

# Planning Your Year Ahead

A well-planned 4-H program gives guidance and direction to club leaders and members. It is an important hands-on, minds-on learning activity that allows everyone to have a voice in what the group does during the year ahead. It helps young people develop planning and management skills. Advanced planning offers many advantages:

- Outlines each person's responsibilities
- Gives everyone ample time to prepare for meetings and events
- Allows each member to be a part of decisions affecting the club
- Provides each member with specific tasks during the year
- Helps assure a balanced program with a variety of activities
- Permits families to better participate in 4-H events
- Promotes wide participation from members and volunteers
- Helps assure the kinds of programs and activities that 4-H members really want

## Consider the Situation

- Consider the club members' ages, where they live, and what they do. Remember to consider their involvement with other activities and organizations.
- Study the community: schools, businesses, and people. How can 4-H work with other groups to develop a good program and improve your community?
- Refer to the current emphasis in the county 4-H program, noting the training available, county or district events and activities, and emerging areas of interest and support.

## Establish Club Goals

What do the young people want their club to achieve during the year? Goals state what the club members would like to see the club accomplish. They should be developed from the interests of club members and other considerations. Here are some examples of possible club goals:

- Promote 4-H and recruit new 4-H members
- Involve parents more in program activities
- Learn more about specific topics, such as careers, health, pet care, or computers
- Participate in community service activities
- Participate in project training meetings
- Receive more assistance from project leaders
- Promote youth participation in local 4-H programs and events

When specific goals are defined, youth and adult leaders should guide club members in determining exactly what needs to be done to achieve each goal. For example, to accomplish the goal of developing greater parent involvement, a committee might plan a parents' night or plan visits with each parent in their homes.

### **Determine Events and Activities**

- Select activities compatible to youth interest.
- Decide which goals should receive greater emphasis.
- Keep club goals in mind in order to select appropriate activities.
- Work with committees during the year to share responsibilities among everyone.

### **Prepare the Program Plan**

- Make sure the program is planned and approved by the club.
- Keep good minutes when planning.
- Present the complete plan for the year in simple writing and distribute to each member, parent, and leader.

An annual 4-H program typically includes the following activities:

- Meetings that take place on a fixed date every month
- Educational field trips or presentations by special guests
- Recreational activities (games, songs, etc.) for each meeting
- Special events such as parties, dances, or picnics
- At least one community service project
- Two or three projects lasting at least 2 months each
- One fund-raising activity
- At least one opportunity for each member to make a presentation
- One club recognition activity
- One promotional activity during National 4-H Week
- One meeting to plan the program for the following year