



Why 4-H Fairs?

4-H Fairs provide time for learning, celebration

4-H Fairs help youth develop vital life skills, such as:

- Leadership
- Organization
- Thinking critically
- Setting goals
- Time management
- Communication

We've all seen photos of long-ago county fairs, when people from around the town would gather to show off and celebrate the town's main focus — agriculture.

Today, county fairs remain **vibrant venues**, changing to reflect their communities yet remaining a treasured **annual tradition** and attracting scores of new families, as well as faithful fair-goers.

4-H fairs offer 4-H members the opportunity to grow in many ways:

- **Exhibiting** helps youth learn to set goals, work toward those goals, develop standards, get a sense of achievement and communicate effectively about what they have done.
- 4-H members have the chance



to **exhibit** their projects.

and other 4-H topic areas

- 4-H members are able to **share their knowledge** of civic engagement, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), healthy living, agriculture,
- 4-H members gain **leadership and volunteer experience** by helping to plan, organize and run county fairs.

To learn more:
nys4h.cce.cornell.edu

Youth can showcase varied interests at 4-H fairs



4-H and Cornell Cooperative Extension make it possible for youth to participate in robotics contests at the New York State Fair.

At a 4-H fair today, you might find children grooming their goats or shining up their saddles for the horse show, but it's just as likely that you'll find them programming their robot or displaying a community map made with GIS data.

Today's 4-H fairs reflect the evolving interests of youth in the world today. And while many youth continue working with animals, growing things in their gardens, or refining their sewing and cooking skills, 4-H contests have expanded to new

venues.

In each competition, youth are guided by judges skilled in the area, who offer feedback, encouragement, tips and advice.

These hands-on experiences help youth improve skills, learn the importance of following rules carefully, gain confidence in interacting with judges, and speak with

confidence about their project.

They do all of this while handling the excitement and nerves that come from public presentation.



A 4-H member presents how to care for a pet rabbit. Along with basic care, she has also made an agility course for her rabbit.



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Teens take the reins at Tompkins 4-H Fair

4-H'ers, ages 8 - 19 years of age, participate in the New York State Fair and are provided opportunities to:

- Display what they have learned
- Enhance individual learning & skill development
- Receive recognition
- Learn & recognize standards of quality
- Learn & apply research-based subject matter
- Promote public awareness of the 4-H Youth Development program

The Fair serves as a “learning laboratory” for youth. 4-H members learn the importance of evaluation based upon pre-described standards; to develop positive **sportsmanship** skills; to volunteer one’s time and skills to accomplish a common goal; to build leadership skills by working with staff and volunteers; and to feel good about one’s self and accomplishments.

Emma Jesch, current secretary of the 4-H Youth Fair, reflects on the importance of the fair experience. “As a non-farm kid, I’ve grown up without having livestock in my life, but at Fair, I had the opportunity to lead cows in “Animal Buddies” and compete for

showmanship in “Round Robin”. That’s what makes the Fair so special – it leads you directly out of your comfort zone. Fair also means **leadership** to me. Many of my favorite memories started out as simple leadership opportunities as an Assistant or Steward and grew into the role of a Superintendent. My experiences in working on the Fair Focus, a newspaper written and produced by youth, gave me a taste for my future journalism career.”

Ethan Woodie, new member to the Tompkins County 4-H Youth Fair Board, says fair is important “because it allows kids to share their projects and

have someone who hasn’t been teaching them give a good opinion of their work.”

The value of the 4-H Youth Fair and impact on the lives of the young people reach far beyond the blue ribbon – the **skills** they learn better prepare them for the challenges of college and careers and will prepare them to be engaged in their communities as adults.



4-H fairs connect kids to Cornell

As New York’s land grant university, Cornell University offers support for 4-H youth programs across the state.

Youth and adults who participate and plan 4-H fairs use Cornell resources and project materials in many ways.

Youth consult Cornell research in the areas of animal science, engineering, environmental issues, horticulture, geospatial sciences, health, human ecology and other areas as they prepare their exhibits.

Extension educators apply

research on effective educational practices, youth development principles, and community-building activities. They also help evaluate the fair’s goals, objectives to improve the quality of the fair, and the learning opportunities it provides youth.

For more information

To learn more about the New York State 4-H fairs, visit:

nys4h.cce.cornell.edu

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Hands-on learning

Youth who are involved in “hands-on” activities take away much more from the lesson than those who listen to a lesson, but aren’t interactively involved.

This experiential approach to learning involves **real-life problem solving**, so 4-H fairs offer the ideal opportunity for **intensive learning**.

While preparing for the fair, young people learn more about themselves and what motivates them. They learn how to make decisions, communicate their plans, respond and relate to others, manage time and acquire and use information.



Hands-on exhibits offer 4-H presenters and the public an opportunity to get excited about science. Activities teach fair-goers simple scientific principles of a more complex issue, such as nanobiotechnology, through a fun activity.

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