



## Tips on Managing 4-H Programs



### *“Extension Staff Role in Progress/Prospect Shows and Related Events”*

The following guidelines are provided to help staff assess their own role in progress or prospect shows that may be held in the county/area in which they are employed. Progress shows may be a way of providing additional experience and education for 4-Hers with livestock projects. Historically, the intent of progress shows was to provide an additional educational experience so that exhibitors could be more prepared for and comfortable with exhibiting at the county fair. When Extension Staff are obviously involved in the management, advertisement or facilitation of a show, the public often directly associates that show with the University of Nebraska, Cooperative Extension and 4-H. When extension staff are involved, it is expected the event will:

- \$ Provide positive youth development experiences,
- \$ Emphasize education and provide experiences which reflect the mission of Cooperative Extension, and
- \$ Use the 4-H Clover properly, within national and state guidelines.

Given these expectations, we must think carefully about our role as staff and what is represented at the shows. Some points to consider and evaluate the situation are listed below.

1. What is the purpose of the show? Is it to provide youth an opportunity to practice showmanship and preparation of animals for later shows, to learn good sportsmanship and appropriate ways of improving their project? Or is it more likely to provide an experience that does not contribute to the educational goals of the project? Does the show fit within the Eight Essential Elements of 4-H?
2. Consider the rules of the show. Are there any and are they clearly stated? Do they promote the education and experiences of the youth in gaining skills in fitting, training, showmanship, nutrition, etc. Do the rules promote the National Code of Showring Ethics? Is behavior that is appropriate for later 4-H sponsored shows being modeled by participants and facilitators? If the rules are provided from a source other than Cooperative Extension, would we (Cooperative Extension) support those rules?
3. Consider the incentives provided at the show. Emphasis should not be on incentives that detract from the educational experience. Award items related to the project area are especially appropriate (show boxes, clippers, feed troughs, etc). Large monetary jackpots may not be conducive to an educational atmosphere.
4. Consider the other key people involved in the show, including the judge. Are they focused on providing an educational experience for the youth?
5. Consider your own role as a Cooperative Extension Staff member. If you have a major role in the event, is your role educational - either from a livestock perspective or in regard to volunteer development? If this is not an extension sponsored activity, is it clear that you are working as a volunteer, or in a minor role? Regardless of whether you are working as a volunteer or as a staff member in a minor role - is the event something that meets the goals of Cooperative Extension and 4-H? If working as a volunteer or in a minor role, the event should not be advertised in a way to imply that it is sponsored by Cooperative Extension or 4-H, nor should the 4-H or UNL logos be used.
6. Events that are advertised as 4-H in print media must use the 4-H Clover and University of Nebraska-Lincoln wordmark correctly and should consider using the template provided. Consider whether the event is appropriate for the use of these symbols - if not, your involvement as Cooperative Extension staff may not be appropriate. Events that are advertised electronically should meet similar criteria.

The points above are items to consider. Keep in mind that situations may differ and that an event may be outstanding in one regard and marginal in another, but the overall focus of the event should be positive and educational for the youth and families involved. If the overall focus is positive and educational, it appropriate for Cooperative Extension staff to be involved.

