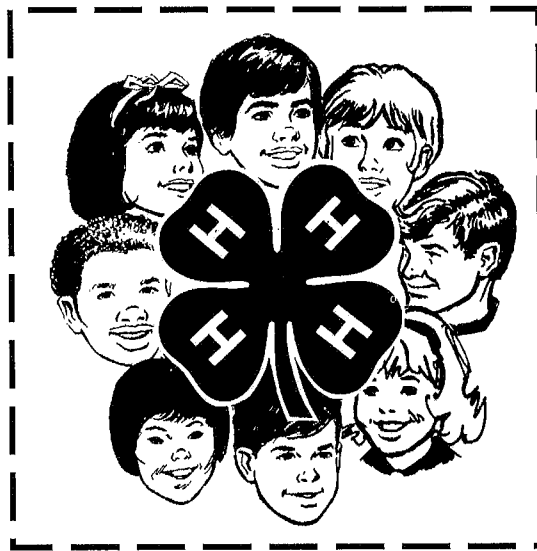


WELCOME TO  
THE  
WORLD OF  
4-H!



A GUIDE FOR THE  
FIRST  
YEAR 4-H MEMBER

# THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT 4-H

## **\*\*MOTTO\*\***

"To make the Best Better"

## **\*\*EMBLEM\*\***

The 4-H emblem is the four-leaf clover with the letter "H" on each leaf, standing for head, heart, hands and health.

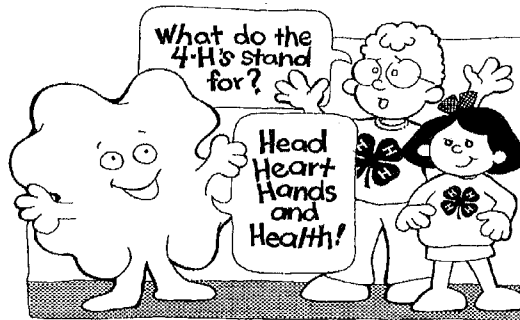
## **\*\*COLORS\*\***

The 4-H colors are green and white. Green symbolizes nature's most common color and represents life, spring-time and youth. White symbolizes purity.

## **\*\*4-H Pledge\*\***

### I PLEDGE

my HEAD to clearer thinking,  
my Heart to greater loyalty,  
my HANDS to larger service,  
and  
my HEALTH to better living,  
for my club, my community,  
my country, and my world.



## **\*\*WHAT IS 4-H\*\***

- ◇ 4-H is America's largest informal educational program for all youth, 8-19 years of age, living in town, country, or on a farm/ranch.
- ◇ 4-H is volunteer led, year round program that supplements the teachings of home, church, and school.
- ◇ 4-H is a family affair-youth have fun while learning with family and friends.

## **\*\*4-H IN THE BEGINNING\*\***

The Cooperative Extension Service System was established by the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 to "extend" the research and knowledge base from the laboratories of the land-grant universities (South Dakota State University-SDSU) and the USDA to the laboratories of real life where people live and work.

The first organized 4-H clubs were small groups covering a single topic such as Corn Clubs for boys and Tomato Clubs for girls.

Four-H, as the youth component of Extension, was established as a means of reaching parents with improved farm and home practices. It was based on the assumption that if new ideas were instilled in the minds of the youngsters, they would in turn convince their parents to try these new innovations.

Another reason 4-H was developed was because rural schools were not meeting all the various needs and interest of rural youth.

## **\*\*4-H TODAY\*\***

Today 4-H is the largest youth organization in the world. More than 25,000 South Dakotans are a part of the more than 4.75 million 4-H'ers in America. Today one in six Americans is a former 4-H'er. More than 50,000 Americans are 4-H volunteer leaders with 600 volunteer leaders in South Dakota alone. Today 4-H is urban and suburban as well as rural. Four-H has something for everyone.

## **\*\*WHY YOUTH ENJOY 4-H\*\***

While all youth are different, they are also alike in many ways. Five inner desires are shared by all youth:

1. THEY WANT TO BELONG.
2. THEY WANT TO ACHIEVE.
3. THEY WANT TO BECOME INDEPENDENT.
4. THEY WANT EXPERIENCES AND ADVENTURE.
5. THEY WANT AFFECTION.

