

SPOTLIGHT ON 4-H

Nebraska Extension 4-H Newsletter

Bonus 2017

Using Presentations During Club Meetings

Presentations are a great way for 4-H'ers to teach others about a project or activity. A presentation is basically explaining to others how to make or do something. Many youth have been giving informal presentations for years. For example, "Show and Tell" is a form of presenting.

When youth teach project skills in a presentation format, they are more likely to have a deeper understanding of what was learned. In addition, presentations help youth practice their public speaking skills. Speaking in front of a group is an important skill most everyone will need to do well in their profession. In fact, public speaking skills are ranked among the top desired skill set of professionals.

Encourage your 4-H members to practice their public speaking skills by giving presentations at their club meetings. Some clubs have a sign-up sheet and a different 4-H'er gives a presentation at each meeting. For the beginner presenter, presentations can be short and last only a minute or so, but the 4-H'er will have stood before a group, said something, and done something while fellow members, parents and friends watch and listen. Bringing awareness of a certain topic is another benefit of presentations. When 4-H'ers and volunteers in the audience watch presentations, they may learn something new and want to try it, too.

Through presentations youth learn how to:

- Research a subject
- Organize their thoughts
- Create and use graphics to support their presentation
- Increase poise and confidence

4-H volunteers can help beginner presenters by:

- Having an experienced presenter give a simple presentation as an example
- Sharing simple topics such as, "How to Tie Your Shoes" or "How to Thread a Needle"
- Creating a simple step-by-step outline
- Being positive and kind in their response to the presentation

Presentation Guidelines

There are four major parts of a presentation:

1. Introduction—this should be brief. Convince the audience the topic is important. Be creative and interesting. For example, quote someone, or ask a question.
2. Body—this is the main part of the presentation. Explain your topic and present all the information.
3. Summary—this is a last chance to engage and capture the interest of the audience. What were the most valuable points to remember?
4. Questions and answers—ask the audience if there are any questions. The audience may have missed some point or they may want to test your knowledge.

Presentation Tips:

- Look at the audience
- Pick a topic that is familiar
- Practice in front of a mirror
- Thank your audience
- Relax and smile





Crops Projects Teach Careers & More

Crops play a key role in Nebraska's economy. A wide variety of career paths is available in this rapidly-changing field. With a degree in agronomy, careers are possible as an:

- Agricultural Communicator
- Crop Consultant
- Crop Insurance Adjuster
- Educator
- Elevator or Co-op Manager
- Farmer or Rancher
- Farm Credit Banker
- Farmer Manager
- Field or Lab Researcher
- Plant Breeder
- Seed, Fertilizer, or Chemical Sales or Technical Representative
- Soil or Water Conservationist



If you haven't taken a look at the projects offered in the crop area recently, you should consider exhibiting projects related to field crops, weed science and range. The crops & range division has a wide variety of projects for youth to express their creativity while learning the science behind their exhibit.

If you enjoy making educational displays, consider making a Career Interview Display! The purpose of this class is to encourage youth to investigate a career in agronomy. Youth should interview one person that works with crops about such topics as what parts of their job they like/dislike, why they chose that career, what their educational background is, etc. They should include a picture of the person interviewed and creativity explain what they learned about that career on a display board which could be on poster board or plywood, no larger than 24 x 24".

Other crop displays are:

- Crop Production Display – Contains information about crop production aspects such as crop scouting, alternative crops, etc.
- Crop Technology Display – Aspects of how technology is used in crop production such as genetic engineering, crop breeding, GPS, yield mapping, etc.
- Water or Soil Display – Information about water or soils, such as how soils are being used for crop production, range, conservation, wildlife, or wetland use, or ways to protect or conserve water and soil resources.

The field crops project also has grain or plant exhibits which enable youth to exhibit grain from the previous year, so if planned early, save some grain after harvest, write a short essay on the project and you could have a project completed well before fair time! Another option is to exhibit plants from the current year's project and explain your exhibit in a short essay as well.

Need resources to help youth learn about crops?

Check out the CropWatch.unl.edu/youth website which provides educational resources and activities for leaders or educators to teach youth about crops. If you questions or need additional resources, contact Brandy VanDeWalle at brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu.

Preparing Grain Crops for Fair



Grain crops can be a great project for youth to learn more about farming and what goes into growing a successful crop. To make the project successful, when judged at fair, be sure to focus on preparation ahead of time. The key areas to work on are starting early, preparing a proper essay, meeting the project requirements, and picking the correct samples.

The first key area is to start your preparation well before fair season. For example, if youth would like to submit a grain sample of corn, the sample is going to have to be collected in the fall during harvest. Other crops like wheat or oats are going to have to be harvested when they are mature, which will likely be earlier than fair. Starting early will allow you to start collecting information about the field, such as planting date of crop, variety or hybrid of seed, the economics of growing crops, and tracking the weather patterns during the growing season.



