

SPOTLIGHT ON 4-H

Nebraska Extension 4-H Newsletter

January 2021

Sparks! What are they and where do you find them? - By Julie Kreikemeier

Sparks! Not the dangerous kind, but the kind that ignite the fire within our youth! Peter Benson defines Sparks as “hidden flames in your kids that light their proverbial fire, get them excited, tap into their true passions” (2008). These sparks are what motivate our youth to participate in their many activities, events, and ways they spend their time. Sparks are the things youth love to do and get naturally excited about doing.

Youth typically experience three types of sparks. They are something they are good at—a talent or skill, something they care strongly about and a quality they know is special. Youth can sometimes recognize the sparks within themselves and will describe them as things they ‘love’ to do or activities that excite them. When youth can recognize their own sparks, they may need help igniting them! As adults, we face the challenge of recognizing sparks in youth and setting them ablaze. Once you recognize sparks in youth, it is important to encourage those sparks to grow and develop. Development of sparks can bridge the gap between the activities youth are doing now to potential careers and their future. Parents and guardians are integral in the development of sparks in youth, but they are not the only important guides for youth. Any adult or role model in a youth’s life can become a “spark champion” (Benson, 2008). Spark champions are those who will support and encourage youth on their spark journey, but are not directly in contact with the youth every day.

As 4-H volunteers and leaders, you are a spark champion in the lives of your 4-Hers. You can help identify and develop the sparks within your members. This can be done through helping them identify their sparks, encouraging members to express it, model or teach it, provide safe spaces and opportunities for 4-H members to communicate their sparks to others and help them eliminate obstacles that might be in their way. 4-H encourages the development of new skills and allows youth to explore new areas, all of which can already be untapped sparks or become new sparks for youth to discover. As a 4-H volunteer, you are among your 4-H members’ group of spark champions that encourage and provide spaces for them to grow! You have the flame to ignite the sparks of our youth!

Benson, P. L. (2008). Sparks: How parents can help ignite the hidden strengths of teenagers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



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Tips & Tricks to Engage Youth at the Start of 4-H Meetings

By Melissa Nordboe

Did you know you only have 30 seconds or less to gain youth's attention and motivate them to listen? When it comes to starting a meeting or event and getting rolling, these precious seconds play a critical part. Today, I am going to share with you some simple "attention grabbers" to get youth excited and ready to focus on whatever you are planning.

Now, before we get started, think about the audience you are engaging. Is it Clover Kids, elementary youth, teenagers, or all of the above? This will help you to determine the proper approach to take to making youth take part in your event/4-H meeting, etc.

The first way to grab youth's attention is with **music**. Music is one of the most fun and effective ways to get youth involved or to get them to stop what they're doing. You can add variety to your music depending on the age level. For example, for the youngest youth, use finger plays like the Itsy-Bitsy Spider. The cool thing about this is that if youth are singing, they aren't talking. You can also relate the song to your meeting agenda or event theme.

The second way to engage youth is by **using chants or hand gestures**. Anytime you can include some kind of physical movement, the better youth will listen. One suggestion is to clap out a rhythm for the youth to repeat back. Or use a chant that utilizes motion. For example, Drop It, Zip It, Lock It followed by claps. When you say drop it, youth have to drop whatever is in their hands, when you say zip it, that means to stop talking, and when you say lock it, that means all eyes are focused on the speaker. Younger youth will normally chant with you, which is awesome, too! You can always change up the words and motions if you find that this "attention grabber" works for you!

The third way and my personal favorite way to grab youth's attention is by **using the "throw & tell ball"**. This is a technique I love to utilize in my classrooms for school enrichment as a "starter". This ball has questions on it and when thrown to a youth, they have to answer the question that their index finger lands on. Some of the questions are, "What do you do when you feel bored?", "Where's your favorite place to go on a hike?", "What is one thing you are grateful for?", and etc. There are so many cool questions to ask and this is very easy to utilize for all ages and can be adapted as needed. This is a great tool to help kids focus. In this game, everyone wins!

Finally, try not to think of "attention grabbers" as an annoyance. Think of them as a tool to be creative and have some fun within your 4-H club or event. Who doesn't like to start a meeting or event off with fun?



2021 4-H State Fair Animal Nomination and Identification Requirements

By Brandy Schulze

Market Beef- All market beef must be identified with a federally-accepted 840 EID electronic identification (EID) tag. Market beef must have a sealed official DNA envelope with hair samples for DNA verification turned in to the local Extension office and exhibitors should have completed the online nomination (Show Stock Manager) along with submitting payment online by June 15. Any animal carrying an 840 EID tag will require the exhibitor to obtain a Premises ID.

