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Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service 4-H 141



PRESENTATIONS



IMPROVING Your 4-H Presentation Skills

Member Manual
Level II



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Leo E. Lucas, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.





PRESENTATIONS

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IMPROVING

Your

4-H Presentation Skills

In Level I you followed the mileposts to learning the basics of a 4-H demonstration. You moved past the mileposts of:

1. Selecting a topic
2. Making a brief outline
3. Assembling equipment
4. Making charts and visuals
5. Writing a script
6. Reading the script with action
7. Practice
8. Polish
9. Presentation



You probably had fun at your 4-H meeting showing and telling the other 4-H members about something of interest to you. As you started to learn the art of speaking in front of a group, you might have been nervous. However, by giving more 4-H presentations, you will begin to develop more self confidence and poise. This publication is designed to help improve your presentation skills by:

- Learning how to "sharpen up" your 4-H presentation.
- Learning how to make and use effective visual aids.
- Learning the difference between a demonstration and an illustrated talk.
- Learning the basic principles in giving a team presentation.
- Learning the necessary skills in giving a foods presentation.
- Learning the necessary skills in giving a live animal presentation.

"Sharpening Up" Your 4-H Presentation

Interesting, fun and educational 4-H Presentations just don't happen by accident, they are planned. The following suggestions will help you "sharpen up" your 4-H Presentation.

Good Outline — A good outline will help you organize the steps you will need to follow in your 4-H presentation and will help you determine the equipment, supplies and illustrations needed. Organization is essential for a good presentation in which the message is coordinated with the steps and the best use of time is made.

In starting your outline, you will:

—List the important steps and processes that are to be discussed.

—Arrange the steps in logical order.

—Outline the explanation necessary to go with each step or process.

—List the necessary material, equipment, illustrations, models, etc., needed.

Your outline will cover the three main parts of a 4-H Presentation, the introduction, body, and summary. The outline on the following page can serve as a guide.

Title — A clever title will help you get the attention of your audience. The title should be short and eye catching. If posters are used, the first poster should be your title poster. "All Fit For The Fair" would attract more attention than "How To Wash And Groom My Lamb For The Show".

The title should attract the attention of the audience and hint at the subject matter. "A Few Cutting Remarks" could be the title for a presentation on scissors and shears.

Introduction — This is the "interest-getter". Your opening remarks will play a big part in how the audience will react to your presentation. Tell your audience your topic is important. Your opening should be interesting, original, and clever, but keep it brief to save time for the main part of your presentation.

A quotation, question, illustration, unusual statement, startling facts, story or poem could be used.

Following your opening remarks (introduction), move right into the body of the presentation. Do not let the interest of your audience wane by reintroducing yourself at this point. You were introduced at the beginning.

Transitions — Your presentation should have a clear transition between the introduction and body and the body and summary. It should flow smoothly, but at the same time, should let the audience know that you are making the change.

Between the introduction and body, you could use statements like:

- "And now I'll show you the steps to follow..."
- "To make this nutritious snack, I'll be using..."
- "To build this gun rack, you will need..."

Between the body and summary, you could use statements like:

- "In summary, I will review the main steps..."
- I have shown you the advantages of..., in summary, they are..."
- "In conclusion, let's summarize the main points in..."

Equipment — 4-H Presentations vary in the amount of equipment needed. As you use more equipment, increased organization is needed so your presentation runs smoothly. Try to follow these points:

- Make a checklist of all needed equipment and supplies. Index cards can be used for the checklist.
- Choose equipment that is practical.
- If electrical equipment is used, include an extra extension cord. Be sure your electrical equipment is dependable and check it out before your presentation.

4-H PRESENTATION PLANNING OUTLINE

Catchy
Title _____

Subject
Area _____

-
-
- I. Introduction (outline) — Why topic was selected, why it is important, etc.
- A. "Attention getting" opening statement
 - B. Information about topic and why it is important
 - C. Transition statement
-
-

- II. Body (outline steps) — How it is done, why it is done.

What To Do	What To Say	Supplies, Equipment & Visuals Needed

- A. Transition statement
-
-

- III. Summary — What was accomplished...What it meant to the demonstrator...What it can mean to the audience...

- A. Important principles emphasized or "big ideas"

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

- B. Closing statement

- C. Ask for questions
-
-

- If many small items are needed, place them on towel-covered trays for easy movement. Organize the trays to fit the steps in the presentation.

- Keep your work space clear and neat. Place equipment and supplies not needed at once on a second table to the side or behind you. However, you should avoid turning your back on the audience.

