Dear 4-H member,

As a 4-H member, you get to take part in different activities. In this issue, you’ll learn about some of the fun and interesting things that 4-H members have the opportunity to do.

Judging Contests

You may enjoy 4-H judging contests. Contests begin at the local level. If you win, you go on to regional and state levels. Most of the State Contests are held in June at the University of Illinois. Older members who compete on the state teams may go on to the national level. Some contests have age limits, so check with your 4-H leader to see which contests you may enter.

There are judging contests for horses, beef, sheep, swine, dairy, meats, and poultry. There are also contests for forestry, wildlife, and horticulture. Each contest has its own rules. In most of them, 4-H members judge a number of classes. A class is a group of animals or other items that fit into the same group. In the contest, judges rank the items or animals from best to worst. For example, a team member may judge and rank a class of four steers or four flower or shrub samples. In some contests, members must tell why they put the animals or items in that order.

Quiz Bowls

Quiz bowls are a good way to share what you know about horses or dairy animals. In the horse bowls and dairy bowls, there are questions about animal health, nutrition, and physiology. Responses are timed. Quiz bowls also take place at the county/unit, regional, and state levels. Older members who win on the state level go on to compete nationally. Ask your leader for more information.

Public Presentations and Demonstrations

One of the most important skills that 4-H members can learn is speaking in front of a group. In 4-H, members have lots of chances to practice this skill. During 4-H meetings, you have probably watched members give a talk or demonstration. Soon it will be your turn to talk about one of your projects. It can be a little hard to do the very first time. It gets easier with practice.

Club members who want to improve their public speaking skills can take part in the public presentations contest. There are many types of public speaking to choose from. You can do a demonstration, a formal speech, an illustrated speech, or an oral interpretation. You can also try extempore speaking, being a master of ceremonies, or performing an original work, such as a poem or comedy routine that you have written. Ask your leader to tell you about these types of speaking. Are you taking a foods project? In the food demonstration contest, you can show how much you know about food or display your food preparation skills.
Public presentation and food demonstration contests take place first at the county/unit level and then at the state level. Sometimes, two members can work on these speeches and demonstrations. Ask a friend to do one with you!

Do you like gardening or flowers? You may want to try the horticulture demonstration and speaking contest. You can compete in one of three groups. Ask your leader to tell you more about them. In the “Speaking of Horticulture” contest, you can give a talk with or without visuals. These contests also take place at the county/unit, and state levels. Older members who win on the state level can enter a national contest.

**Rocket Launch**

If you are interested in flying or space, you can take part in a statewide rocket launch. The launch is in June at the University of Illinois. Each county can send ten members. If you would like to go, call your local Extension office.

**4-H Camp**

If you enjoy the outdoors and like to make new friends, 4-H camp is for you! Campers always have a great time. All Illinois counties take part in the 4-H camping program.

Camps usually have lots of art and nature activities. They also have sports, including water sports. Your 4-H leader and county Extension office can tell you more about camp dates, costs, and activities. Most camp weeks are open to kids who aren’t in 4-H. Invite a friend to learn how much fun 4-H can be!

**In 4-H, Learning Is Fun!**

When you take part in these events, you learn and have fun at the same time. Judging teaches you how to make decisions. It also improves your observation skills. Quiz bowls teach you to think quickly, and you learn about many different subjects. Public speaking and demonstrations help you learn to express yourself in front of an audience. At 4-H camp, you learn new skills and make new friends. What do all of these activities have in common? They teach you skills you will use the rest of your life. They’re also fun to do!

Be sure to check out the Illinois 4-H Web site at http://www.4-H.uiuc.edu.