

## LEOTA HALLYBURTON – BENTON COUNTY

Leota started her 4-H journey when she was eight years old, as a member in a Home Economics club participating in cooking, sewing, knitting, canning and other home management projects. Her mother and grandmother were the club leaders, impressing upon her at an early age the importance of adults in the 4-H program. She exhibited at county fair, then added a market steer project, so that she could spend even more time at the fair every year! After high school, Leota attended Oregon State University, majoring in Animal Science, and even took the extension methods courses with the intention of becoming a County Extension Agent. Upon her graduation from OSU, while still living in Corvallis, her friend who was the local 4-H agent asked her to take over a livestock club. She did so, learning about 4-H Sheep and Swine projects 'on the job.'

After several years away from 4-H, Leota returned when her oldest daughter was old enough to join. She joined the Reata Riders, in Kennewick, Washington, which was her first exposure to the 4-H Horse Project. The next year, she took extension office Project Leader Training, later joining the Fur-Ever Friends 4-H Club. After a few years, she became club leader in addition to being a project leader for Horses, Foods, Aerospace, Food Preservation, Photography, and Vet Science. She has been the Horse Department Superintendent for the Benton Franklin Fair since 2010. She has continued to be a guiding light to the project, determined to be a fair, even handed guide to the youth of the Horse Department. Leota has encouraged horse leaders by providing them opportunities to contribute to the success of the Horse Department at the Benton-Franklin Fair. She always listens to what an adult or youth has to say, encouraging them to grow and become more confident, responsible individuals. She never tells a child what they think they should do, but asks, allowing them to have ownership over their decision-making. She believes in following a scientific approach in engaging youth and animal projects. After thirty years' involvement with 4-H, Leota continues to be open-minded and adaptive to 4-H as it changes with the times, while many leaders may have been 'set in their ways.'

In 2003, Leota was the Vice President of the 4-H County Council; during a time where there was not a lot of support for the council by the 4-H leaders, she remained passionately engaged. She advocated for youth service on the board, and initiated Youth Adult Partnerships in Benton-Franklin 4-H. She has volunteered to work on the bylaws committee multiple times, helped develop a photography contest, and helped revamp the scholarship application process. She also developed guidelines to encourage club attendance at county council meetings by making certain awards contingent on the club having good attendance at the meetings. At county council, she is always available to help develop the organization as needed, often first to offer resources as they are needed. She encourages youth to vote at county council meetings and ensures that they are well aware of why parliamentary procedure is important. Leota has also been recognized as the Benton County Leader of the Year multiple times Leota may be the most diverse and invested 4-H Leader that Benton-Franklin 4-H has ever had. There is not a community service day, community learning day, or workday that the 4-H program puts on where she is not available and ready to serve. She has a great sense of community and works well to make sure all youth feel included and welcomed,