- Be sure each part of your presentation is visible. Use step shelves, slant boards or mirrors as needed.

- Do not try to "speak over" noisy equipment.

Quoting References — You probably used many sources of information as you gathered facts, data and information about the subject of your presentation. This accurate, up-to-date and complete information could come from project manuals, extension publications, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, etc.

If appropriate, you could quote your source of information during the body of the presentation or you could quote your source just before you ask for questions.

It is important to let your audience know where you get your information. By quoting your references, you add credibility to your presentation.

Answering Questions — At the conclusion of your 4-H Presentation, you should ask if there are any questions. It is a good idea to either repeat the question or work the question into your answer. This way, you will be sure the audience heard both the question and answer.

If you cannot answer the question, simply say, "I'm sorry, I don't know the answer to that question." You could suggest where the answer might be found or offer to find the answer and let the person know.

???

Personal Appearance — Your personal appearance will make a lasting impression. You need to dress **neatly** and **appropriately** for the topic you are presenting and be well groomed. If you are working with foods, use an apron and hair net or chef's hat. In the area of mechanics and live animals, coveralls or blue jeans would be appropriate. A party dress, suit and tie or a clown outfit might be appropriate — it just depends on your topic.

Avoid wearing **excessive** jewelry, accessories and make-up — this is not the time to show off your wardrobe or a new, creative look.

Good posture is needed. Stand tall and don't lean on the table. Also avoid distracting mannerisms such as pushing back your hair or pushing up your glasses.

Helpful Hints

- Number your charts and posters in the lower left hand corner on the front side. Use small numbers. This makes it easy to check to see if you have all of them in the proper order.

- Use the pointer for pointing — then lay it down.

- Practice in front of a mirror. That's what your audience is going to see. How's your eye contact, movement and appearance?

- Do not chew gum.

- Use note cards, not a manuscript. Note cards should contain the steps in the presentation. Place small numbers on the note cards to keep them in proper order.

- Tape a paper bag to the edge of the table to dispose of garbage.

- Use transparent containers (bowls, dishes, etc.). They should be of uniform size and clearly labeled.

- If possible, avoid using brand names. Guidelines for using brand names in consumer education presentations are available in the leader manual.

- If an accident does happen or something doesn't turn out right, just explain what happened and continue on with your presentation.

MAKING AND USING EFFECTIVE VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids can add to the clarity and effectiveness of your presentation. However, they should only be used if they can help explain or emphasize a point. Visual aids should supplement and not detract from your presentation.

Most of your visual aids will need to be made by you. They could be charts, posters, diagrams, drawings, flip-charts, flannel boards, overhead transparencies, slides, etc.

When visual aids are used, they will help you show the audience something that:

- is normally too small to be seen by the group.
- is too large to bring to the meeting place.
- is hard to explain with just words.
- is difficult to remember.
- needs special emphasis.

Each visual aid you use should be tested against these questions:

- Is it needed?
- Does it focus attention?
- Is it neat and simple?
- Is it easy to use?
- Does it fit smoothly into the presentation?

Charts and Posters

Most of your visual aids will be in the form of charts and posters. Keep them simple and bold, not cluttered and detailed. Follow the A-B-C's of making them attractive, brief and clear.

Atttractive

Brief

Clear

Charts and posters should:

- Only contain one idea or topic per poster.
- Be the same size and all made vertically or horizontally.
- Be used only where really needed.
- Be large enough to be seen.
- Have lettering large and dark enough to be seen.
- Be neatly done and clean.
- Be on poster board or cardboard that will not buckle or bend.
- Be numbered in the lower left hand corner for easy arranging.

The following information will be helpful to you in making your "A-B-C" charts and posters.

Legible Lettering

Lettering plays an important part in the appearance and effectiveness of your visual. It is a skill that is basic for all poster work. Legible lettering involves three major factors: size, spacing, and style.

Size — Your audience will not **work** to read your message, so be sure that you consider the distance to the last row in your audience in determining proper letter size. The following is a chart you can use as a guide:

Letter Size	Viewing Distance
1/4 inch	6 feet
1/2 inch	10 feet
3/4 inch	20 feet
1 inch	25 feet
2 inches	50 feet

These sizes refer to the height of the letters. When using both upper and lower case, determine the size by the height of the lower case.

Spacing — Spacing of letters is important because it determines the readability of the poster or chart and affects the overall appearance. Space between letters depends upon the letter shape. General rule: try to leave the same amount of space between the letters.

P[^]erson

ne[^]t[^]work

Extra space between letters spoils the flow of words.

Spaces between **words** should be about the size of a full letter.