Breeding Beef- All registered heifers must be identified by ear tattoos according to the regulations set by the various national beef breed associations. NEW: All commercial heifers must be identified by ear tattoos OR a federally-accepted 840 EID electronic identification (EID) tag. Note: Calf-hood brucellosis (Bang's) tattoos are not considered as an official identification tattoo. Breeding beef exhibitors will need to complete an online nomination along with submitting payment online (Show Stock Manager) by the June 15 deadline. DNA is not required for breeding animals.

Market Swine- All market swine must be identified with a federally-accepted 840 EID electronic identification (EID) tag. Market swine must have a sealed official DNA envelope with hair samples for DNA verification turned in to the local Extension office and exhibitors should have completed the online nomination (Show Stock Manager) along with submitting payment online by June 15. Any animal carrying an 840 EID tag will require the exhibitor to obtain a Premises ID.

Market Lambs and Market Goats- All market lambs and market goats must be identified with an official USDA scrapie tag. Market lambs and market goats must have a sealed official DNA envelope with hair samples for DNA verification turned in to the local Extension office and exhibitors should have completed the online nomination (Show Stock Manager) along with submitting payment online by June 15.

Breeding Sheep and Goats- All ewes and does (registered and commercial) must be identified with an official USDA scrapie tag. Registered ewes and does must be identified with the tag/tattoo required by the breed association. Breeding sheep and breeding goat exhibitors will need to complete an online nomination along with submitting payment online (Show Stock Manager) by the June 15 deadline. DNA is not required for breeding animals.

Dairy Cattle- All dairy cattle must be identified on the paper ownership affidavit by photograph, a sketch or by ear tattoo. Dairy cattle paper ownership affidavits must be turned in to the local Extension office by June 15. Dairy exhibitors will not complete the online nomination, only paper. All dairy affidavits must be turned in to the State 4-H office by June 22 to be eligible for exhibition at the State Fair.

Horse- All horses that will be shown at the District &/or State Horse Show must be appropriately identified on the Nebraska Horse identification affidavit and turned in to the local Extension office by May 7.

Rabbits & Poultry- Rabbits and poultry do not have a nomination requirement in order to exhibit at the State Fair. Rabbits will be required to have an ear tattoo by the show entry deadline (August 10).

Reminders

- The due dates listed above mean that all tagging is complete, the animal information and payment should be submitted online via Show Stock Manager, DNA is collected and completed and in the possession of the local Extension office.
- Paper ID sheets WILL NOT be accepted as a form of nomination for State Fair.
- Each exhibitor may nominate a total, between 4-H and FFA, as follows: Market Beef (10), Market Lambs (20), Market Swine (40), and Market Goats (20).



Crucial collaborators for a successful county 4-H program explained

By Kylie Kinley

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a bunch of talented village groups to raise a 4-H program. Extension boards, ag societies, fair boards, 4-H Councils, and 4-H members all play roles in the success of a county 4-H program. If they work together, these entities can better the lives of adults and youth in Nebraska counties.

4-H Council members have one of the most hands-on roles in a 4-H program. Their input can be evident in something as abstract as writing and enforcing county fair ice cream roll contest policy months before the first coffee can full of oreo surprise mix rolls across the floor, or something as tangible as who shows up first with their ATV to fair clean up. 4-H Councils also develop and manage a Council budget to support the 4-H programs, lead and support fund raising activities to reflect the planned budget, and provide resources and recognition to those contributing to the 4-H program (including youth, parents, volunteers, and partners).

The titles **ag society member / fairboard member** are used interchangeably, but “fair board member” is the more colloquial term. Ag society constitutions and by-laws are governed by the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture and the County Agricultural Society Act. Ag Societies have annual meetings, annual budgets, and the ability to levy and assess a tax for their operation. Membership of a county ag society may be elected by the registered voters of the county or appointed by the county board. Ag society members’ duties vary depending on the county, and most are volunteer positions. They often manage the facilities, grounds, entertainment, and 4-H/FFA premiums for county fairs.

Extension Board members might be the least visible of these entities, but just because they aren’t barreling around a fairgrounds in a side by side does not mean their role is less important. The Extension Board provides guidance to Extension staff in establishing and accomplishing Extension education program goals and objectives. They help dispel the myth that Extension is “just the county fair” or “just 4-H.” Volunteers from all areas and business sectors of the county assess current issues and areas of need within the county, help prepare the county extension budget, and assist with local extension programming. Extension Boards belong to the Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards (NACEB), which advocates for Extension’s needs to the Nebraska legislature.