This information will be important for youth to know to be able to do the second key point, of writing a proper essay. The essay is important because it tells the judge a story about how the crop was produced and what the youth learned. This is critical, so take as much time as possible to gather information about the field and express observations about how the growing season progressed. The essay counts as 50% of the total judging score. A good essay can make a big difference in placings.

The next key for grain crop projects is to make sure that the sample meets all of the requirements for the project. These requirements are listed in either your county fair book or in the state fair book. Take ample time to look them over. For plant samples, check the requirements to ensure that you have the proper number of samples, for instance, 3 corn stalks or 6 soybean stems.

The last key point is picking the correct sample to submit for fair. Just like horticulture projects, judges like to see uniform samples, so find stalks that are similar heights and that look similar. Also, look for plants that have as little damage or disease as possible. For grain samples, take time to clean out foreign material like bugs or broken grain to end up with as clean a sample as possible.

For more information on preparing grain crops for fair contact your local Extension office!



Family Safety Plan

Disaster happens. Unfortunately, it also often happens without much warning. Whether the disaster you face is fire, tornado, blizzard or flood, the best thing you can do is prepare the youth in your life with a family safety plan.

With so many possibilities, it can be difficult to know where to start. Citizen Safety, the 4-H project manual, has resources at your disposal. The manual has resources to prepare your youth to contact and communicate with various emergency dispatchers and personnel in stressful situations. Certain small details such as knowing one's address and being able to clearly explain directions to it are often overlooked, but crucial for youth that may be home alone. This guide also creates a solid starting point for encouraging youth to initiate conversations about their own home safety plans with their parents or guardians.

First aid kits are another crucial item. Many homes and 4-H facilities are equipped with first aid kits, but they are not as helpful when they are not used appropriately. This is a great opportunity for a club project. Members of your club can assemble their own first aid kits for their homes using the Citizen Safety manual as a guide. First aid kits make a great county fair entry and are also eligible for state fair. You can take this experience a step further by engaging local paramedics, health departments or medical staff to teach first aid basics while also introducing their career paths.

Safety could also serve as a theme for your 4-H year as this broad topic provides opportunity to tackle a new section of it at each club meeting. One idea could include touring the local fire station while learning how to develop fire escape maps for the home and identifying a meeting place for displaced family members away from the home. Another idea could be participating in some severe weather science experiments while learning about locating tornado shelter areas in or around home. Completing a club community service project that aids in a disaster relief project would also fit nicely into the theme.

To find more resources for preparing your club or family for disaster, visit <http://extension.unl.edu/disaster-recovery-resources/> or contact your local extension office to be connected to the statewide disaster education efforts.



Healthy Snack at Your 4-H Club



Every kid loves a good snack, but parents may think that snacking is bad and can lead to weight gain. Although this might be the case when snacking on cookies, chips, and candy all day, *healthy* snacking is an important part of a child's daily intake. Childhood is a time of rapid growth, and meeting the nutritional needs associated with normal development is critical to a child's well-being. Because children have much smaller stomachs than adults, healthy snacking can provide nutrients between meals to help them meet their daily nutritional needs.

Healthy snack choices can provide children with some of the vitamins, minerals, proteins, and calories they need for growth, energy, and overall good health. Healthy snacking satisfies hunger between meals, improves concentration, and prevents overeating at mealtime.

- Snacks should not replace a meal, so avoid serving large snacks. Small portions are especially important for those occasional snacks that contain lots of added sugars and are low in nutrients.
- Avoid using food as a reward or a way to calm an upset child. Also avoid using treats such as cookies or candy to make up for a meal not eaten.
- Not all snacks are appropriate for everyone. Always keep in mind food allergies and potential choking hazards when planning snacks.

Choose “food group foods” first to meet the recommended intake for different nutrients, and think about ways to combine foods from different food groups. To meet more nutritional needs, make snacks that incorporate at least two food groups. For example, pair apple slices with cheese, or whole-grain crackers with peanut butter. Incorporate foods from all the food groups into the snacks you serve over the course of a week.

At a 4-H meeting, come up with ideas for healthy snacks. Have ingredients on hand so the 4-Hers can each invent a trail mix. Use popcorn, pretzels, snack crackers, raisins, or other dried fruit. Think of a variety of textures, flavors and colors.

Smoothies are also a great way to let the kids invent a snack. The basic ingredients are $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup yogurt added into a blender. Kids can try to add a variety of fruit including strawberries, bananas, mango, blueberries, or any other fruit that is in season. Not every child likes the same fruit, but mixing and matching will make this a fun and easy lesson.





CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Thanks for a great year of SPOTLIGHT!

If you have any question about anything you've read over the past few months or have topics that you think would be relevant to all audiences, contact your local Extension Office. They will be put on our brainstorming list.

We thank all of our volunteers, leaders, and supporters for all their help through out the year. We hope this newsletter helps you to do your best work and be a positive influence on the youth around you and in the 4-H program.

