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# 4-H LEADS FOR LEADERS

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## THE PROJECT AND PROJECT MANUAL

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Leader's Guide



Every boy or girl who joins a 4-H club agrees to work on a project or activity. Members work on projects throughout 4-H careers.

### **Purpose of the 4-H Project or Activity**

4-H projects serve two main functions:

- to provide the opportunity for boys and girls to learn physical, mental and social skills suitable to their age and experience.
- to give each boy or girl meaningful experience in how to handle new situations and boost their self-esteem.

It is the project that gives life and meaning to the 4-H member's experience, regardless of the field chosen. The project, combined with 4-H activities, is the means by which decision-making, leadership, record-keeping, citizenship and many other lifeskills are developed.

### **Project Selection**

Projects should be selected according to the ability and interest of the club member. The project should also be suitable for the member's home and community situation and should be chosen with the guidance of parents and a 4-H club leader.

Young or inexperienced members should enroll in only one or two projects and these should be done as completely as possible. As members gain experience and become older, they will probably expand their project work and their participation in related activities.

As members mature in experience and age, they could benefit by cooperating in group or community projects of mutual interest.

Enrollment in a 4-H project is not something to take lightly. Because there are so many different kinds of people with different developmental needs, the choice or choices to be made should be given careful consideration. Standards for a leader to use in guiding a member are:

- Does it fill a useful and educational need for this individual?
- Does the member have the necessary resources and facilities for obtaining and maintaining this project on a practical basis?
- Does the project have the right amount of difficulty and complexity to challenge the member to the limits of present physical and mental capabilities?
- Is information and help available (in the project manuals or from resource persons) for the member to learn new and accurate ways of increasing abilities and expanding in the project?
- Does the member really understand what is expected in the project?

Many projects are designed to appeal to a certain age and to develop skills of a member in that group. For example: Unit 1 of a project usually is organized for the beginning member. Succeeding units teach more complicated techniques and skills. A person's ability should be the deciding factor as to what unit of a project to enroll in and not age alone. An older beginning member *may have* enough skill to enroll immediately in one of the more advanced phases of a project.

The *Colorado 4-H Project Selection and Educational Media Guides* can help with project selection. This is published each year and explains each project and unit and what should be done and learned.

## **Project Manuals**

A manual is available for each project listed in the *Project Selection Guide*. Some projects (livestock) have only one manual. 4-H members

receive this manual the first year they enroll and in succeeding years they receive only a record book. In some projects, members receive a different manual each year because every succeeding year the project develops more complicated techniques and teaches new skills.

Subject matter included in the 4-H project manuals is prepared by Colorado State University Cooperative Extension agents and specialists in cooperation with resident staff, the Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station and the public relations office at Colorado State University. The subject matter is based on the newest information available from university's departments. Some manuals are prepared by private industry in cooperation with Cooperative Extension.

4-H members, parents and leaders should become familiar with the content of the 4-H manuals early in the project year.

### **Project Ownership**

Members should own the animals or materials on which they are working in their project in order to:

- provide maximum project interest;
- give ownership experience; and
- develop personality.

Check with your local Extension office concerning county ownership rules.

## **Developing New Projects**

Volunteers and counties may develop county pilot projects that meet the needs of individual members not provided for in the current project offering.

## **Keeping Project Records**

A record is a measuring stick. It's facts and figures keep the members, parents and leaders informed. By keeping records, members obtain experience and training that is of value throughout their adult lives. From their records, members can see to what degree they participate in club events and activities and how well they meet their own personal goals. They can measure the value of the project financially and in skills and knowledge.

To help members keep good records:

- Explain the value of records to members and their parents at the first meeting of the year. Go over the record book so members know what types of information to keep.
- Encourage members to have a notebook with a pocket for their 4-H record. They should write on the calendar what they did each day

and put any sales slips or bills in the pocket. This information can be transferred to the record book once a month.

- Emphasize the point that facts are necessary and should be written down when it is fresh in your mind so it will not be forgotten.
- Help members keep records up-to-date by having a schedule for checking them and using junior leaders or selected adults to answer questions.
- Encourage members to take pride in their records and *keep them up-to-date*.
- Remind members that project work is not finished until the record book is complete and is approved by the local leader.
- Study records at the end of the project year so you can plan for next year's work.

### **Assembling Records for Special Awards**

Some county and state awards are available to members based upon individual record books. Others are based upon a compilation of work done throughout the 4-H career.

Contact your Extension office for the most up-to-date information on awards and the necessary forms.

Materials that may help when members are assembling records include:

- *Handbook for Colorado 4-H Awards (state and national)*  
This is published each year and explains contests, scholarships and other opportunities for members, leaders and Extension agents. (One copy is available per club).
- *Colorado 4-H Progress Review Form*  
Copies may be secured for members from your local Extension office.
- *General Suggestions for Assembling Records for the National Awards Programs*  
Counties should have at least one file copy of the material that takes you step-by-step through the national report form and indicates how to fill in each blank.
- *National Report Form*  
Order from your local Extension office.
- *National 4-H Group Report Form*  
Submit a form for club or county awards. Order from your local Extension office.

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