
WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF 4-H!

Opportunities for 4-H Members



Key Ideas

Club Activities

- Social events
- Community service learning
- Recognition activities

County Activities

- Project workshops
- Contests-Judging, Share-the-Fun, Fashion Revue
- Presentations
- International Four-H Youth Exchange
- County fair
- 4-H summer camp

Beyond the County

- Citizenship Washington Focus
- National 4-H Conference
- National 4-H Congress

State 4-H activities

- 4-H Youth Conference
- State Fair
- State Council
- Shooting Sports Qualifying Match
- Clover Woods
- Scholarships
- State Recognition

Dear Volunteer,

Now that you've had several club meetings and the members are excited about their project work, you'd probably like to know about the many 4-H activities available to your members.

Club activities

In addition to regular meetings, field trips, and special activity days, some clubs also plan social events such as family potluck dinners, picnics, swimming parties, trail rides, and campouts. The county 4-H volunteer meetings, newsletter, and county calendar on the website will give you information regarding upcoming county activities-- read it carefully and share it with your 4-H members.

One 4-H goal is to help members become caring citizens of their communities. Therefore, every club is encouraged to work on a community service learning project of its choosing that supports their community. Some clubs work on environmental projects like cleaning up trash, planting flowers and shrubs, building and maintaining nature paths, or hosting and teaching special events for young children. As your club members grow and mature, they may decide on a long-term community service learning project, such as monitoring a section of stream for water quality, to be developed or repeated over several years. There is a training module designed for volunteers to learn more about all aspects of community service learning.

Many clubs have a special family activity during the 4-H year. This might be to install new officers, recognize 4-H member achievements, or show appreciation to parents. Usually families and friends are invited, giving the club members an opportunity to explain the club activities and goals.



County activities

During the 4-H year, each county has many activities in which you and your members are encouraged to participate. It's helpful to know what these are at the beginning of the year so you can plan accordingly.

Project Workshops

Many counties schedule workshops in various project areas (such as visual arts, science, horse clinics, dog obedience trainings, large animal clinics, small animal workshops, fishing, and natural resources workshops). Sometimes these are also offered in neighboring counties, or on a regional or statewide basis.

Contests

Regularly scheduled 4-H contests include 4-H communication presentations, fashion revues, animal shows, and others. Find out from your county Extension staff of what contests are held in your county. These contests provide educational opportunities for both 4-H members and volunteers. Many 4-H members find that competition motivates them to "make the best better."

Judging Contests

These are contests in which an individual 4-H member or team evaluates classes of three or four items each and ranks them from the highest quality to the lowest quality. Your county may have judging contests in the following areas: dairy cattle, dairy goat, meat animal, dog, horse, clothing, and foods. Some judging contests take place on a statewide basis. The 4-H member/team is almost always asked to support his or her decisions by giving either written or oral reasons for the placings.

Presentations

These are short informative talks or demonstrations given by 4-H members on any topic they choose. They can be given first to a member's own club, then at public gatherings, and finally at the county 4-H communication contest. The contest has separate classes for juniors, intermediates, and seniors. County winners who are 5th grade and older may be selected for state fair. The younger a 4-H member is when starting to learn to give a presentation, the more skills that will be built.

You might want to invite older 4-H'ers with experience in giving presentations to help teach this skill to your club. Presentations should be 3 to 5 minutes long for younger members and 10 to 20 minutes long for older members. Teachers often remark they know which of their students are in 4-H because they aren't afraid of public speaking.

County Fair

One of the major activities of the 4-H year is the county fair, where every member has the opportunity to exhibit what he or she has learned in their project areas during the year. Ask your county Extension staff for a copy of the most recent county fair book so you can determine the schedule and requirements for the exhibit classes. (Your county may have fair books available online or as hard copies) This may help in planning project information for your club members. Make sure your club members know about the Hot Sheets and Tip Sheets available online at

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/projects-list>

These valuable resources help members with their project work throughout the year and help them understand what judges are looking for at fair time. Also make sure that your members get the necessary entry forms for fair exhibits, know how to fill them out correctly, and know the entry deadlines. Your county may have a special meeting for volunteers to explain details about the county fair.

