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<https://lavaca.agrilife.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/LavacaCounty4H>

Lavaca County 4-H News



Friday, October 10, 2025

The County Office will be closed in observance of Columbus Day on Monday, October 13, 2025.

Big thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the BBQ this year. Special thanks to Mr. Travis Etzler who oversees all the logistics and got his team of cooks going in the very early hours of that morning and always sees it through to the end.

Shout Out to those who recorded public service announcements for National 4-H Week: Nathan Henke (Town Rounders), Ryan Janak, Ashlyn Pustka, and Tanner Pustka (Green Leaves), Tate Gonzales and Olivia Gonzales (Moulton), Jake Good (Half Moon), Lana Opela, Rylyn Orsak and Ava Shimek (Vysehrad). Let us know if you heard any of them on Texas Thunder this week!

Flickr Account

In an effort to share event pictures with our members, Natalie has created a Flickr Account to store albums. As albums are created, the links to the specific albums will be shared either here in this newsletter or sent directly to participants. **The links are not to be shared with others outside of our organization and the photos are only for your personal download for use in record books and personal photo albums.** Social media does a great job of telling the 4-H story but **DO NOT** post the pictures from these albums **unless you have permission from all of the people in the photos.** We have many 4-H families who for various and valid reasons have declined the media release. Please respect their wishes.

The Flickr account is a trial run to see if it could possibly be used for our county photography contest.

Links to albums:

PSA's and National 4-H Week Proclamation: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/195841551@N06/KD035w3287>

Food and Nutrition Project Workshop: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/195841551@N06/k4m5680DV7>

BBQ: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/195841551@N06/bdrE260ftR>

Big thanks to Sarah Collins for the BBQ photos!

Thank you to our parents and other adult volunteers who have enrolled in 4-H online. All adults who are going to be involved in 4-H activities need to enroll in 4-H online. There are two training videos to watch that address our youth protection standards and 4-H rules. Please take the time to complete these. Your enrollment is not complete until the training videos are completed and the background screening is approved. If you have enrolled, you can check to make sure your enrollment is complete by looking to the right of your name in the family profile. If you have not yet enrolled, county council will pay the \$10 registration fee for adult volunteers who select pay by check.

Shooting Sports Results

The fall shooting sports was a big success. Thank you to the leaders who make this happen twice year a year! There were 88 participants this time!

Beginner Rifle

Junior	Intermediate	Senior
1 st Place – Andrew Machacek	1 st Place – Claire Janak	1 st Place – Blake Robinson
2 nd Place – Kennedy Kusak	2 nd Place – Jaedyn Grahmann	
3 rd Place – Peyton Jansky	3 rd Place – Vivian Peck	
4 th Place – Ariel Muehr	4 th Place – Ty Pierce	
5 th Place – Brantley Grahmann	5 th Place – Caston Zudek	
6 th Place – Pyper Jasek		
7 th Place – Rachel Machacek		
8 th Place – Dakota Sevcik		
9 th Place – Bryson Langhoff		
10 th Place – Ty Henke		
11 th Place – Julie Haas		
12 th Place – Anton Keller		
13 th Place – Wyatt Kaspar		

Other Participants: Jordyn Haas, Ella Johnson, Eli Pierce, Tanner Johnston, Ellie Kedziora, Emmalee Pastucha, Axel Prasek, Jack Tieken, Gabrielle Woods, Liam Srala, Cody Robinson, Lila Armstrong, Rowan Armstrong, and Madeline Armstrong

Experienced Rifle

Junior	Intermediate	Senior
1 st Place – Tanner Rother	1 st Place – Jake Good	1 st Place – Darren Jurena
2 nd Place – Kassie Moeller	2 nd Place – Hillary Etzler	
3 rd Place – Brie Rother	3 rd Place – Hunger Moeller	
4 th Place – Axel Foerster	4 th Place – Gage Tobola	
5 th Place – Kolet Olsovsky	5 th Place – Ellasyn Klekar	
6 th Place – Hollis Parkinson		
7 th Place – Austin Kedziora		
8 th Place – Julianne Henke		
9 th Place – Blakely Hanslik		
10 th Place – Barrett Hinton		
11 th Place – Katniss Rother		
12 th Place – Tristan Collins		