The wide variety of "learn by doing" projects, activities, and events which make up the 4-H program contribute to meeting these needs. Decision making, individual responsibility, achievement, and recognition further help to make 4-H satisfying.



## **\*\*OBJECTIVE OF 4-H\*\***

The 4-H mission is to help young people become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. The program helps youth develop inquiring minds, learn practical life skills, strengthen decision making skills, improve their communication techniques and strengthen their interpersonal relationships with other people. Ultimately, the goal of 4-H is to encourage young people to share their skills, knowledge and experience in a leadership role with others.

This is a change from the original objective of teaching improved practices to farmer and homemakers through their children. Today the emphasis is on the development of the youth through a wide variety of learning opportunities in which all youth can participate. Project work is one of the best devices for accomplishing this goal. To "learn by doing" is fundamental in any sound educational program and is characteristic of the 4-H program.

Four-H is intended to supplement, not replace, the three primary educational institutions...the school, church, and home.

## **\*\*4-H PRINCIPLES\*\***

It is not what we know, but what we believe, that determines what we do. 4-H leaders and parents can make their best contribution to the development of 4-H youth by understanding 4-H objectives and principles.

- +The 4-H club youth are more important than the project.
- +Project work is one of the best devices for developing young people. To "learn by doing" is fundamental in any sound educational program and is characteristic of the 4-H program.
- +4-H is not trying to replace the home, church, or school – only to supplement them. This does not mean that 4-H should avoid areas touched by school or church. 4-H music, performing arts, etc., may give additional opportunities for participation.
- +4-H'ers should be their own best exhibit. This means in manners, attitudes, actions and courtesy.
- +Competition is a part of life and should be recognized in 4-H as a human trait, but competition requires careful planning and safeguards when used as an educational device.
- +A purple ribbon 4-H'er with a red ribbon exhibit is more desirable than a red ribbon 4-H'er with a purple ribbon exhibit.
- +Every 4-H member needs to be noticed, to feel important, to achieve some degree of success, and to be praised.
- +Our goal is to teach 4-H members how to think, not what to think.

## **\*\*LIFE SKILLS AND 4-H\*\***

The South Dakota 4-H Youth program has identified life skills as the best way to develop self esteem and individual responsibility at any age by the following:

- >Understanding self as a resource
- >Communication
- >Commitment to and relating to others
- >Problem solving and decision making
- >Acquiring, analyzing and using information
- >Managing self and other resources
- >Working with others

## **\*\*AGE FOR MEMBERSHIP\*\***

4-H membership is open to all youth who are 8 years of age by January 1 and have not passed their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday by January 1 of the current 4-H year. Beginning level is 8 to 10 years old, Juniors are 11 to 13 years old and Seniors are 14 and older as of January 1. 4-H age is determined as of January 1 of the current 4-H year.

## **\*\*4-H YEAR\*\***

The 4-H year begins October 1 and ends September 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year.

## **\*\*WHAT IS A 4-H CLUB\*\***

A 4-H club is a group of youth organized with officers appropriate to the group (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, reporter, etc.) and with one or more leaders sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service. Clubs usually consist of similar project interest and location.

Also, youth are 4-H members by taking part in special interest groups (one project clubs), independent member, and school enrichment programs.

## **\*\*PURPOSE OF 4-H CLUB MEETINGS\*\***

The purpose of 4-H meetings is to help youth:

1. acquire new information
2. learn to use leisure time creatively
3. develop social skills
4. acquire leadership and citizenship traits

4-H members are given the opportunity to learn and practice decision-making in group situations by using knowledge and skills acquired at these meetings. Parents are encouraged to attend meetings with their 4-H'ers. 4-H is a family affair.

**Are you into it?** 

## **\*\*HOW OFTEN DOES THE CLUB MEET?\*\***

Most clubs hold monthly meetings, with dates, times and locations set by the club. Members are required to attend at least 4 meetings per 4-H year to complete their records and be eligible for awards.

