



# Chemung County 4H

## *Family Guide*

October 1, 2008 - September 30, 2009

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Chemung County 4-H Program. We appreciate that you have chosen to become involved in a program that creates close bonds between members, their families, and leaders. As a member of the 4-H family, you will have an opportunity to meet new people, try new things, learn leadership, citizenship, and build life skills.

Chemung County 4-H has many amazing volunteers helping to make the 4-H program a success. However, your involvement in the 4-H program and 4-H projects is critical to your child's success. Families help youth establish goals, work toward those goals, develop a sense of achievement and communicate effectively about what they have done. You do make a difference and we are glad to have you in our program.

Please take a few minutes to review the information found in this Family Guide. This guide will help you to better understand the unique educational and social opportunities that 4-H can provide for your whole family. Reading and understanding this guide will ensure for a successful 4-H experience for both your children and yourself.

Please don't hesitate to call us if you have any questions. Have a great year!

Sincerely,

Garrett Fenton

4-H Resource Educator

Elaine Noble

4-H Community Educator

### ***"4-H is a family affair."***

When your child enrolls in 4-H, your whole family becomes part of the 4-H education experience. Everyone benefits when families are involved in the 4-H program:

- **4-H members** need family support and encouragement to attend meetings, complete projects and fulfill responsibilities to the club.
- **Families** have an opportunity to enjoy activities and spend time together.
- **4-H leaders** have a lot to juggle. Families can be a big help.
- **The community** benefits when families support community-minded organizations like 4-H. Involved families are more knowledgeable about community issues and therefore more likely to support community efforts.

#### **Here are some suggestions:**

***Meet with leaders at the beginning of each year.*** This meeting may take place before, after or as part of the club's planning meeting. While members should make the final decisions about their projects and activities, it is important to know early in the year the ways in which you can support the club program. Share your interests with club leaders and sign-up for activities when you are available.

***Maintain good communications.*** Stay informed about the "when, where and whys" of both the club's activities and the 4-H club program in general. Share your email address with club leaders and county 4-H staff. Some ways you can stay connected are:

1. Ask leaders if you can assist at club meetings. Offer to host a meeting in your home.
2. Offer to help your kids on projects at home.
3. Ask leaders about special activities such as Public Presentation Day. Be curious and ask questions about the purposes of the program – why it is important for your child's personal development and how you can help your child prepare, as well as the basic facts about time and place.
4. Make time to chat with leaders whenever you bring your child to a 4-H activity.

***Create opportunities to get to know leaders and other parents better.*** For example, host and participate in a "parent night" or "family day" during which members can "show-off" their accomplishments and you can socialize with parents. Share your personal interests, hobbies and family activities.

***Express your appreciation appropriately.*** Remember to say "thank you" to other parents and the leaders involved in your club.

Here are several other ways for you to help your child get the most out of their 4-H experience:

- Attend 4-H meetings and other special 4-H events.
- Guide your child's project work and encourage completion **without doing** the work for the 4-H member.
- Be an example of good sportsmanship so your child will learn to appreciate the success of others.
- Make others in your community aware of 4-H.
- Tell your child you are PROUD of their accomplishments.

#### **What is a 4-H Club?**

4-H is the premier youth development program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Originating in the early 1900's as "four-square education," the 4-H's (head-heart-hands-health) seek to promote positive youth development, facilitate learning and engage youth in the work of their community through the Cooperative Extension Service to enhance the quality of life. For more than a hundred years, 4-H has been dedicated to creating opportunities for youth that broaden skills and aspirations nurturing the full potential of youth.

#### **4-H Club Definition**

A 4-H Club is an organized group of at least five youth from three different families who meet regularly with adult volunteers or staff for a long-term, progressive series of educational experiences.

#### **4-H Club Purpose**

The purpose of a 4-H club is to provide positive youth development opportunities to meet the needs of young people to experience belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity—the Essential Elements—and to foster educational opportunities tied to the Land Grant University knowledge base.

#### **4-H Club Membership**

4-H Club membership is open to all youth without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, or public assistance. All 4-H members must be enrolled in the 4-H club each year. All members and leaders need to fill out an enrollment form and a medical release in case of an emergency.

**Age and grade in school** – In New York State 4-H membership is limited to children enrolled in kindergarten through youth age 19. Kindergarteners must turn 5 by January 1 of the current 4-H year and teenagers may not enroll or re-enroll if they will turn 19 before January 1<sup>st</sup> of the new club year (October 1 to September 30).

**Independent membership** – When circumstances prevent a child from joining a 4-H club that child may participate in the 4-H Club Program by enrolling as an independent member. Independent members work on projects of their choice at their own pace with parental or other adult assistance. They are encouraged to participate in county activities. They must meet the fundraising requirement in order to participate at the Fair and to be considered for award trips.