Other Participants: Brie Bludau, Dillon Etzler, Bentley Jahn, **Jarrett Jansky**, Avery Knesek, **Levi Malina**, Henry Tieken, Ross Tieken, Tristan Hudson

Beginner Shotgun

Junior	Intermediate	Junior
1 st Place – Tate Gonzales	1 st Place – Ryan Kalmus	1 st Place – Hunter Jasek
2 nd Place – Jackson Johnson	2 nd Place – Cole Rainosek	2 nd Place – Olivia Gonzales
3 rd Place – Ace Leopold	3 rd Place – Nolan Moran	Intermediate
4 th Place – Thomas Kloesel	4 th Place – Brooklyn Michna	1 st Place – Cason Foerster
5 th Place – Andy Franklin	5 th Place – Jackson Roberts	2 nd Place – Ty Rother
	6 th Place – Collin Moran	3 rd Place – Sebastian Kloesel
	7 th Place – Heidi Rother	4 th Place – Khloe Olsovsky
		Senior
		1 st Place – Dylan Moeller
		2 nd Place – Kaylie Hotz

Return Shotgun

Other Participants: Caiden Roberts

Members whose names are in red have plaques and targets to be picked up in the office.
Names in green have targets at the office.

Chili Cook Off and Pet Parade Entry Forms are Due by 5:00 p.m. Today!

Fun Fair
Sunday, October 19
Hallettsville Youth Center

4-H is Family! Fun Fair is a day where we invite the families in Lavaca County to come learn about 4-H. It is an opportunity to bring members from all of the clubs together for a day focused on project activities and fun.

Talent Showcase
Bake Show
Hand Craft Contest
Bake Show
Club Chili Cook Off
Petting Zoo
Pet Dress Up Parade
Project Booths and
more!



Please sign up—we need everyone's help! Most jobs are small and the more help we have the more fun the day is for everyone. This day cannot happen without workers.



We need your help! (Enrolled Adults and Youth Members)
Sign up here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZWwZZpADP7mCZY9_IdCsQI2g39dhKcxajrovoAASteMa19A/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=113160902448211784469

Time Schedule/Tasks

12:00 - 12:15 Meet Natalie at the office at 12:00 if you can help her transport items from the office.
12:30 – 1:00 Set Up

- Tables for Project Booths
- Chili Cook Off teams will be told to bring their own tables
- Panels for petting zoo
- Bake Show and Hand Craft Tables
- Registration Table/ t-shirt sales
- Awards Table

1:00

- Chili Cook Off teams set up
- Petting Zoo Animals Arrive/Set Up
- Project Booths set

up
1:15 Chili Cook Off Begins

2:00 Doors Open
Talent Showcase, Bake Show, and Craft Show entries will be accepted until accepted until 2:30

3:00 Talent Showcase
performances 3:30 Pet Parade
4:00 Awards and Recognition All Events
4:00-4:45 Clean Up

Details for all contests including entry information is available at
<https://lavaca.agrilife.org/event/lavaca-county-4-h-fun-fair-2/>

Livestock Validations and Orders



Shiner Junior Livestock Show Rabbit Validation

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Ward Pavilion, Green Dickson Park

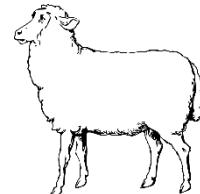
All Entries for Fort Worth Stock Show are due here by October 31

Shiner Junior Livestock Show

November 22, 2025

Kaspar Pavilion

Green Dickson Park



All Entries for Houston, Austin, San Antonio, San Angelo, and Elite are due here November 17.

This includes all contests (even non-animal) that take place at these shows.