## **\*\*HOW ARE GOOD MEETINGS ACCOMPLISHED\*\***

Planning is the key. It takes considerable thought, initiative, creativeness and organization to make a 4-H club meeting run smoothly. More importantly, 4-H meetings need to be fun in order for 4-H members to feel involved and a "part of the action."

An important success tool to good 4-H club meetings is to plan ahead for the next year. Most 4-H clubs now outline their educational program for the year at the beginning of the new 4-H year. The club will select a leadership team, the older 4-H members, a parent committee, or any other committee to line up the program for the year. Many clubs will use their own "calendar" that outlines the host family for each month, the members that will give demonstrations each month, recreation chairs for each month, etc. It is also important to list all field trips, meeting dates for special workshops, etc. Always be sure to incorporate fun activities into your planning as well. Include ideas for monthly fun themes or games or other ideas that give the members ownership in their club. 4-H'ers that feel involved will stick with the program for a longer period of time and become more successfully involved.

Each club normally elects officers at the beginning of the 4-H year. Officers elected may include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, Historian, Recreation Leader, and Song Leader.

Leadership for the club usually consists of an organizational leader and assistant leader. Several project leaders are also an important part of the club leadership. Leaders may be parents of 4-H'ers, retired persons, former 4-H'ers, young adults or any adult willing to share time and talents with youth.

## **\*\*4-H FEES\*\***

There may be a membership fee to join 4-H. Check with your County Extension Office and club to find out if this applies. Because 4-H is non-profit, there are club and county 4-H fundraisers.

Educational material, for projects, is provided to all 4-H members of clubs at minimal cost or no cost, along with record forms.

## **\*\*4-H INSURANCE\*\***

Members must have coverage:

At the time of enrolling in 4-H, all members must purchase 4-H insurance. This cost is determined by whether or not the member is enrolled in the horse or rodeo project. Check with your leader and/or the Extension office for more information and forms.

## **\*\*4-H PROJECTS\*\***

The 4-H project is a teaching tool that can be used to develop many desirable traits as well as specific skills. Projects are real-life experiences that help 4-H'ers learn practical and "life" skills. They provide the basis of the 4-H program through which a member "learns by doing."

The objectives of the 4-H project work are to create a sense of ownership, to give a feeling of achievement, and to strengthen family and community ties. In addition, project work gives members the opportunity to learn new skills, develop good attitudes, assume responsibility, participate in healthful competition, make meaningful decisions and explore career opportunities.

The selection of 4-H projects has expanded greatly over the years. There are now over 50 different projects available – ranging from agriculture to computers to foods and nutrition to visual arts. Many of the projects have several different stages of developmental advancement built within them. And, a member may even choose to "self-determine" a project in an area of special interest to them. The possibilities are endless.

## **\*\*HOW DO YOU SELECT PROJECTS\*\***

One of the best things about 4-H is discovering what it is all about. And, in that discovery, the young person also finds out what they are all about as a person. Often, the 4-H project areas that are chosen by a child are the keys to lifelong hobbies, career choices and special interests.

Projects are selected early in the 4-H year – often being early October to mid-November. It is better for young 4-H members to select a few projects to do well versus selecting so many projects that none are done very well at all. "Quality not Quantity" is good advice to follow in project selection.

In choosing a project, a member will consult with parents and 4-H leader(s). After considering all the projects available and the requirements of each, they should select one based on:

- Does the project meet the interests, needs and capabilities of the member?
- Is the project in keeping with the age and ability of the member?
- How much time does the member have and how much time does the project require?
- Is the project acceptable to you as a parent? Does it fit into the needs of the family?
- How much will the project cost?
- Is adequate space and equipment available?
- Are there leaders to help with the project, or are you as a parent willing to help with the project area in your club?

The club and county may conduct project meetings and workshops during the year.

## **\*\*HOW ARE PROJECTS CONDUCTED?\*\***

Project work is conducted through a variety of activities and events such as:

1. Project meetings in the local 4-H club.
2. County project workshops and judging schools.
3. Demonstrations and talks at club meetings.
4. Tours and field trips.

Project work begins with goal setting. Soon after choosing a project to enroll in, members should set goals for what they hop to accomplish in the project. Two or three goals for each project should be recorded.

