



## LETTERS TO NEW 4-H LEADERS

### Letter 5: 4-H Activities

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#### Dear Leader,

Now that you have had several project meetings and the members are excited about their project work, you'd probably like to know about 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 potluck dinners, picnics, swimming parties, trail rides, and campouts. Your local group or county 4-H newsletter will give you the information regarding upcoming 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 project of its choosing. Many clubs share something related to their project area with older people in retirement or nursing homes, such as taking pets for the residents to see, making special holiday favors or just visiting. 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 decide on a long-term project to be developed or repeated over several years.

#### Recognition Activities

Many clubs have a special recognition activity at the end of the 4-H year, at which they acknowledge each member of the group for his or her achievements during the year. Usually families and friends are invited, giving the club leader an opportunity to explain the club activities and goals.

## 4-H Member Divisions

To design 4-H experiences based on the developmental levels of youth, 4-H members are commonly divided into three divisions: junior, intermediate, and senior. These or similar divisions are used in county and state activities.

## 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 animal education clinics, education workshops, home economics learning days, horse clinics, dog obedience trainings, officer training and natural resources workshops). Sometimes these are also offered in neighboring counties, or on a regional or statewide basis.

*Contests*-Tehama County 4-H contests include a food preparation/table setting contest, fashion revue, animal shows and others. Find out from your community club leader what contests are held in Tehama County. You can also find information about these contests in the monthly newsletter. These contests provide educational opportunities for both 4-H members and leaders. Many 4-H members find that competition motivates them to, "Make the best better."

*Judging and Identification Contests*-These are contests in which 4-H members evaluate classes of three or four items and rank them from highest to lowest quality. In many contests, the 4-H member is asked to support his or her decisions by giving written or oral reasons for the placing.

*Presentations*-These are short informative talks or demonstrations given by individual 4-H members (or a team of 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 presentations contest. The contest has separate classes for primary, juniors, intermediates, and seniors. Winners can progress to Sectional Presentation Day then on to State Presentation Day (primary members excluded). When preparing or planning you might want to invite older 4-H members with presentation experience to help teach this skill to your project group.

For more information about presentations, check out the Presentation Manual online at <http://www.ca4h.org/leadership/spd/index.asp> or pick one up at the 4-H Office.

*Exchange programs*- The California 4-H Program sponsors some excellent exchange programs, providing opportunity for 4-H members and their families to gain a broader understanding of the world around them. These programs are usually for senior 4-H members. Some counties participate in exchanges with 4-H groups from other counties or states. In California, members may participate in a Japanese exchange program by hosting Japanese young people or by going to Japan as a member of an exchange group. There are more exchanges available. More information online at <http://www.ca4h.org>.

*County/District and 4-H Fairs*-Two of the major activities of the 4-H year are the Tehama District and 4-H Still Exhibits Fair, where every member has the opportunity to exhibit what he or she has learned in their project area during the year. Copies of the most recent fair books will assist in determining the schedule and the requirements for the exhibit classes. This may help in planning the project work for your club members.

As soon as new fair books are available, obtain a copy. Also make sure that your members obtain the necessary entry forms for fair exhibits, know how to fill them out correctly and when they are due.

Ribbon awards are usually given at fairs in 4-H contests. In most judging used for exhibits and contests, the exhibitors are judged against a predetermined skill level and standard. This is known as Danish system judging. Each exhibit receives a blue, red, or white ribbon based on the following criteria:

*Blue Ribbon:* excellent, within the ability of most contestants

*Red Ribbon:* good quality, some room for improvement

*White Ribbon:* acceptable, but shows need for considerable improvement

*4-H Summer Camp-* summer camp is available for 4-H members between 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. There is also a camp teen staff and leadership program for older youth. Once a 4-H member has graduated from eighth grade through their high school years they must be a teen staff to participate in the camping program. Ask your county 4-H staff or check the Guidelines for dates and details.



## **Sectional and State Activities**

*State Fair* - 4-H members' exhibits that qualify at the county level may be sent to State Fair in August for judging and display. Intermediate and senior citizenship, leadership and animal science exhibitors who qualify at county level are eligible to participate at State Fair. Older 4-H members may apply to do volunteer work at State Fair. Contact your County Extension advisor for information.

*Conferences* - There are several citizenship and leadership conference opportunities available for older members on the sectional and state level. Check the county monthly newsletter or ask your county 4-H staff for more information.

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

## **Good luck!**

Check out our website at <http://cetehama.ucanr.edu> or call 530-527-3101 to reach the staff at Tehama County 4-H Office:

*4-H Program Representative* - **Lynn Strom**, [lmstrom@ucdavis.edu](mailto:lmstrom@ucdavis.edu)

*4-H Secretary* - **Spring Severson**, [sseverson@ucanr.edu](mailto:sseverson@ucanr.edu)

Also visit the California 4-H website at <http://www.ca4h.org>

**How can I use the information in this letter?**

1. New activities to plan into our club program:

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

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

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