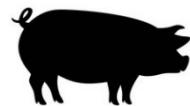
Major show and HJLS Swine validation

November 11, 2025

Expo Center 4-6 pm and

November 13, 2025

Expo Center 4-5:30 pm



HJLS halter heifers can be validated at any HJLS validation: November 11, or November 13

HJLS Entries Due December 1

Including \$10 entry fee and project record form



HJLS broiler distribution

December 12

Lavaca Expo Center

\$10 validation fee will be collected from each exhibitor at distribution

HJLS rabbit validation

December 16

Expo Center

5:00 – 6:00 p.

Quality Counts reminder:

All 4-H members **planning to show in a major show** must also have a current Quality Counts certificate. The test must be completed once in each age group Junior (3rd-5th grade), Intermediate (6th-8th grade) and Senior (9th -12th grade). Your Quality Counts number must be provided with your entry. Go to: <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/quality-counts/01t4x000008HBZdAAO>



2025 County 4-H Food Show and Food Challenge Entry Form

This form is **due by 8:00 a.m. on Monday, October 27, 2025**

Date Change

Contest: Saturday, November 1, 2025

Food Challenge will be held from 9:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Food Show will begin after lunch

Shiner Public School Cafeteria

A finalized schedule will be sent to participants once entries are received.

Name _____ Grade _____ Club _____

Email address _____

We will follow the District 11 Rules and Guidelines for County. Access the recipe form for food show and the rules and guidelines for both contests here: <https://d114-h.tamu.edu/events-and-contests/food-show-and-food-challenge/> and utilize the project resources to study and prepare for both contests on the state website at: <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition/>

Food Challenge: (teams that have both Juniors and Intermediates will compete as Intermediates. Senior teams may only have senior level members.)

I plan to participate in food challenge. **All members must complete a form.**

Team Name:

Other Members on Team:

I do not plan to participate in food challenge.

Food Show: (attach the required recipe form to this sheet)

I plan to participate in food show and have attached my required recipe form.

I do not plan to participate in food show.

I understand that I must be enrolled as an active member in Lavaca County 4-H and be academically eligible to participate in the county food show. I have the permission of my parent or guardian to participate and am responsible for arriving prepared.

Member Signature:

Parent Signature:

Opportunities You Don't Want to Miss !



SPARK!
Light Up Luau

Includes 4-H exploration, dancing, camp activities, and FUN!

- Hosted by Texas 4-H Council
- Camp for Junior & Intermediate 4-H Members
- November 7-9, 2025
- Held at Texas 4-H Center in Brownwood
- \$175 per participant
- Registration opened September 1st on the Texas 4-H Center website

SCAN ME

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Light Up Luau

Spark!

Spark is a weekend Junior Leadership Lab hosted by the Texas 4-H State 4-H Council and held at the Texas 4-H Center at Lake Brownwood.

The '25-'26 Texas 4-H Council will host "Light Up Luau" November 7-9, 2025. Registration is \$175/participant and closes on Monday, October 26, 2025! So don't delay. Get registered today!!!!

Lavaca County 4-H Council will reimburse you $\frac{1}{2}$ the fee with the correct paperwork submitted after attending, see the reimbursement policy.

We are also in needs of Chaperones for the event. Cost to chaperone is \$0. You will be housed in the dorm with the youth. Natalie will go, as well!

Click here for more information and for the registration link <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/events/spark/>

District Crossroads- Registration Due Today 11:59 P.M.

November 6-8, 2025 Sam Houston State University

<https://d114-h.tamu.edu/events-and-contests/crossroads/>

Crossroads is a three day/two night **career development** and youth leadership program to involve 8th - 12th grade youth in various projects that will expose them to various career and higher education opportunities.

Event Details In 2025, District 11 4-H Crossroads will be held at Sam Houston State University. Host Hotel: Best Western Premier in Bryan College Station Tx 1920 Austin's Colony PKWY, Bryan, Tx 77802 Event Fee Registration will be from September 28, 2025 to October 9, 2025. **The cost for Crossroads is \$200.00 for 4-H members and \$200.00 for adult leaders and County Extension Agents.** A late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed from October 10, 2025 – October 16, 2025, for youth participants. Late registrants may not receive a t-shirt. No refunds will be given!