Most counties use conference judging at their county fairs. This is an interview method evaluating 4-H member's fair exhibits. In this method of judging, the 4-H member brings his or her exhibits and visits with the judge for a few minutes. The judge will consider three major criteria:

- learning involved
- workmanship techniques, and
- general appearance and design in relation to the 4-H'er's goal.

The judge can offer positive comments and suggestions for possible improvements in future exhibits. Often this is one of the 4-H'er's most helpful learning experiences of the year. *Ribbon awards* are usually given at fairs. In Iowa, a Danish system of judging is used for exhibits and contests. This means that exhibits are judged against a predetermined skill level standard. Each exhibit receives a blue, red, or white ribbon based on the above criteria. At some

state fairs, if merited, a champion and a reserve champion may be awarded in each fair class.

4-H Summer Camp

Summer camps are available to youth through county and state camps. Your club may want to host its own camp in a local area or at the Clover Woods Camp & Retreat Center near Madrid.

<https://cloverwoods.org> Ask your county Extension staff if the summer camp for your county is scheduled. You can share this and other details with your members.

Other county events are planned for 4-H members. Ask your county Extension staff for a list. Also, watch for activity announcements in the county newsletter or online calendar.

Beyond the county

Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF)

Citizenship Washington Focus is a 4-H leadership program for high school youth. For seven weeks of the summer, delegations of 14-19 year-olds from across the country attend this 6 day program at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center, located just outside Washington, D.C. The program is aimed at enriching young people's lives by broadening their appreciation and respect for themselves and others in the world. Participants attend workshops, committees, field trips and social events, giving them hands-on opportunities to learn and grow. They learn and practice skills that will make them better citizens and more successful individuals. This program supplements the ongoing 4-H citizenship education programs and stimulates youth to search for solutions to contemporary issues, practice leadership skills, and become more meaningfully involved with 4-H and community programs when they return home. Youth will meet with Iowa legislators on Capitol Hill to expand their understanding of government issues. Participants are selected on the county level. To learn more about CWF, go to <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/cwf>

National 4-H Conference

The purpose of this conference is to give 4-H'ers a meaningful involvement in program development. Through discussions and sharing of ideas, delegates develop recommendations on pre-selected topics. It is held during the spring at the National 4-H Center, Chevy Chase, Maryland. From our state, 4 youth and 1 adult go each year. They are selected from an application and interview process held in March. Anyone in grades 9-11 may apply. *A person may attend only once.*

National 4-H Congress

Participants have an opportunity to interact with 4-H'ers from other states and develop leadership skills. Recreational, social, and cultural activities add to the fun trip: 22-26 Iowa delegates are selected from an application and interview process held in March. Anyone in grades 10-11 at the time of application may participate. *A person may attend only once.*

National 4-H Dairy Conference

High school age youth enrolled in the 4-H dairy project are eligible to apply for this award trip held in early October in Madison, Wisconsin. Highlights include World Dairy Expo, ABS, Dairy Shrine Museum, Hoard's Dairy Farm, and Hoard's Dairyman tours. Delegates participate from all over the U.S. and Canada.

State 4-H activities

4-H Youth Conference

Each summer, Iowa 4-H Youth Conference is held for youth who have completed grades 8 through 12. This three-day conference is planned by the State 4-H Council for high school teens. Activities include speakers, workshops, mixers, dances, a banquet, community service opportunities, and 4-H Animal Science ROUNDUP. Information is made available for all youth in the spring. Ask your county Extension staff for a copy of the latest Iowa 4-H Youth Conference program. <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/iowa4hyouthconference>

State Fair

At the Iowa State Fair held annually in Des Moines, youth can participate in several ways. They can give either educational presentations, working exhibits, extemporaneous speaking, or Share-the-Fun performances. Youth also can exhibit in the 4-H building if the exhibit was selected from a county fair or county achievement show. Clothing selection, fashion revue, and \$15 challenge programs are held for selected county representatives as part of the Awardrobe event. 4-H livestock shows are held for beef, dairy, dairy goat, rabbit, sheep, swine, horses, dogs, and other small animals. Other competition opportunities exist for teams such as a Robotics Challenge. Volunteer opportunities are also available for youth and adults to assist with State Fair 4-H events and activities. Contact your county Extension staff for information on participating in 4-H events at the Iowa State Fair or check out the 4-H state fair website.