**Cloverbud membership**—The New York State Cloverbud Policy specifies that a child must turn five by January 1 of the current 4-H year and must have been enrolled in Kindergarten **at the beginning of the school year** to be eligible to participate in the 4-H club program as a cloverbud member.

Children continue to participate as cloverbuds through age eight. However, a third grader who turns nine during the club year may choose to enroll either as a cloverbud participant or as a regular 4-H club member. The determination must be made at the beginning of the club year by consensus of a parent/guardian, leader and Extension Educator.

**Regular 4-H Membership** - Once a member reaches the age of 9 by January 1 of the current 4-H year they are considered "regular" of "full fledged" members and are eligible to participate in 4-H functions on regional, state, and national levels. A member can remain a member through the program year of their 19th birthday (any member reaching their 19th birthday before Jan. 1st is ineligible for membership).

#### **4-H Fundraising Commitment**

Due to county and state budget cuts 4-H has experienced a decline in program funding. Since this occurrence the Fundraising Committee decided to make fundraising mandatory for each\* 4-H member in order to maintain our program in its current status. Each member must fulfill their fundraising requirement by June 1st. There will be 2 county-wide fundraising opportunities for 4-H members. Each member can fulfill their commitment by participating in the county fundraiser or parents may also send the office a check for \$25.00 to enroll their child in place of fundraising.

\* There is a per family cap of (2) fundraising commitments or \$50.00 in cash.

**Note: No child is barred membership as a result of not being able to complete the fundraising requirement. Please call the 4-H office to notify us of special circumstances!**

#### **Structure of a 4-H Club**

- Enrolls at least 5 youth members from at least 3 families.
- Conducts a minimum of 6 regular club meetings per year, with many holding 9-12 regular meetings throughout most or all of the year, and often supplemented by project meetings, camps, fairs, and other 4-H learning activities.
- Selects youth officers or youth leaders to provide leadership to the club.
- Meets in any location—a home, community center, military installation, library, public housing site, school, afterschool program, and/or many other places.
- Adapts to and supports mobility of youth and parents—linking them to 4-H programs in other counties and states.
- Meets interests and needs of youth in same-age or cross-age groupings and using single project or multiple project formats.
- Is advised by adult staff or volunteers who have been screened and trained.

#### **4-H Projects**

A 4-H Project is a planned sequence of age-appropriate and research-based learning opportunities. As a result of long-term active engagement in the project, the youth gains knowledge and develops skills based on planned goals and identified outcomes. 4-H project work is guided by trained adults who help youth set goals and provide access to appropriate curricula and resources.

#### **The Educational and Youth Development Principles of a 4-H Club**

- Uses experiential learning (learning by doing) as a primary teaching approach.
- Must have programming that shows evidence of promoting the Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development.
- Includes planned opportunities to learn and apply life skills such as leadership, citizenship, community service and public speaking.
- Provides individual project experiences to develop in-depth knowledge about science, engineering and technology; citizenship; and healthy living.
- Provides programs, curricula, and procedures that are based in research and are developmentally appropriate.
- Provides members and volunteers access to resources of land-grant universities and to county, state, and national 4-H opportunities.
- Fosters youth-adult partnerships that encourage active involvement and participation by youth and adults.
- Provides safe and healthy physical and emotional environments.
- Offers projects in a wide range of subject matter areas relevant to the Land Grant University knowledge base to meet youth needs and interests.

#### **4-H Vision**

4-H is a world leader in developing youth's ability to become productive citizens and catalysts for positive change to meet the needs of a diverse and changing society. Through 4-H youth development education, youth will:

- Practice effective problem-solving and decision making skills.
- Practice responsible health behaviors.
- Be environmental stewards.
- Possess positive work attitudes and skills.
- Value diversity.
- Have a strong sense of community and social responsibility.
- Contribute to positive relationships with family, friends, peers and community.
- Demonstrate communication and leadership skills.
- Value lifelong learning. Feel the personal pride that comes with mastery.
- Feel valued and utilized as a resource in the community.

#### **4-H Mission**

The mission of the 4-H Youth Development Program is to create supportive environments in which culturally diverse youth and adults can reach their fullest potential. In support of this mission, Extension will:

- Provide formal and informal community-focused experiential learning.
- Help youth develop skills that will benefit them throughout life.
- Foster leadership and volunteerism in youth and adults.
- Build internal and external partnerships for programming and funding.

- Strengthen families and communities.
- Use research-based knowledge available from the land grant university system (Cornell) and other sources.

**The accomplishment of this mission will result in capable, competent, and caring citizens.**

#### **4-H Emblem**

The national emblem is a four leaf clover with the letter “H” on each leaf.