Lavaca county will reimburse $\frac{1}{2}$ youth and adult chaperones the full registration with the correct reimbursement forms submitted.

Texas 4-H Center

TEEN RETREAT



CAMP INTO THE NEW YEAR!

Jan. 2nd-4th \$175 Per Camper

FRESHMAN TO SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL



New year, new memories, and a whole lot of fun! Discover team building, leadership, and outdoor adventure through archery, kayaking, high ropes, and a color run!



REGISTRATION
OPENS
OCTOBER 9TH,
2025

Contact
(325) 784-5482
makayla.waiser@ag.tamu.edu



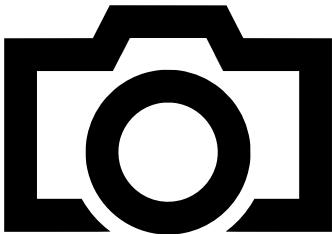
SCAN TO
REGISTER!

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.

Natalie hopes to take a group and other adult chaperones are welcome. The County Reimbursement policy allows for $\frac{1}{2}$ the participant fee and 100% adult chaperone fee to be reimbursed.

Let her know if you want to attend!

Photography



The photography project is one of the easiest projects to get involved with in 4-H. We will have a countywide workshop later this fall (typically during Christmas break). We have a county contest that is digital submission. The rules and guidelines will be released by the end of the year, but will follow the state guidelines that have already been released. You can find the categories and other rules here:

<https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/photography/>

Our county contest has four age groups: Clover, Junior, Intermediate, and Senior. Clover entries are exhibition only. Junior and Intermediate first place winners advance to our district competition. First place senior winners advance to state. Clover, Junior and Intermediate entries will be due the beginning of February. Senior entries will not be due until some time in March.

The link above also has information on photography judging and the leadership opportunities that are available. There is a separate natural resources fall contest that is statewide. The link is not currently there to the rules but the rules should be released soon, as it is usually a December 1st deadline.

If you have not watched the video of the 2025 county photography contest you can view it here: <https://youtu.be/rYisqvfjEPk>

Record Books

(It is important to understand record books are not the report forms or books your stock shows require you to submit.)

There have been changes made to the 4-H Record Book.

The 2025-2026 Texas 4-H Record Book Family Guide is now available. You will notice a few changes to the record book format for this coming year. Recordkeeping is one of the most valuable life skills taught in the Texas 4-H program. Members are encouraged to keep project records throughout the year and review them annually by completing a Texas 4-H Record Book. The primary purpose of a Record Book is to help youth learn how to set goals, work toward them, reflect on their progress, and then set new and higher goals for the future. A secondary benefit is preparing young people for real-world applications such as academic scholarships, college admissions, and even job opportunities. This secondary benefit is the reason for the changes you will see in the new format.

See the last newsletter for a complete list of the major changes. The family guide, forms and other resources are available at <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/recordbooks/>

Additionally, the record book corner will return to this newsletter in October providing section by section tips. Also watch for Natalie to schedule a training this fall.

Consumer Decision Making

2025 Guadalupe County 4-H Consumer Decision Making Contest to be held Friday, October 24, 2025 at the Country Church in Marion, Tx. The deadline to register is October 20. Cost is \$40 per team. If you are interested in taking a team, please contact Natalie.kneseck@ag.tamu.edu before the deadline. Materials for CDM can be found at <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/consumer-education/>

