



4-H In Fairs

Fairs are an opportunity for Iowa's most valuable resource — PEOPLE — to have a unique 4-H learning experience.

1. Fairs provide 4-H'ers an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned. This represents an educational function in which the 4-H'er can share what they have done and serves to strengthen their life skill development.
2. Fairs provide feedback on 4-H'ers accomplishments. This recognition opportunity stimulates positive self-regard for their efforts.
3. Fairs provide families a chance to work together. This fellowship opportunity helps strengthen family relationships.
4. Fairs also provide an opportunity for the public to see 4-H in action. This showcasing opportunity serves to help our external audiences better understand what 4-H'ers are able to achieve.

In the fair setting, a 4-H'ers learning can be enhanced in the exhibit evaluation process through **Education, Evaluation and Encouragement**. Since 4-H focuses on youth, the growth and learning of each individual is more important than the outcome of a competitive event, product, article, or animal exhibited. Exhibits and fair activities should provide an opportunity for youth in all types of 4-H clubs and groups to **educate** others about what they have learned by being involved in 4-H. Our challenge is to merge the traditional orientation of fairs (products, livestock and competitive events) with 4-H's commitment to the individual growth and life skill development of youth.

In the past we've given much of our attention to the competitive activities that identify a "champion". This type of activity is important, but is only one of the ways 4-H'ers compete at a county fair. The **evaluation** process of a 4-H fair exhibit, presentation, working exhibit, share-the-fun, judging contest, etc. helps youth to measure their progress toward accomplishing their goals and against accepted standards of excellence. Each experience can **encourage** and inspire 4-H'ers to expand their project interest and activity.

Fairs and 4-H both have a rich heritage and tradition in Iowa. Fairs provide a powerful motivation to youth and adults to participate and excel in their selected areas of interest. However, plans for fairs should be flexible to allow change to meet the needs of Iowa's youth, families and communities. With leadership by Extension staff, judges, and volunteers, our 4-H mission "to create supportive environments for culturally diverse youth and adults to reach their full potential" can be accomplished, if needed. Help 4-H accept this challenge for change as we move forward.

4-H Objectives for the Iowa State Fair

For 4-H'ers:

- To provide a setting that encourages 4-H'ers to further demonstrate, learn, and apply practical and university researched methods of production, management, and/or marketing of their 4-H accomplishments.
- To assist in the continuing life skill development of 4-H'ers in the areas of self concept, communication, decision making, learning how to learn, coping with change, citizenship, and leadership.
- To provide an opportunity for 4-H'ers to measure their progress and skills against individual goals and accepted standards.
- To provide an opportunity for 4-H'ers to participate in a variety of program opportunities beyond the county level.
- To provide an opportunity for 4-H'ers to gain personal satisfaction, meet new people, share ideas and learn to work cooperatively with others.

For Public:

- To create an updated, comprehensive image of Iowa's 4-H Youth Development Program.
- To provide a showcase for accomplishments of 4-H'ers.
- To stimulate interest and learn new ideas from the variety of 4-H projects and experiences available.

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