#### **The 4 H’s**

The four H’s stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

#### **The Pledge**

4-H members should learn the national 4-H pledge:

“I pledge My Head to clearer thinking (point to head)  
 My Heart to greater loyalty, ( place hand over heart)  
 My Hands to larger service and (open both hands, palms up)  
 My Health to better living, for (stand with hands at sides)  
 My club, my community, my country, and my world”

#### **Motto**

“**To Make the Best Better**” should be the objective of each 4-H leader.

#### **Slogan**

“**Learn by Doing**”

#### **4-H Values**

The 4-H Youth Development Program believes in the following value statements:

1. Youth development is the focus of all program activities. 4-H allows individuals to unlock their potential through:
  - Active involvement in self-determination of learning activities.
  - Quality experiences that stimulate skills for living and life-long learning.
  - Relationships that empower people to help themselves and each other voluntarily.
  - Interaction with caring adults and peers to create a positive, family-like support system.
2. In successful youth development education, partnerships are essential for:
  - Resource development
  - Program innovation
  - Delivery capabilities
  - Creating and delivering caring environments
  - Access to research-based knowledge
3. Volunteerism is fundamental to:
  - Delivering quality programs
  - Developing adult educational capacity
  - Teaching youth to volunteer
4. Diversity strengthens the ability of the 4-H Youth Development Program to:
  - Develop positive values among program participants in today’s global society.
  - Provide opportunities for program involvement regardless of economic, social, or cultural status; age; religion; disability; or gender.

#### **4-H Club Leadership**

**Leader Guidelines working with “Cloverbuds”** - While not all leaders will choose to enroll Cloverbuds in their club, for those who do, these Guidelines for working with Cloverbuds have been established. Additional guidelines are available at the 4-H office and potential leaders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these guidelines.

Listed below are policies that must be followed:

- Staff and/or volunteers (youth or adult) who will be working with cloverbuds must receive training related to working with this audience.
- The volunteer (youth or adult) should meet the following criteria:
  - \* Have knowledge of the child he/she is working with .
  - \* Have a working understanding of developmental characteristics of this age group.

- \* Is familiar with, or has been adequately introduced to, the subject matter/topic the youth will be introduced to.
- \* For youth who are not as developed physically, emotionally, or intellectually, the ration must be 1:1 (especially regarding hands-on activities).

**Safety policies for all members** - Cornell Cooperative Extension staff and volunteers maintain the right to dismiss any project animal that poses a safety concern to any 4-H participant or the public. Programs may be stopped for failing to address safety concerns.

**Volunteers** - Parents, friends, and family members are all encouraged to help out the club and county program. There are several opportunities for volunteers to serve on any of the countywide committees .

**Transporting Youth** - All adult volunteers involved in transporting youth (other than their own), will need to have an enrollment form on file and must complete and sign a *Motor Vehicle Record Request Permission Form* in order to be covered by our liability insurance.

**Insurance** - Each 4-H member and adult volunteer whose enrollment form is on file at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Office, is protected automatically by accident insurance. Insurance coverage begins when the enrollment form is received. The 4-H staff must be notified within 24 hours of an accident. The insured must be participating in a 4-H activity or event. Further information about insurance is available from Cornell Cooperative Extension- Chemung County.

**4-H Club Leadership**- The 4-H club must have one adult leader called an organizational leader. The organizational leader is responsible for ensuring all members and leaders fill out an enrollment form and a medical release form. Leaders may choose the age group or gender they are most comfortable working with. Mixed gender clubs are recommended. Information on projects and ideas for club activities are provided at the 4-H office, 734-4453.

#### Leader Policy

**Leaders** - The adult leaders of 4-H clubs are “volunteers”, all 4-H Leaders and co-leaders are considered **Category I\*** Volunteers. A 4-H leader must be at least 21 years old. 4-H volunteers must complete an application, background check and have references checked before becoming leaders.

All new 4-H leaders must go through a “leader training” which will be conducted by an Extension 4-H staff member. “Leader Trainings” will be held as a group at a given date supplied by the 4-H office. Individual trainings are also available for those leaders unable to attend a group leader training.

**Co-Leaders** - For those adults between the ages of 18-21 who want to be actively involved with the leadership of a club, may serve as co-leaders until such time as they turn 21 at which time they may become full fledged leaders. Co-leaders are also considered **Category I\*** volunteers.

**Note:** All existing 4-H leaders are now **required** to attend a “leader training “ as a refresher course **once** every 3 years to keep their leader status in good standing within the county.

**Project Leaders** - Project leaders are teen 4-Hers to adults who assist with a particular project. Project leaders are considered **Category II\*** volunteers.

#### Volunteer Categories

**Category I Volunteer** - (Program Volunteer) An individual whose primary volunteer role involves direct work with program participants throughout the calendar year (EX: leading a 4-H/youth club, Master Gardener, teaching a series of classes, etc.) Background checks will be required. Category IA volunteers are those who will require fingerprinting because of additional requirements.

