

# NEW KIDS IN THE CLOVER



Dear 4-H member,

one of the Largest events during the 4-H year is the county fair. The county fair is a very exciting time. You may feel like you've learned a lot in the past few months, but you can learn even more at the fair if you keep your eyes and ears open!

Sincerely,

Amy Sollock, 4-H Agent



## THE COUNTY FAIR

At the county fair, 4-H members bring the animals they have raised, the rockets they have built, or items they have made during the most recent 4-H year. In Ford County, all 4-H exhibits are judged during the county fair, with a few minor exceptions.

You will receive information about what you should bring to exhibit for your project. This information is printed in what we call the "Fair Book." You may need to sew a garment, train your dog, make a poster or display, or make a food item. It all depends on what projects you're enrolled in. Read the descriptions for your projects carefully. Ask your club leader if you don't understand what to do.

In some areas, you may receive a special mailing in the spring about a weigh-in for your livestock, immunizations for pets, etc. You will also receive a mailing in June to pre-enter the correct "classes" during fair. Don't be afraid to ask your leader or an older member for help. If you sign up for the wrong class, they may not be able to judge your project when you get there. Watch for the due dates and make sure you sign up on time.

At the fair, the first step is checking in. Instructions for checking in will either be in a special mailing from the Extension

office, or in a 4-H newsletter. If you don't know where to go, ask!

Everyone is busy during the fair, but someone will be able to help you get to the right spot. Sometimes, projects must be checked in by a certain time. Leave home early enough to get there and find where you are going.

After check-in, people who know about your projects judge them. All 4-H projects receive a ribbon or special award. Judges give blue award ribbons for projects that meet 4-H standards. Red award ribbons are for projects that need some improvement, and white award ribbons are for projects that need much improvement. In most 4-H shows and classes, everyone can get a blue award. They are not given just to one person. In this part of the judging, members are not competing against each other. Projects are judged on their own merit.

After the judging, judges may select state fair delegates, class champions, or best of show for some classes. Judges compare the blue award projects and the best ones are chosen as winners. At many county 4-H shows, judges announce the winners at special times. If you are a special winner, you should be told about these events. You must be 9 years old by January 1 of the 4-H year to be eligible for the Kansas State Fair.

Animal exhibits are different from other project exhibits, especially if you are in any of the large animal projects. Depending on your 4-H show, the large animal classes may be judged by competition only. The judge puts the animals in order, from top to bottom of the class. Then members receive ribbons from first to last place. In other areas, judges rank the animals in the same way, but all animals can get blue ribbons if they are good enough.

Take the time to walk around and look at other 4-H members' projects. You may see one that you would like to take. Sometimes you can get an idea for next year's project. Remember, though, you shouldn't just copy what someone else has done.

## CONFERENCE JUDGING

Many counties or districts use a style of conference judging at their fair. The state fair also uses it for a few select 4-H projects. You can learn many new things from this type of judging. We want to tell you about it here because it can be a little scary at first!

Conference judging is a one-to-one talk between you and the judge about your exhibit. Other people may be listening, or it may be just you and the judge. Either way, the judge will ask you about your project. Why did you choose to do this item (if you had a choice)? How did you make it? Did you have any problems? What did you learn? The judges may also talk to you about what they see. They should tell you what you did well and talk to you about what you could do better next time. At the end of the talk, the judge will tell you how you did.

Talking with judges who are "experts" can be a great learning experience. Don't be afraid to ask them questions, especially if you don't understand what they say. They can give you tips on how to improve your project. And they can tell you where to get information that you need. Just relax and smile!



## KANSAS STATE FAIR

4-H members from across the state take their projects to the Kansas State Fair each year. But, you must be 9 years old by January 1 of the 4-H year in order to exhibit.

All livestock projects are shown on set days, depending on the type of animal. You must nominate market beef animals by May 1 and other livestock species by June 15. Entries are then due on July 15 for the Kansas State Fair or August 15 for the Kansas Junior Livestock Show. Get a special entry form from the local Extension office. You can usually get these forms and information from the State Fair Book in early May. The KSF entry information & rules are also available on the Kansas 4-H website, [www.Kansas4-H.org](http://www.Kansas4-H.org) or the KSF website, [www.KansasStateFair.com](http://www.KansasStateFair.com). Judging for animal classes is competitive and premiums are based on the final ranking of the class.

Most 4-H projects must be brought to the State Fair before the fair begins for judging. Many times, the local Extension office will coordinate the efforts to get projects from the county to Hutchinson. You will need to listen or read guidelines from the Extension office carefully so you can follow all of the instructions necessary to get your project to the fair. Be sure to pack your item carefully so it will not be damaged along the way. You may want to plan a family trip to the State Fair to see your exhibit on display.

For action-type projects, you will have the chance to go to the fair and demonstrate your skills. Projects like Fashion Revue, Public Presentations and Life Skills Judging Contests are judged on specific days. A few select projects may also be judged by conference judging on designated days. Your local Extension office will have the information you need for these exhibits.