it to be attached securely to the hay wagon—grommets, ties, etc. The banner can be sewn or glued. Be sure it is sturdy enough to stand up to being attached to the side of the hay wagon as it bumps along the fairgrounds. What should be included? Whatever you think will make attendees want to come to our barn—rabbit races, pat a bunny/cavy, agility, etc.

**RABBIT AND CAVY DEPARTMENT:** Make an interactive exhibit to be used with the public to educate them about rabbits or cavies. The exhibit could be used during the fair or at a Pat A Bunny/Cavy event. The item should be sturdy and easy to store for multiple uses. Ideas include making a model showing the body parts of a rabbit or cavy, making a touch exhibit with a sample of fur, whiskers, teeth, etc. Think about what made you choose a rabbit or cavy as your pet, as this can be your inspiration for the challenge.

**SEWING DEPARTMENT:** Light It Up! Sew a small or larger project and add lights. You may use a battery pack with string lights or string your own LED lights. Sew a holiday wall hanging, purse, bracelet skirt or anything else you can imagine and insert the lights into small slits or eyelet buttonholes. Item should be able to be lit on entry. All sewing department rules apply.

**SWINE DEPARTMENT:** Educational Poster. Provide educational information about the care, raising or breeding of dairy cows. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters may be brought to the Swine Department on Thursday night, August 27 between 5:30 – 9:30 p.m. Posters will not be accepted at any other time. Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

**SWINE DEPARTMENT:** Theme Poster - "I love my swine" photo collage. Maximum poster size is 22" x 28". Posters may be brought to the Swine Department on Thursday night, August 27 between 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Posters will not be accepted at any other time. Posters will be judged during the course of the Fair as follows: information 40%, creativity 40%, neatness 10% and spelling 10%.

**WORKSHOP DEPARTMENT:** Build and finish a small occasional table for the side of a bed or sofa, approx. 17" in height, with a top between 10"x10" and 15"x15". It should be made of wood, and can be as basic or ornate as you would like. It could be more complex depending on the age/ability of the entrant. For example, a drawer and/or shelf could be added. A drawing of the design and a written description of the construction must be included in the entry. The entrant is strongly encouraged to apply a finish which would most certainly place the table at a higher ranking. For example, applying a varnish to create a smooth surface would bring out that natural grain of the wood, is one suggestion.

**CREATIVE WRITING DEPARTMENT:** Write a 50-word story. Write a story using 50 words or less. It must contain all of the elements of a short story. It must be one page, double-spaced, on 8½" x 11" white paper and in a folder with a clear cover. No illustrations. Choose your words carefully.

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