The concept of setting goals is foreign to most beginning 4-H'ers and they will need some help. A goal should answer the question, "What do I want to see happen?". It should be specific, simple, realistic and measurable. For example, in the foods and nutrition project, a goal might be to prepare a nutritious after school snack three times a week.

In addition, 4-H'ers are encouraged to have their goals relate to the learning process more than to the eventual ribbon placing they might receive on an exhibit. "To teach Rover to fetch" is a goal that focuses on learning whereas "to get a purple ribbon at Achievement Days" focuses on a small segment of the project work.

## **\*\*WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A PARENT\*\***

This will vary among clubs, but there are many ways in which your participation will enhance your child's 4-H experience. 4-H is a family affair – so please get involved!! Here are some responsibilities of parents that are expected in most 4-H clubs:

- Provide transportation for your child to club meetings and special workshops or activities.
- Know the 4-H meeting dates and help your child keep track of them on a calendar at the beginning of the 4-H year.
- Attend at least four club meetings during the year if not all of them or as many as possible.
- Encourage your child in his/her project areas, but do not do the work for them. Parents need to provide enough help to keep the child at task, but not so much that the pride of accomplishment is not his or hers.
- Help your child to see that the experience is of more value than the ribbon placing.
- Encourage your child to participate in a wide variety of activities such as demonstrations, judging, workshops, etc.





## **\*\*ROLE OF PARENTS IN PROJECT WORK\*\***

While the member needs to feel "ownership" of their projects, parents often need to be the spark plug to keep members working toward their goals. How can parents help?

- ✓ Talk with youth about selecting their projects. Help them get their film, fabric, calf, or whatever they need.
- ✓ Encourage youth to work on their projects. Help them to manage their time.
- ✓ Listen to their ideas before you give suggestions or advice. Let them do their own work!
- ✓ How much help should parents give in project work? Only enough to keep the youth from becoming discouraged as they learn new skills. Show them how, then let them do it themselves. Perfection is not as important to the learning process as satisfaction and pride in accomplishment.
- ✓ Never forget that the real objective of project work is to develop youth into capable adults. Winning the most honors at the fair is not what counts most. Such experiences may be good, but they can also be bad if they have the wrong effect on the attitude or character of the youth.

## **\*\*THE 4-H PARENTS PLEDGE\*\***

I pledge my HEAD to give my child the information I can,  
to help him/her see things clearly and  
to make wise decisions.

I pledge my HEART to encourage and support my child no matter  
whether he/she has success or disappointments.

I pledge my HANDS to help by child's club; if I cannot be a leader,  
I can help in many equally important ways.

I pledge my HEALTH to keep my child strong and well for a better  
world through 4-H, for my child's club, our community,  
our country and our world.

## **\*\*EXHIBITS\*\***

An important part of learning in 4-H is sharing that learning with others. This is done by displaying project work at Achievement Days. County Horse Shows are held in July and Achievement Days are held in July and August depending on where you live.

The exhibit can be an article that was made, an animal, a poster or educational display relating to the project.

Refer to the State 4-H Fair Book and the 4-H Division of your County Fair Book, printed in June/July.

## **\*\*4-H RIBBONS\*\***

South Dakota 4-H uses the Danish system of ribbon awards. Youth are judged on the age, experience and personal learning experience. Ribbon placings are defined as follows:

PURPLE—Outstanding, eligible for State Fair

BLUE—High quality, well done

RED—Meets standards

WHITE—Improvement is needed and exhibit does not meet all standards

## **\*\*MEMBER COMPLETION\*\***

To receive credit for the year, a member must:

- Attend at least four club meetings
- Complete current year's 4-H journal
- Give a public presentation (demonstration, illustrated talk, public speaking or project why) sharing something learned in a 4-H project
- Shows project accomplishment in project areas, as determined by leader
- Participates in judging at the club or county level
- Participates in a county event/activity
- Shows leadership at the club/county level

Members are awarded year pins upon the completion of each year, you may also begin working toward project area awards and the bronze, silver and gold medals starting the second year. County medals may also be earned after you reach the age of 12 and you meet the medal requirements.