Club Meeting Information

- Hallettsville Town Rounders 4-H Club Meets 3rd Sunday of each month at 5:00 p.m. Lillie Johnson Appelt Youth Center – Hallettsville CONTACT: Sheila Henke – 979-578-1585 Chris Henke – 979-578-1760
- Hope 4-H Club Meets 2nd Sunday of each month at 4:00 p.m. Hope Community Center CONTACT: Amy Jalufka – 361-772-0142 Lacy Mata – 361-648-5992 Erin Marshall – 830-857-5881
- Green Leaves 4-H Club Meets 3rd Sunday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Lillie Johnson Appelt Youth Center – Hallettsville CONTACT: Karen Janak – 361-798-6898
- Lavaca River Oaks 4-H Club Meets 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Lillie Johnson Appelt Youth Center – Hallettsville CONTACT: Clayton Wimberly – 361-293-8417
- Lucky H 4-H Club Meets 3rd Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Hall of Fame Room at the K.C. Hall – Hallettsville CONTACT: Brooke Meinkowsky – 361-772-4206
- Moulton 4-H Club Meets 3rd Wednesday of each month at 3:45 p.m. Zion Lutheran Church CONTACT: Claudia Gonzales – 979-777-5740 Robin Stewart – 618-340-5821
- Shiner 4-H club Meets 2rd Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Fire Station Meeting Room CONTACT: Lauren Bowman – 361-246-8015
- Half Moon 4-H Club Meets 2nd Sunday of each month at 6:00 p.m. United Lutheran Church of Shiner CONTACT: Stacy Miller – 512-413-8370 Jennifer Garcia – 512-878-7274
- Vysehrad 4-H Club Meets 3rd Sunday of each month at 5:00 p.m. St. Mary's Catholic Church Pavilion CONTACT: Sara Lynn Opela – 361-772-0722
- Sweet Home 4-H Club Meets 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Sweet Home Hall CONTACT: Christy Brosch – 361-772-7166
- Shooting Sports Project Group Meeting times vary Appelt's Hill Gun Club CONTACT: Phil Guenther – 979-562-2124

Having a club meeting, project group, or activity? Please designate one person, adult or youth over the age of 13, to complete the survey using the QR code each time you have a meeting. This is quick and can be done before you ever leave the meeting. **This helps us tell our story to those who help fund 4-H.**





TEXAS 4-H OUTDOOR CHALLENGE DISCOVERY EVENT

NOVEMBER 11, 2025

Come participate to:

- Discover more about the 4-H Outdoor Challenge and how it works
- Prepare yourself to take on the larger 10-event 4-H Outdoor Challenge Contest held every June
- Compete in events including Air Riflery, Archery, Biologist Skills, Off-Road Biking, and Outdoor Skills



THE NATURE CONSERVANCY DAVIS MOUNTAINS PRESERVE, JEFF DAVIS COUNTY

Registration open September 29 -October 27 via 4-H Online

The Texas 4-H Outdoor Challenge Discovery Event is hosted by District 6 4-H and open to all Texas 4-H Members.

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife <http://agrilifeas.tamu.edu/hr/diversity/equal-opportunity-educational-programs/>

4-H AI in AG Challenge:

The challenge opens October 1 and closes November 15, 2025.

Open to youth innovators nationwide, this challenge combines STEM creativity, real-world problem solving, and the future of agriculture.

Together, let's imagine how artificial intelligence can grow a brighter future for agriculture.

<Https://events.projectboard.world/4HALinAg>

This fall's prompt is:

“How can AI help solve problems in agriculture?”

From improving crop yields and reducing food waste to supporting sustainability and innovation, the possibilities are endless, and we want to hear YOUR ideas!

The portal for entries will be open from October 1 – November 15.

Winners will be announced during Computer Science week, the second week of December. Two Categories of 13-15 year olds and 16-18 year olds will be used.

Awards in each category for the top winners will be

First \$500

Second \$400

Third \$300

Attention High School Seniors!

Congratulations on reaching your senior year! Be on the look out for emails sent from Natalie about scholarship opportunities. She will be attending a training next week that is specific to the Texas 4-H Opportunity Scholarship and the first of the scholarship emails will be sent out some time after she completes that training.

A few applications that you will want to start considering:

- Texas 4-H Opportunity Scholarship
- Lavaca County Extension Education Scholarship
- Texas Extension Education Association Scholarship (last year's recordbook required)
- Lavaca County 4-H (recordbooks from previous two years required)
- Go Texan

Details on each of these scholarships along with others that are shared with me will be sent to you as they become available.

