



# LETTERS TO NEW LEADERS



## Letter 5: 4-H Activities

### In this letter you'll find:

- Club Activities
- Recognition Activities
- 4-H Member Divisions
- County Activities
- Sectional and State Activities

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

*Contests-* Fresno County 4-H contests include a food preparation/craft contest, fashion revue, animal shows and others. Find out from your community club leader what contests are held in Fresno County. You can also find information about these contests in *Guidelines*. 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 in three or four items each and ranks them from highest to lowest quality. In many contests, the 4-H member is asked to support his or her decisions by giving either 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 two 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 juniors, intermediates, and seniors. County winners and intermediate and senior divisions may be selected for Sate Fair. The younger 4-H members are when they start learning to give presentations, the easier it is for them to enjoy doing it. You might want to invite older 4-H'ers with experience in giving presentations to help teach this skill to your project.

Presentations should be 3 to 5 minutes long for younger members and 10 to 20 minutes long for older members.

*Exchange programs-* 4-H 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.

*County/District and 4-H Fairs-* Two of the major activities of the 4-H year are the Fresno and 4-H Fairs, 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, make sure you get a copy. Also make sure that your members get the necessary entry forms for fair exhibits and know how to fill them out correctly.

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 camps are available for most 4-H members. There is also a camp counseling and leadership program for older youth. Fresno County has a Sierra and a Marine Science Camp.

As 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 contest participants and animal science exhibitors who qualify at county level are eligible to participate at State Fair. Activities at State Fair include fashion revue, presentations, and several judging and identification contests. 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 *Guidelines* 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!**



## REFERENCE MATERIALS

*Big Fresno Fair Entry Book*  
*4-H Fair Entry Information Booklet*  
*4-H Record Forms*

## 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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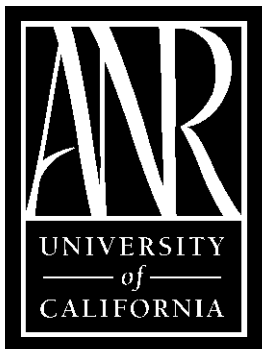
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Fresno County



**Letter 5: 4-H Activities**

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