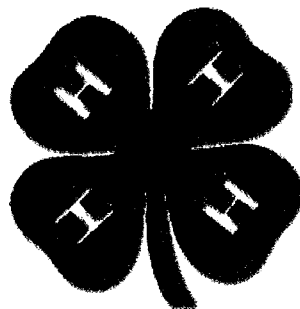
## **\*\*THE 4-H JOURNAL\*\***

### Keeping a 4-H Journal

Learning the skills involved in preparing a well-developed journal is the key. Leaders and parents can help by reminding members to bring their journal to club meetings and at the time a project activity is performed to complete the various sections.

The Journal provides an opportunity for members to establish goals and evaluate how they are doing.

1. Completing a journal provides members a basis for determining actions and making decisions.
2. Keeping a journal can help member and leaders evaluate what was learned and performed, and what additional challenges need to be made.
3. Writing a journal can help parents know project goals and, thus, become better project helpers for their children.
4. Completing a journal preserves the satisfaction and accomplishments of the club year
5. Journals can be used by leaders to evaluate progress and readiness of members for recognition and awards
6. Completing a 4-H journal develops life skills



**For Youth**

**For Parents**

**For Volunteers**

**For Educators**

## **\*\*WHAT'S WHAT\*\***

### **Youth in Action Events** **Public Presentations**

#### **Demonstrations**

A demonstration is a step by step process of actions and explanations resulting in a finished product that can be shown to an audience. The audience learns by watching and listening. Actual products, materials garments, plants, etc. are used during a demonstration. The demonstration may also include charts, posters and illustrations as visual aids to help the learning process.

#### **Illustrated Talk**

An illustrated talk is a combination of speaking and showing by means of one or more visual aids such as charts, pictures, models, real objects, flip charts, drawings, etc. The individual tells how something is to be accomplished. There is not a finished product.

#### **Project Why**

A project why teaches the "why" as well as the use. It is used to encourage, excite and to motivate further study in a specific area. A 3 x 3 exhibit is prepared and the member explains "why" something happens. The 4-H'er will also answer questions from a moving audience as to "why" his illustrated principle is true.

#### **Public Speaking**

Public speaking is more formal than other presentations. The member must choose a subject or topic which relates to an aspect of 4-H such as a project, promotion or personal experience. The 3-6 minute speech tells the audience about what he/she has learned.

In order to complete a project area each member must give one county or two club demonstrations, illustrated talks, project whys, or public presentations within three years of being enrolled in each project.

#### **Special Foods**

This event combines food preparation skill, nutrition knowledge, and aesthetic awareness as the 4-H member prepares a nutritious dish for which they have planned an accompanying menu and table setting to enhance the dish. During the preparation, the 4-H member is given the opportunity to share their knowledge of the nutrient composition of the dish.

#### **Fashion Revue**

The Fashion Revue program places emphasis on selecting, constructing, accessorizing and modeling a garment or garments that complement the member.

## **Quiz Bowl Contest**

Quiz Bowls are currently held in the Foods & Nutrition, Horse, and Beef areas. This activity encourages youth to gain greater knowledge of the specific project and to organize and present their thoughts on the particular subject. The activity also encourages the development of leadership skills. Two teams of four members each compete for points by answering questions about the subject area they are competing in.

## **Judging Contests**

The activity of judging encourages youth to:

- learn how to select, make decisions and pass judgment
- recognize good and poor quality in products
- see how they can improve the products they make or select
- organize their thoughts in a logical order
- gain self-confidence and poise through such experiences as giving oral and written reasons
- develop leadership abilities, build character and assume citizenship responsibilities

In typical 4-H judging classes, four like articles or animals are evaluated and ranked based on accepted standards of quality. The 4-H'er not only ranks the articles but supports his ranking with written or oral reasons.

Judging is often a part of the educational program of a club meeting. In addition, judging schools are held at the county level as a teaching tool and to qualify team members for county judging teams to represent the county at the State Fair.

If a judging contest is held for a project area in which you are enrolled in you are required to judge at the club or county level.