Project Help and the People in the Office

Please help us in welcoming Lauren Loos to the County Extension Office. Lauren is training to be the office manager when Jennifer Steffek retires at the end of the year.

Jennifer Steffek has been the office manager for 25 years. She knows the ins and outs of everything. Do no hesitate to ask her your questions.

Natalie Knesek is the County Extension Agent-Family and Community Health and 4-H Coordinator for Lavaca County. She oversees the family and consumer sciences related activities, approves 4-H enrollments and registrations, oversees management of clubs and volunteers, and shares project responsibilities for STEM and Leadership/Citizenship with Shannon DeForest.

Shannon DeForest is the County Extension Agent -Ag and Natural Resources and oversees the projects related to both agriculture and natural resources including Shooting Sports.

Please do not hesitate to ask for help with your projects. If you go somewhere or do something 4-H related that does not require registration through 4-H online we often do not hear about it. Please be sure to tell us where you are going and what you are doing and let us know how we can support you.

Some Basic Information for our New Members

Lavaca County 4-H is part of District 11 4-H.

There are 12 districts in Texas 4-H. District 11 4-H includes:

Austin, Washington, Fayette, Wharton, Jackson, Lavaca, DeWitt, Karnes, Bee, Refugio, Goliad, San Patricio, Nueces, Aransas, Colorado, Victoria, Calhoun, and Matagorda Counties.

In 4-H we have three age divisions: Junior 3rd-5th grade (and at least 8 years of age)

Intermediate 6th-8th grade

High School 9th-12th grade (until 19 years of age)

We have educational opportunities for Clover Kids as well. Clover Kids are in K-2.

Natalie and Shannon have adjunct faculty agreements with all of the schools in Lavaca County enabling our youth to participate in events in accordance with UIL as extracurricular activities. In order to receive an excused absence you must have pre-approval and must meet your school's guidelines and have their approval. This process begins with your request in our office.

Reminder About Fundraising

Clubs and 4-H project groups are required to submit the appropriate fundraising request form in advance of doing any fundraising on behalf of their local or county group. This helps us coordinate efforts and not conflict with others. We have many, many wonderful supporters of the 4-H program in Lavaca County and we want to make sure that we do not ask the same groups/businesses/etc. over and over. Please request the fundraising form from your club manager or Natalie.knesek@ag.tamu.edu. This needs to be approved prior to any fundraising efforts.

There are LOTS of opportunities that do not get included in this newsletter. Make sure you are also reading the weekly email from Texas 4-H and following Texas 4-H on social media so you do not miss out. There is just more than we can possibly keep up with and share. If you participate in something, please send us a picture or two and let us know what you learned and what you did so we can spotlight you in this newsletter or on our Facebook.

How to say the 4-H Motto and Pledge

Always begin with the motto by saying

"In support of the 4-H club motto, 'To make the best better'
I pledge my **HEAD** to clearer thinking,

My **HEART** to greater
loyalty, My **HANDS** to
larger service, and

My **HEALTH** to better living,
For my club, my community, my country, and my world."



The 4-H Prayer

"Help Me, O' Lord, to live so that the world may be a little
better because thou didst make me. Amen."

Reimbursement Policy

Our county council has funds designated to reimburse youth and adult chaperones who participate in events representing Lavaca County in District and State 4-H contests and leadership workshops. The policy and form to submit for reimbursement requests is available on our county website:

<https://lavaca.agrilife.org/files/2024/01/Lavaca-County-4-H-Reimbursement-Policy-and-Forms.pdf>

**County Council
Monday, November 3
7:00 p.m.
Location TBA**

Enrollment Fees increase to \$30 after October 31, 2025. If you have had your payment bounce back at you or if you paid by check and it is not received by the Texas 4-H program by the 31st, your fees will increase. You can check your member status next to your name in your profile. Email Natalie.kneseck@ag.tamu.edu with questions.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in any Extension activity, are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office (361)798-2221 to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.