

You've enrolled in 4-H ... now what?!?



4-H may be the last thing on your mind during this busy, festive time of the year. However, December and January are great months to begin your 4-H planning for the new 4-H year. The more pre-planning you do now, the easier it will be on parents, members and leaders as the summer months and county fair draw closer.

Assuming you are already enrolled in 4-H, you now have until April 15 to add or drop 4-H projects. If you are sure you are going to stay in the projects you've signed up for, go ahead and order project manuals to help you complete your projects.

If you already are doing some work on your project, or are enrolled in a livestock/horse/small animal project and you already have animals in your possession, start keeping records of your expenses/income for your project. For animal projects, barn sheets or calendars are great ways to record income and expenses, feed changes and other pertinent project information.

Calendars work great for general project records as well. It is also highly recommended that you print your record books from the state 4-H website to familiarize yourself with the records you will need to keep for your project.

Now is also the time to start asking for help with your project. Many 4-H projects may already have a project leader. If your project does not have a project leader or mentor, the Extension office staff will work closely with you to find a leader or mentor for your project. If you plan to exhibit livestock, a horse or small animals but you do not know where to purchase the animal, the Extension office will have some resources and possible contacts for you. Your club leaders are also great resources for 4-H information.

It's never too early to start on your projects! Whether it's breaking a steer to lead or learning cake decorating techniques, the earlier you start working and practicing, the more successful your project will be. The same is true of record book completion.

Extension Corner

Written by Kindra Plumb

Don't wait until the last minute! Ongoing project planning and project documentation will minimize stressful situations down the road.

A few final tidbits for a successful 4-H year are:

—Attend scheduled club meetings. You will benefit greatly through the leadership, public speaking and teamwork skills learned and practiced while at meetings. Plus, you'll be on top of all 4-H happenings!

—If you don't know, don't hesitate to ask questions. Project leaders, head club leaders, Extension staff and other 4-H families are ready for the opportunity to help.

—Don't be afraid to try something new. You never know where you may find "hidden" talents.

—Read all information that comes from club leaders and the Extension office.

—Learn from your successes and mistakes.

—Make new friends!

—And most importantly, have fun!

For more information about the Phillips County 4-H Program, please contact the Phillips County Extension office at 970-854-3616. Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

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