The **4-H member** is the reason for the season, though “we do it for the kids” is more often spoken during fair season than county tax budget season. 4-H members can serve on 4-H Councils as youth members, and can offer their voices at ag society and Extension board meetings. If a 4-H member’s curiosity and zeal for their community is nurtured, they can give back to their counties through any of the previously mentioned entities and help grow agricultural, industrial, and educational opportunities as adults. Ideally, 4-H members work with the partners that help grow Extension in their counties, and those partners lift up youth voices in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Whether a county has two villages or a metropolitan area, the success of its extension programming depends on how well its ag societies, Extension boards, and 4-H Councils fulfill their separate roles while working together to raise up their 4-H members and their communities. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer in one of these groups, reach out to your local extension office for more information.



Diamond Clover

By Melissa Mracek

Do you struggle with how to help your club members set goals for themselves for the 4-H year? Often when we ask youth what their goals are for the 4-H year, they focus on winning a certain award or ribbon color, they forget about the learning piece of their project or all the other opportunities that 4-H offers them. The Diamond Clover award helps to alleviate some of this stress and burden for 4-H Club Leaders.

The Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover program encourages youth to experience different 4-H programs, projects, and events that will help them to stretch their abilities and acquire new skills. Recently the Diamond Clover program has been revised to help engage youth from all delivery methods, including clubs, camps, school enrichment, after school, and special interest groups. Each of the six levels consist of age-appropriate accomplishments. The Diamond Clover program is a great way to start out the new 4-H year. Youth can select several accomplishments that they plan to complete throughout the year. As a club leader, you can revisit these goals on a regular basis to ensure youth are making progress towards their goals. At the end of the year, 4-H members will create a short summary explaining what they did and learned while accomplishing each goal. You can celebrate members as they complete one of their goals by recognizing them or giving them a small prize during the meetings. At the end of the year, they will be recognized by receiving their Diamond Clover level pin.

There are suggested ages for youth to complete the levels, but they can be completed at any age. Youth can only complete one per year. If they are an older member starting this program, they can start at a later level instead of Level 1.

Level 6 – the Diamond level has changed significantly from in previous years. Youth used to have to plan and complete a service-learning project after it had been reviewed by a special committee. It was a two-year commitment. The new requirements for the Diamond Level are like the other levels but encourage youth to take on some of the organizational and leadership roles instead of the participant role. It also stretches the youth to try experiences outside of their county.

Help your members practice setting goals and following through with them by implementing the Diamond Clover program into your meetings today! More information and the application forms can be found at <https://4h.unl.edu/diamond-clover>.



Special Gardening Project

By Elizabeth Exstrom

The Nebraska Extension Special Gardening Project lets 4-H members try their hand at growing unusual vegetables and flowers. The project allows experienced 4-H gardeners to grow something fun, new, and different while letting those new to gardening get their feet wet in this project area.

This project is open to all youth of 4-H age and it will give them the opportunity to learn about growing, harvesting, and exhibiting this tasty vegetable; obtain the tools necessary to be successful gardeners, and learn about the wide range of plant-science related careers.

Each year the Special Garden Project focuses on a different flower or vegetable. The focus of the 2021 project is the Hakurei Turnip. These are not your grandmother's turnips. Hakurei is a white salad turnip that is smooth, round and at its best when harvested under 2". The roots can be eaten raw or cooked, and the tops can also be cooked.

Interested in participating? Youth enroll in the Special Garden Project through 4-H On-Line, then contact their local Extension office to let them know the number packets they will need. The county offices will order and distribute the seeds to the youth.

The flyer about the project, an educational newsletter, and examples of how to exhibit are all available at the website <https://4h.unl.edu/special-gardening-project> or the OneDrive folder <https://go.unl.edu/sqpresources>

4-H members enrolled in the Special Garden Project will:

- Receive a 'packet' of Hakurei turnips (one packet per youth) in April/May
 - Receive a newsletter containing information about:
 - Planting & growing turnips
 - Turnip problems & insects
 - Harvesting & using turnips
 - Exhibiting turnips
 - Be able to enter this tasty vegetable at County and State Fair
- * State Fair Special Garden Project Educational Exhibit Class G-775-001. The educational exhibit is based on what was learned from the project.
- * Special Garden Project Fresh Cut Flowers or Harvested Vegetables G-775-002. The current years' Special Garden Project fresh picked turnips should be entered in this class.

Be on the lookout for other fun county only ways to exhibit this unique vegetable like a story, poem, or poster. Each county is different so be sure to check with your local Extension Office.

In order to improve the program, please remind youth to participate in the evaluation at: <https://go.unl.edu/2021turnipeval>. Youth who complete the evaluation are entered to win a gardening prize.