**Category II Volunteer**- (Casual Volunteer) An individual who accepts a limited volunteer assignment (Ex: teaching a short-term course, assisting with fund development, serving on a program committee, etc.) Since casual volunteers do not receive background checks, they must not have on-going or unsupervised contact with youth, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities.

#### Award Trips & Other Opportunities

##### **Public Presentation Trip (Summer Trip)**

Time: July or August; Ages 5 & up

4-H'ers who completed a Public Presentation in February are invited to go on the Summer Trip. This is a day trip that is focused on fun!! Ideas for future trips are always welcome!

##### **New York State Fair Teen Leader Program**

Time: End of August/Labor Day; Ages: 13 & up

Teens who have shown their enthusiasm and maturity at county Fair and before, have the opportunity to attend NY State Fair as a teen assistant. Besides meeting youth from across NY State, the teens set up the county booth, conduct make and take project lessons, and spend time exploring the great NY State Fair.

##### **Career Exploration**

Time: Last week of June; Ages 13 & up

A great chance to find out about campus living as you spend three days learning about a career of your choice. Approximately 300 youth participate each year and the teens tell me this is a great trip!

#### ***4-H Capital Days***

Time: Mid March; Ages 14 & over

As county delegates, up to three youth travel to Albany to spend two days in our state capitol. While there, 4-h'ers have the opportunity to sit down with our legislators and State Senator to discuss issues that effect them. They also interact with other delegates in the quest to pass a state budget. Visits to the NY State Museum, Court of Appeals Building and many other interesting tours are included.

#### ***Agri-Business Career Conference (ABC Trip)***

Time: October; Ages 14 & over

The ABC trip is held in the Cobleskill, NY area and is jointly sponsored by the New York State 4-H office, and the NY State Farm Bureau. Youth explore the diverse opportunities available throughout our state in agri-business related careers. This is a hands-on trip with lots of touring opportunities and great guest speakers. Youth interested in Natural resources/Environmental Careers also benefit.

#### ***Vermont Career Exploration Trip***

Time: Every other April (On even years); Ages 14 & over

This is an exciting four days spent exploring careers in culinary arts, hotel restaurant management, fabric technology, merchandizing and advertising. Participants have visited Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, the Vermont Culinary Institute, Vermont teddy Bear Factory, and Polar Tech Company.

#### ***Animal Crackers***

This is a day trip to Cornell Vet School offered each spring for 4-H'ers involved in Animal Science Projects, and who would like additional hands-on learning opportunities with the help of Cornell veterinary School staff and students. The day is designed with three animal areas focused on each year. 4-H'ers choose the one they are most interested in.

#### ***Veterinary Clinics & Workshops***

These workshops and clinics are held throughout the year and the topics vary from species to species as well as subject to subject. The goal is to afford an educational animal science practical experience in a friendly and fun environment.

#### ***Dairy Bowl***

Time: March & April; Ages 8-19

Dairy bowl competition is open to **any** 4-H'er interested in learning more about the dairy industry. This is a team event competition and includes subjects such as: current dairy industry events, machinery, genetics, veterinary related questions. It is **not** a prerequisite to own or exhibit dairy animals to participate. Teams practice on the county level and then compete at the regional competition in March. The top 6 individuals from each region and "A" team will have the opportunity to compete at the state competition in April.

#### ***Livestock Skill-A-Thon***

Time: Labor Day or Labor Day Weekend at State Fair; Ages 8-19

This program is open to **any** 4-H'er who has and interest in learning more about livestock, breeding, equipment ,feeds, current events, animal health This competition is a hands-on activity that educates participants about a wide range of livestock animals and practices.

#### ***Dairy Challenge***

Time: End of August, State Fair; Ages: 8-19

This program is also open to **any** 4-H'er who has an interest in the dairy industry and appreciates a hands-on atmosphere. Equipment, tools, feeds, cattle judging, and animal health are topics of the competition

#### ***Shadows Dances***

Time: 2 Saturdays a month Sept. -June.

These dances are for middle school age children and sponsored by Back Stage Kidz 4-H Club. Any middle school age youth is welcome to attend. High School age 4-Hers, and other volunteers help to "chaperone" the dances.

#### ***The "4-H Spirit" Newsletter***

"The Spirit" 4-H Newsletter is now published semi-monthly. The "Spirit" includes highlights from 4-H activities in previous months, as well as general 4-H information. There is also a section for a calendar of upcoming 4-H events and deadlines. Any club can call the office to get their upcoming 4-H activity listed, as well as submit 4-H related news for the "Spirit". The items and contents chosen to be printed in the "Spirit" will be at the discretion of 4-H staff and available space for that month. The Spirit is available electronically and will only be mailed if requested.