

How do I prepare for exhibition at fair?

1. Begin by thinking early about how your 4-H experience can best be represented in the form of an exhibit. Remember, the exhibit you take to the fair is just a product that represents the process that makes 4-H a youth development experience. There are literally hundreds of 4-H exhibits at the fair each year in many different classes.
2. In May, you will receive a fairbook in the mail. This fairbook outlines the rules and guidelines for participation in the county fair. Remember to read the general rules for exhibition as well as the specific rules for the class(es) you plan to exhibit in. For example, if you would like to refinish a dresser to exhibit at fair, look under “Home Improvement.” There are several choices of classes under the category of “Home Improvement,” but the class for refinished furniture is 531B. If you composed a song that you would like to be judged at the fair, look in the fairbook under “Personal Development.” The class for music is 871A.
3. 4-H judges look for evidence of the process a 4-Her went through to plan, carry out and reflect on their project. A written explanation, an audio cassette (less than five minutes), or video tape (less than five minutes) is to be included as part of each exhibit. The exhibitor must respond briefly to the following questions about the exhibit:
 1. What was your exhibit goal(s)?
 2. How did you go about working toward your goal(s)?
 3. What were the most important things you learned as you worked toward your goal?
 4. What would you like to do in this project area next year?

Exhibitors may use pre-printed half sheets provided by club leaders, but may not use record book forms as a goal sheet.

It is **recommended** that exhibitors consider a notebook or report with the following information:

- What was your exhibit goal(s)?
- How did you go about working toward your goal(s)?
- What steps did you take?
- What materials did you use?
- What was the cost of this exhibit? Compare the price of your exhibit to the cost if you purchased this exhibit.
- Consider attaching labeled photos of each step in the development of your exhibit.
- What were the most important things you learned as you worked toward your goal?
- What would you like to do in this project area next year?

Be sure to check for additional requirements in exhibit classes in food and nutrition, home improvement, photography, clothing and visual arts.

Many 4-Hers type their report and print it on the computer. Then they put it in a report cover. Be sure to proofread your report for spelling and grammatical errors before you print your final draft.

Instead of a report, 4-Hers can also complete an [exhibit goal form](#). This is a shortened version of an exhibit report.

4. To ensure that we can identify your exhibit in case it gets separated from you or your club booth, each exhibit should have an entry tag securely attached with tape or string. [Junior tags](#) are white, [Intermediate tags](#) are yellow and [Senior tags](#) are green.
5. Some kinds of exhibits have [special tags](#). Be sure to ensure you have the correct kind of tag attached to your exhibit.

I don't know what class an exhibit should go in. What should I do?

Most of the time, there is no one right class in which to put an exhibit. Many items can be put in more than one class depending on how a 4-Her would like the exhibit to be judged. For example, say a 4-Her sewed a pillow. He or she could put it in class 531D. Then the pillow would be judged according to the construction of the pillow, and the report or [goal form](#) completed by the 4-Her should include information regarding the construction of the pillow. On the other hand, if the 4-Her created the pillow with a particular design and fabric to match a particular room arrangement, he or she could put it in class 531A. Then the pillow would be judged according to the way the pillow fits into the design of the room, and the report or [goal form](#) completed by the 4-Her should include information regarding its design. If you have questions about where to put an exhibit, contact the Extension office and we can help you decide.

What can I expect on judging day at fair?

At the front of the fairbook there is a schedule of when each club is scheduled to be judged. Please come to the 4-H building during your club's designated time.

When you come into the building, your club booth will have a sign on it. You can put your exhibits there. Be sure to pick up a [white judging sheet](#). On the left side of the [judging sheet](#) is a column for you to write the class number of each exhibit you are having judged. Be sure to put the name of the exhibit next to it.

In Scott County, we use conference judging. Conference judging is when the 4-Her sits down with the judge and talks with them for a few minutes about the exhibit, what their goals were, what they learned, what they did well and what they could do differently next time. Conference judging provides one-on-one opportunities for learning.

Take your [judging sheet](#) and the exhibit(s) you would like judged to the table of the judge who judges that type of exhibit. When you are finished being judged the judge or his/her helper will mark the color of ribbon you received on your [judging sheet](#). Then the judges' helper will put a ribbon on your exhibit. You should place exhibits that are finished being judged back in your

club's booth for arrangement on Monday. At the end of the day, it is very important to turn your [judging sheet](#) in. Watch for signs about where to do this.

What do the ribbons mean?

4-H uses the Danish system of judging. Blue ribbons mean that the exhibit meets or exceeds standards in all areas. Red ribbons mean that the exhibit meets or exceeds standards in some areas, but needs improvement in some areas. White ribbons mean that the exhibit needs improvement in all areas. In Scott County, Junior classes may receive three Champions and three Reserve Champions per class. Intermediate classes may receive two Champions and two Reserve Champions per class. Senior classes may receive one Champion and one Reserve Champion per class. Other possible awards include Special Award and Honorable Mention.

What does it mean to be considered or chosen for state fair?

Each county in Iowa is allotted a specific number of exhibits that can be exhibited at the Iowa State Fair. Judges choose these exhibits based on their type, quality and learning experience. Only 4-Hers who have completed the fifth grade are eligible for state fair. While there may be some exhibits that are chosen as both county champions and for exhibition at state fair, there is no relationship between the two honors. Champion and reserve champions are part of the Danish judging system, while state fair selection is based on a state quota system.

What if I don't like the way I was judged?

When you bring an exhibit to the fair, you are asking for the judge's evaluation of that exhibit and the judge's evaluation of your learning experience. Sometimes you will agree with the judge's assessment and sometimes you won't. For example, say you decided to bring chocolate chip cookies to the fair. The recipe you used is for soft chocolate chip cookies. You take your cookies to a judge and didn't receive the response from the judge that you expected because that judge prefers crunchy chocolate chip cookies. Neither you nor the judge is right or wrong – it is simply a matter of preference. At the same time, judges should ask questions and give constructive ideas about how to improve an exhibit. Remember that you do not need to bring exhibits to the fair in order to participate in 4-H. Exhibition at fair is just one part of the experience of 4-H.