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/statefair>

State 4-H Council

The State 4-H Council is a group of approximately 42 4-H members in their junior or senior year of high school. The State 4-H Council is selected through an application and interview process and includes two representatives from Collegiate 4-H. Duties of the State 4-H Council include: serve as an ambassador for Iowa 4-H programs; provide input regarding state 4-H and youth program issues; help plan and execute state events such as Iowa 4-H Youth Conference and State Fair; and generate enthusiasm and involvement of 4-H'ers in leadership opportunities at the state level. Members of the State 4-H Council receive special training to serve as ambassadors for the Iowa 4-H program, complementing efforts at the region, county, and local level. The purpose of the ambassador program



is to stimulate interest in current 4-H opportunities plus increase awareness of Iowa 4-H programs to groups and persons outside our organization. The Iowa 4-H ambassadors are available to organize and support National 4-H Week promotional efforts, for speaking engagements at local or county 4-H events, as well as civic organizations, club and county officer training workshops and to promote 4-H via radio, TV, and newspaper.

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/statecouncil>

Safety and Education in Shooting Sports (SESS) Qualifying Match

All counties that have active Shooting Sports programs are encouraged to have their members participate in the annual State Team Qualifying Match. Qualifying youth will be selected to participate in the National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational Match held every summer. Counties can send teams of young people who have state recognized 4-H Safety and Education in Shooting Sports programs (leaders must have 4-H Shooting Sports training at a state or national 4-H Shooting Sports workshop). Youth must be 4-H club members in good standing and have a minimum of 10 hours of supervised instruction by a 4-H Certified Shooting Sports leader that includes both classroom and range events. Youth must be 9 years of age or older to compete in riflery or archery and at least 12 years old to compete in shotgun. All shooters must have shot a minimum of 50 targets on a regulation trap range. Rules and additional information available under at

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/shooting-sports-activities-and-events>

Clover Woods Camp and Retreat Center

Open year round. Volunteers and youth have available to them a 1,100 acre residential learning center. Five villages, each with meeting room and cabins, are available for 4-H and non 4-H needs. Programs include archery, rappelling, climbing, teams course, high ropes course, fishing, canoeing, shooting sports, hiking, backpacking and more. Volunteers can plan a camp at the center with center staff for their club, or they can come to summer camp for a weeklong adventure. Check out the Clover Woods website for more information. <https://cloverwoods.org>

Scholarships

Some counties offer financial assistance to 4-H members applying to attend 4-H camps, Iowa 4-H Youth Conference, or special workshops. Contact your county office of ISU Extension to find out what's available. The 4-H Foundation also offers scholarships.

As you can see, there are lots of activities for your 4-H members: in project areas as well as in citizenship, leadership, and communication development. The more you can encourage your members to participate in these activities, the more they will gain from their 4-H experience.

Good luck and Thank you!

Action Steps

- ◆ Familiarize yourself with opportunities available for 4-H members in your county, state and national levels. Share this information with members and families.
- ◆ Encourage members to participate in events and activities offered.

This is an adaptation of an Oregon State University publication that was prepared by Mary Alice Dodd, 4-H volunteer leader, Linn County; Lyla Houglum, Extension specialist, 4-H and youth development, Oregon State University; and Michelle Robinson, Extension agent, 4-H youth, Oregon State University Extension Service. Development of this material was funded by R.J.R. Nabisco, Inc., through the National 4-H Council Salute to Excellence Program, September 1987.

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Reference materials

County 4-H activity publications (fair book, contest descriptions, camp flyers, etc.).
Iowa 4-H website <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/>

How can I use the information in this letter:

1. New activities to plan into our club program:

2. Other people who could help us and how they might help:

3. Questions to ask ISU Extension staff and other leaders:
