



Critter Crew Membership Handbook

Dear Critter Crew Members and Families,

Thank you for participating in Critter Crew, where members gain hands-on experience in animal care, agriculture, and education. This program allows youth ages 8 to 18 to develop valuable skills, work alongside staff, and interact with visitors as agriculture ambassadors.

This handbook provides important information regarding membership guidelines, safety protocols, animal care procedures, and farm operations. Parents and members should review this document carefully to ensure a successful and enjoyable experience at Critter Barn.

Program Overview

Critter Crew is designed to teach responsibility, teamwork, and leadership through real-life farm experiences. Members will:

- Care for farm animals
 - Learn and apply safety protocols
 - Participate in on-the-job training
 - Assist in guest interactions and education
 - Gain exposure to the 4-H program, classes, and farm tours
 - Use our animal management software, **Farmbrite** (www.farmbrite.com)
-

Critter Crew Philosophy

LEARN / DO / TEACH

Golden Rule

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Treat animals as you would want to be treated”

Membership

- Critter Crew is open to youth ages 8-18.
- An annual membership fee is required to help sustain the program (first year is included in Critter Camp tuition).

Registration

- To register, visit www.critterbarn.org, click **GET INVOLVED > CRITTER CREW > Shift Sign-Up**.
 - Members must register for shifts online before arriving. No walk-ins.
-

Critter Crew Shift Schedule

Tuesday - Saturday:

- **8:00 AM - 11:30 AM:** 10 Crew Members
- **12:00 PM - 3:00 PM:** 8 Crew Members
- **3:00 PM - 6:00 PM:** 10 Crew Members

Blue & **Red** shirts may sign up for **one shift per week**.

Orange shirts may sign up for **two shifts per week**.

Check-in & Pick-up:

- Drop-off and pick-up are at the Welcome Desk inside the white hoop barn next to the parking lot.
- Parents/guardians must park and check in/out their child for each shift.

School-Year Scheduling:

- Opportunities are available year-round.
 - Homeschool students may participate during daytime hours.
-

Dress Code

- **Uniform:** Always wear your Critter Barn logo shirt or sweatshirt.
- **Bottoms:** Solid black, khaki, or dark-colored pants or jeans (no patterns).

- **Shorts:** Must be modest and appropriate—at least a 5" inseam or reaching your fingertips.
 - **Materials:** No leggings or pants made of thin fabrics.
 - **Footwear:** Wear tennis shoes or work boots—no open-toed shoes.
 - **Weather:** Dress appropriately for the weather. Bring coats, gloves, hats, etc., as needed. We will complete chores outside regardless of conditions.
-

Advancing in Critter Crew

Milestone Alert:

- After completing **20 hours of service**, members earn a **RED shirt!**
 - Shirt color changes signify additional training and responsibilities.
 - Members track their hours using the “chick paper” provided at registration.
 - Students who are a Critter Crew member for 2+ years, come often, are helpful, and good role models can be promoted by our staff for their **Orange shirt!**
-

Farm Rules & Safety Guidelines

- Follow all staff instructions at all times.
 - Proper farm attire is required: closed-toe shoes, Critter Crew shirts, and weather-appropriate clothing.
 - Always wash hands after handling animals.
 - Never enter an animal enclosure without permission.
 - Treat all animals with kindness and respect.
 - Be courteous and helpful to guests; you are an **Agriculture Ambassador!**
 - Report any injuries or unsafe conditions to staff immediately.
-

Personal Details

- **Hydration:** Stay hydrated—bring water! Snacks are welcome but not required.
 - **Cell Phones:** Please leave your phone with your parents or store it with your belongings during your shift. We encourage you to fully disconnect while working. A working phone is available in each barn for communication with parents or in emergencies.
 - **Check-In/Out:** Drop-off and pick-up take place at the Welcome Desk inside the white hoop barn next to the parking lot. Parents/Guardians are required to park and walk in for check-in and check-out at each shift.
-

Farm Phone System

Phones are available in:

- The office
 - The Welcome Center
 - Small animal barn feed room
 - Large animal barn feed room
 - For emergencies or assistance, call **616-748-1110**.
-

Additional Educational Opportunities

Critter Crew members may participate in our 4-H program, advanced farm classes, community field trips and speakers, and earn mini certifications. These activities allow members to:

- Gain leadership and educational experience
- Learn about agriculture and livestock management
- Prepare for future careers in farming, animal care, or education

For more information about **4-H involvement**, ask a staff member!

Get Involved!

Critter Crew members are encouraged to be active farm advocates! Share your experience with family and friends, attend special events, and invite others to visit Critter Barn.

Final Reminders


- **Parents:** Review these rules with your child.
- **Members:** Be respectful, responsible, and ready to learn!
- **Stay connected:** Visit www.critterbarn.org for updates.


We are excited to have you as part of the Critter Crew Family!

Contact Information


For any questions, please contact:

Makayla Brewer - Programming Coordinator

 616-748-1110 ext. 100


 volunteer@critterbarn.org

Tony McCaul - Executive Director

 616-748-1110 ext. 105

 tony@critterbarn.org

Ian Klaes - Livestock Operations Coordinator

 616-748-1110 ext. 102

 ian@critterbarn.org