## **4-H Special Events**

### **County Achievement Days**

This is an event for 4-H members to exhibit their project accomplishments. Interview and showmanship judging of projects is recommended to all 4-H'ers. This allows judges to ask questions of the 4-H'er and to understand the learning experience the member obtained.

### **State Fair**

4-H exhibits receiving purple awards at county achievement days are eligible to go to state fair in Huron. Check the County Fair Book for exceptions. Youth may elect to attend State Fair for county purple Youth in Action contests and animals.

### **Western Junior Livestock Show**

A regional 4-H Livestock show that is held in October at the Central States Fair grounds. The Western Jr. Livestock Show was organized in 1937 and has been an annual event since. The first show included only the feeder calf project but since that time has grown to include sheep, swine, dairy and other projects relating to livestock production.

### **Western 4-H Family and Consumer Science Show**

A regional Family and Consumer Science show held along with the Western Jr. Livestock show. This show focuses on family and home living areas with many different contests for 4-H members to compete in, including: Bread Baking Contest, family life photo contest, public speaking contest, judging contest, place setting contest, measuring contest, fashion revue, home living contest and nutrition quiz bowl.

### **Western Youth Rabbit Show**

4-H rabbit project members are eligible to attend and exhibit their 4-H rabbits in this regional show. Date to be set, usually sometime in October.

### **Black Hills Stock Show Youth Day**

Held on the First Saturday of the Black Hills Stock Show in Rapid City. Contests include: Beef Cook-off, Livestock Judging contest, Horse Quiz Bowl, Hippology Contest, Livestockology Contest, Dog Show and Play Day.

### **Shooting Sports**

This educational program encompasses shooting and hunting education teaching essential skills to produce safe and ethical hunters. Archery, BB Gun, Pistol, and rifle are a few of the areas offered.

### **4-H Camp**

4-H Camp is available to all youth ages 8-12. Camp is held in June at Camp Bob Marshall outside of Custer. The camp is usually 2 half days and 2 full days and campers will experience a wide variety of activities including: canoeing, crafts, campfires, dances, recreation, and many other opportunities as programming allows. Parents are always encouraged to attend as chaperones.

### **Teen Camp/Camp Counselor Training**

Held at Camp Bob Marshall and is open to youth ages 13-18. Camp Counselor Training is held to train Jr. Counselors for youth camp sessions. This gives youth the opportunity to learn and provide leadership during the camp program. Teen Camp is held as a continuation of youth camp but with more of a leadership and community service emphasis.

### **State Youth Conference**

State Youth Conference is held in June on the Campus of South Dakota State University for any youth ages 13-18. This is a very worthwhile conference that youth from across the state attend and take part in many educational and fun activities

### **Trips**

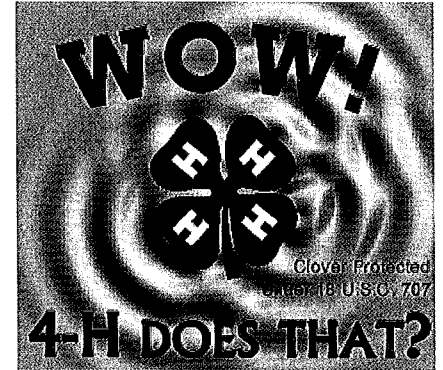
Several 4-H trips, for all ages, are available and awarded at county and state levels. Notifications of requirements and deadlines are in the newsletter.

# WELCOME!!!

Your family has embarked on a wonderful adventure into the exciting world of 4-H!

During your first couple of years of membership, 4-H will seem slightly overwhelming and possibly quite confusing to you.

But, don't panic!! 4-H is very "user friendly!" Hopefully, this handbook will do a good job of introducing the 4-H program, the 4-H concept and the overall "nature of things" to you.



In your first few years of 4-H we hope you will explore the many opportunities that 4-H has to offer to you. We know that you will have to tailor the program to fit the needs of your child as well as the needs of your family. However, we also know that 4-H fits that need well – as you will discover on your adventure of the

## *WONDERFUL WORLD OF 4-H!!!*

Welcome to the World of 4-H was updated in 2003 by LaDonna McKnight Custer County Extension Educator.

Creating Opportunities for a Lifetime

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