



4-H Projects vs. County Fair Exhibits

What's the difference between 4-H projects and fair exhibits? A **4-H "Project"** is an area of interest you want to learn more about (like a hobby). This is what you sign-up for during enrollment in 4-HOnline (i.e. horse, electricity, dogs, photography, etc.). A project is intended to help you explore, learn, and practice skills in your areas of interest. Youth must choose their projects at the time of enrollment so they have plenty of time to learn about or practice with their project area before the fair.

A **County Fair "Exhibit"** is what you actually take to the fair – like the cabbage you grew, the animal you trained, or the rocket you built while exploring and learning about your projects. There are always things you do while exploring your project area that you do not take to the fair as exhibits and that is ok. Remember: the point of the project is to learn how to do something new and better and an exhibit will help you do that!



Why Exhibit?

- ♦ The 4-H project is designed to help young people learn practical skills, develop abilities and acquire knowledge on topics of interest to them.
- ♦ The county fair is just "one part" of the total learning experience for youth involved with 4-H youth development programs. An exhibit is "one part" of participation in a project area.
- ♦ Exhibit judging in a fair gives 4-H'ers an opportunity to know where their exhibit stands in relation to other exhibits and how well they did compared to an ideal. The award given recognizes the completion of a task.



Fair Judging – What to Expect

The fair is a great opportunity for youth to get feedback and evaluation on the projects on which they have chosen to work during the year. This experience can be both motivating and educational for 4-Hers. Critiques from judges can serve as a guide to further improvement. The judging process is probably more valuable than the award or recognition. To plan, practice, and present a finished product is to “learn by doing.”

Types of Fair Judging

What is Face-to-Face judging? Face-to-face judging of certain fair projects is performed to help exhibitors learn the strengths and weaknesses of their project directly from the judge. Exhibitors report to the judge with their projects at the designated time. They meet face-to-face with the judge, who learns more about the work the exhibitor put into the entry while the judge evaluates it. Exhibitors then receive a ribbon for the quality of the exhibit & knowledge of their project, as well as new information they can use to do better next year.



What is Danish judging? The Danish system of judging provides more exhibitors a chance to receive a ribbon for their entries. Instead of placing only the best four exhibits and giving them a blue, red, white, or pink ribbon (like in Open Class) all entries are placed. All entries receive a premium and ribbon. The number of blue, red, white, and pink ribbons a judge hands out depends on the number of entries in the class. For example, if there are 8 entries in a class, up to 2 can receive a blue rating, up to 4 red ratings, up to 6 white ratings, and up to 8 pink ratings.

What is Conference Judging? Conference judging is a combination of face-to-face and Danish judging. In conference style judging, the exhibitors and exhibits come before the judge by Class. The judge may ask youth questions about their project and use the knowledge as well as the quality of the exhibit to place the entries according to the Danish method of placing.

