

Letter of Intent to Collaborate to Support 4-H and FFA Youth

The purpose of this letter is to clearly articulate our intent to work cooperatively to support young people who are interested in agriculture, agri-business and leadership development. This letter acknowledges that specific agreements related to county fairs, and other competitive events will have to be developed at the local level if the administrators of the individual local programs find that necessary.

The rationale for this letter is that young people who are interested in agriculture should be encouraged to achieve all that they can achieve without artificial intervention on the part of those who propose to support their continued growth towards becoming agricultural professionals. It is inappropriate for the Extension Service or the Department of Education to place statewide restrictions on the ability of a young person to exercise their right to develop a full scale enterprise or project or maximize their educational opportunities. Such limits should exist only to the extent that local facilities/resources may limit some opportunities or individual and family resources may limit the scope of an individual's program.

While the educational goals of 4-H and FFA are similar, the specific requirements for success in each organization are unique and distinct, members should be encouraged to achieve excellence up to the limits of their abilities within each organization without interference from any other organization. To this point, neither 4-H nor FFA have agreements limiting participation because of membership in any other organization. However, the partnering organizations endorse the guiding principles attached to this letter of intent.

Guiding Principles:

Members wishing to participate in both 4-H and FFA should be encouraged to do so.

4-H or FFA members may participate in any program offered by their respective organizations.

In the case of animal projects, if possible, students should identify separate animals for each organization and separate records to meet the reporting format requirements of the respective organization.

In the case of project enterprises, a member may engage in the same enterprise in one or both of the organizations, but should not enroll the same specific animal or exhibit in both organizations at the same time and event. For example, if a member wishes to participate in both 4-H and FFA with their sheep program, they would not be able to show the same animal in both 4-H and FFA, but they would have the option of having one set of animals for their FFA program and a different set of animals for their 4-H programs, with separate records according to the requirements of the respective organizations. Members may use the same animal in both organizations for performance events (horses and dogs).

These Guiding Principles are not intended to imply that any local organization should/can not limit the total number of animals or exhibits that an exhibitor could bring to the competition for awards and premiums. Those decisions should be made locally and should be based on what is in the best interest of the programs within the limits of the local resources.

In non-exhibit projects such as public speaking, members should be encouraged to develop different speeches in order to meet the format and judging criteria of the respective organizations, however, the student may use the same basic content and structure or enter an item of similar quality and content.

It is recommended that district or county meetings be held with agents, agricultural and natural resources teachers, and local organization leaders to discuss their roles and to determine local application. Frequent contact between the agents, teachers and leaders for mutual support and planning of leadership development programs are encouraged.