Questions? Contact Elizabeth Exstrom at elizabeth.exstrom@unl.edu or 308-385-5088.



National 4-H Council Offers “4-H at Home”

By Sarah Polacek



Many people believe that 4-H is a youth program that just allows youth to be involved with the county and state fairs. What some may not realize is that in addition to those events, there are endless opportunities year-round for thousands of members across the nation to be involved through many different formats.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the way we learn turned upside down! For many youth and adults, questions emerged, such as what do we do next and what activities can we do? What is possible to complete at home through 4-H that will advance our curiosity and knowledge while still building skills? That is when the 4-H program stepped up to offer “4-H at Home” activities, experiments, and experiences.

The National 4-H Council compiled amazing resources for youth ages preschool through high school. Categories include, but are not limited to: Agriculture, Agriscience, Animal Science, Career Exploration, Chemistry, Community and Civic Engagement, Computer Science, Cooking, Crafting, Creative Arts, Digital Literacy, Electricity, Engineering, Environmental Science, Financial Literacy, GIS Mapping, Gardening, Health living, Mindfulness, Photography, Physics, Robotics, and STEM. Through the search engine, lessons are easy to filter and select the ones you are most interested in or that supplement your lessons at home!

Learn to make a simple, healthy lunch, visit outer space, discover the secrets to fluffy or crispy cookies, make homemade butter, attend a virtual 4-H camp, classify animals, learn about tracking, make a wind vane, and so much more!

One highlighted experiment titled “Intelligent Eggs” focuses on the principles of buoyancy with a “magic trick” using only household items. You need two 8-ounce glasses of water, four tablespoons sugar, two uncooked eggs, and a laundry marking pencil (found in the laundry detergent section). As an alternative to a laundry marking pencil, you could try a permanent marker. The lesson continues to share the steps needed to complete and learn about “misdirection” and buoyancy as well as the difference in fresh water and water containing dissolved materials. This experiment also offers additional opportunities to dig deeper and check out the full curriculum at the link at the bottom of the lesson plan.

“4-H at Home” activities appear all the time! Check out the website often; as the holidays and seasons change, so do the lessons! Activity guides to cookbooks, systematic experiments, and much more can be found at <https://4-h.org/about/4-h-at-home/>.

Increasing Accessibility to Education Through the Nebraska Promise and the CASNR Change Maker Competition

By Rachel Ibach

Nebraska Promise

On April 17th, 2020, the University of Nebraska's President Ted Carter announced the Nebraska Promise program would take effect in the fall of 2020. This program guarantees that all full-time resident undergraduates whose families have adjusted gross incomes of \$60,000 or less or qualify for the federal Pell Grant can attend any University of Nebraska campus and pay no tuition. Nebraska Promise applies for returning, transfer, and new students, both on-campus and online. No separate application beyond the Free Application for Federal Student Aid is required for this program.

Collegebound Nebraska, the university's existing need-based financial aid program, currently guarantees tuition-free education to 3,000 Nebraska students. The expanded Nebraska Promise will cover approximately an additional 1,000 current and future University of Nebraska students. University leaders hope this program will attract Nebraskans who thought they could not afford a university education.

To be eligible for full tuition coverage under the Nebraska Promise, students must take at least 12 credit hours per semester and maintain a 2.5 grade point average. The Nebraska Promise will cover up to 30 credit hours per academic year. The program does not cover costs beyond tuition like fees, books, or room and board.

Detailed information on the Nebraska Promise program is available in both English and Spanish at www.nebraska.edu/nebraska-promise.

CASNR Change Maker Competition

Students who dare to dream big and tackle big challenges are needed to be change makers in our world. The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln launched the CASNR Change Maker Competition for students who dare to do the extraordinary to address worldwide issues. Eight full-tuition scholarships for the 2020-21 academic year for incoming CASNR students were awarded and nine students in the 6-11th grade competition received \$1,000 CASNR scholarships. The winning incoming student videos were shared on CASNR's Facebook page for the People's Choice Award. The student's video that received the most likes and reactions was awarded an additional \$1,000 textbook scholarship.

Applications for the 2021-2022 Change Maker Competition are open from January 18th to February 19th. To get the latest updates on the competition, follow CASNR on Facebook (www.facebook.com/unlcasnr), Instagram ([unl_casnr](https://www.instagram.com/unl_casnr)), and Twitter ([@UNL_CASNR](https://twitter.com/UNL_CASNR)). For more information contact Taylor Hart at thart6@unl.edu or 402-472-7928 and visit our website at <https://casnr.unl.edu/casnr-change-maker-competition>.