

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Goats and Kids: A 4-H Volunteer's Passion

Chevy Chase, MD – July 8, 2009 — As the saying goes, 'Everything is bigger in Texas', and one thing is certain, for 4-H volunteer Shawn Colvert, nothing is bigger than his passion for helping youth. For 15 years Colvert has been a dedicated 4-H volunteer. Living in Sterling City with his wife of 29 years, Laurie, Shawn's family interest began when Colvert's son, Shelby, now 22, exhibited market goats when he was a 4-H member.

That joy evolved into a lifetime commitment to the 4-H program. Colvert is involved in the 4-H Livestock Mentor Program, specializing in market goats. "The program consists of adults who are registered 4-H volunteers and have a clear interest in helping youth and families with their livestock projects," Colvert explained.

4-H volunteers from across the Lone Star state are expected to participate in the Texas 4-H Goat and Sheep Mentor Training Aug. 7-9, 2009 at the Tom Green 4-H Building at the San Angelo Research and Extension Center in San Angelo. The three-day program will provide leaders with a valuable set of resources from which to build and support families in their counties who are new to the goat and sheep project.

It was this same support that motivated Shawn to become involved in the 4-H goat mentor program. Shawn was influenced to become a 4-H volunteer himself when he was inspired by the community volunteers who selflessly shared their time and knowledge with local youth. "Volunteering for 4-H is a way that I can give other families what my family was given," he said.

Now a seasoned volunteer, Shawn believes that 4-H activities build character and are based on family involvement. "In my opinion, the livestock program is one of the best parts of 4-H," Colvert said. "It teaches responsibility, integrity, honesty. It also teaches young people skills they can use throughout the rest of their lives. People that youth meet at stock shows will be friends for life."

A huge part of Colvert's volunteerism includes livestock shows, according to Chad Coburn, Sterling County Extension Agent. "Shawn assists me with preparation of meat goats competing at all livestock shows in Texas including the State Fair of Texas, the Sandhills Stock Show in Odessa, the

Southwestern Livestock Exposition in Ft. Worth, the Houston Livestock Show and the Star of Texas Livestock Show in Austin,” Coburn said.

Colvert also serves as director of the Junior Meat Goat Show Circuit (JMGSC). The JMGSC is a major statewide organization that sponsors an award program for youth exhibiting meat goats.

“Shawn has become a tremendous help to me,” Coburn said. “He spends one-on-one time with families new to the meat goat project including selection, feeding, and showmanship. Shawn is a great volunteer because he readily offers his time to youth involved in the meat goat project. He goes above and beyond the duties and guidelines of the Livestock Mentor Program. Shawn is a very likable person who is easy to get along with and more importantly, he is honest, dependable and responsible.”

The Livestock Mentor Program has benefited thousands of volunteers in Texas. “The purpose of the program is to provide training for 4-H livestock project leaders, equipping them with a valuable set of resources and tools from which to build and support families enrolled in a livestock project,” Coburn said. “It provides project leaders like Shawn with two central themes of training: species-specific subject matter and youth and volunteer development.”

The Extension specialist believes the 4-H program offers a dynamic array of programs and possibilities for young people. “We need volunteers to make our programs the best youth character building activities in Texas,” he said. “As professionals, we take pride in training our volunteers with the most current research-based opportunities available. In return, they assist us in planning, conducting and evaluating our programs.”

It's that same strong belief the Extension agents have in their dedicated volunteers that Monsanto Company continues to recognize. Monsanto, a leading global provider of technology-based solutions and agricultural products that improve farm productivity and food quality, has continued its financial support of the National 4-H Volunteer Initiative. Colvert is just one of the 514,000 4-H volunteers who are committed to providing American youth with opportunities to learn leadership, citizenship and life skills.

“We are proud to support the dedication of 4-H volunteers across the country as they help youth become active citizens and community leaders,” said Ernesto Fajardo, vice president of Monsanto's U.S. Commercial division. “As a company 100 percent focused on agriculture, Monsanto is committed to investing in ag youth who represent the future of the agriculture industry.”

For more information about 4-H, go to [HYPERLINK "http://www.4-h.org/"](http://www.4-h.org/)www.4-h.org. For more information about the Texas 4-H Goat and Sheep Mentor Training Program in August, contact Charla Bading, Texas West Region Program Director for 4-H and Youth Development at 325-653-4576.

About National 4-H Council

4-H is a community of more than six million young people across America learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of National 4-H Headquarters (USDA). The 4-H programs are implemented by the 106 land-grant colleges and universities and the Cooperative Extension System through their 3,100 local Extension offices across the country. Learn more about 4-H at HYPERLINK "http://www.4-H.org"www.4-H.org.

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