This is an example of too little space between words and an oversized letter.

a[^]PERSON

These two words are hard to read because of poor spacing.

is[^]an

And remember, as long as you are living in this culture, use horizontal rather than vertical placement of your lettering. Vertical lettering might fit your layout scheme, but it is very difficult to read. Plan posters and charts to read from top to bottom, left to right.

**V
E
R
T
I
C
A
L**
**H
O
R
I
Z
O
N
T
A
L**

Lettering should be planned. Letters that are supposed to be the same size should be the same size. Lines of lettering should not run at an angle unless they are planned to be that way.

Style — Lettering should not be too tall and skinny or too short and squatty. This makes it difficult to read.

TALL AND SKINNY

SHORT/SQUAT

CAPITALS ALL CAPITALS ARE MONOTONOUS AND GENERALLY HARDER TO READ.

Lower Case Lower case letters are easier to read.

Capitals can be used to emphasize titles and headings.

Use simple letters without feet or "serifs". The "A" on the left has "feet" or flair and is harder to read.

A **A**

Here's another example:

Legibility

Legibility

It's best not to mix styles of lettering in the same message. An exception would be the use of a different style for emphasis, such as:

BALANCE *your* **BUDGET**

Give your posters and charts some personality. Lettering should be pleasing to the eye. The style and placement of letters should harmonize with the idea you are trying to convey.

There is beauty in **STRAIGHT,
SIMPLE**
letter forms.

Here are some examples of easy and hard to read lettering:

ABCDEF G
ABCDEFGHI

There is fun and playfulness in novel creations to emphasize words, however you will not want all the lettering on your poster to look this way.

CRAMPED
HOORAY!
STRETCH

The Lettering

There are many ways to complete the lettering on your posters and charts. Choose the method that is best for you. Here are some examples:

Hand Lettering all by the same person looks appealing. It has a quality of uniqueness about it.

Stencils can be time consuming, but can also give a very neat appearance if used properly. Close the "gaps" on stenciled letters to make them solid letters and easier to read.



Use a pencil to trace the letters directly onto the poster or chart and then color them. Don't attempt to color through the stencil. Stencil letters can also be traced on construction paper, fabric, contact paper, or colored paper and cut out. Tracing the letters on backwards to the wrong side of the paper will help eliminate pencil marks. Cutting them out gives you a chance to space them carefully and check the spelling before gluing them on your poster. It's faster, easier, and generally looks better.

Cut Paper Alphabet letters are good and easy to use but take a little practice in getting started. They are inexpensive and can be made any size you want them.

Redi-Stick Letters are very neat but are expensive to use. Adhesive on the letters sticks the letters to your poster and they cannot be reused.

Dry Transfer or Rub-On Letters are neat but expensive to use. Letters need surface protection or they will scratch off.

Templates are plastic lettering guides which you can use to create lettering of different sizes and styles. They are also available for drawing circles, hexagons, and other engineering shapes. This type of lettering is neat, but generally harder to read.

HELLO
HELLO

Color

Color can add life to your chart or poster. The important thing in selecting colors is not how many colors are used, but rather, how well they are combined. A poster with six or eight colors is not necessarily more impressive than a poster in one, two, or three colors. In fact, when too many colors are used, the overall effect can be a visual hodgepodge, destroying the focal point of your poster. Limit your visual to two or three colors so color does not become too obvious to the viewer. Have one dominant color and follow the rule: "The smaller the area, the brighter the color."

Color can create the desired mood or atmosphere for your message. Colors have meaning, so use the appropriate color for your subject. Typical meanings of colors are:

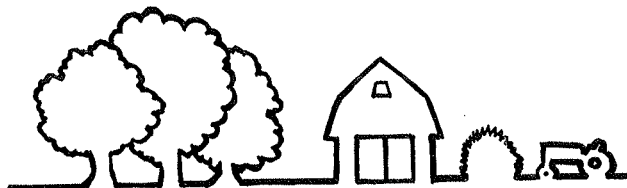
- Black** -- formal, neat, rich, strong.
- Blue** -- cool, melancholy, depressed.
- Purple** -- royalty, rich, imperial.
- Red** -- love, anger, hatred.
- Orange** -- Halloween, festive, gay.
- Yellow** -- warmth, light, ripe.
- Green** -- fresh, growing, young.
- White** -- purity, clean, neat.

Consider legibility when selecting colors. Although various combinations may harmonize, they may not make your message easy to read. Remember, too, that marking pens will change the color of the paper you are using. The following color combinations are listed in **order of legibility**:

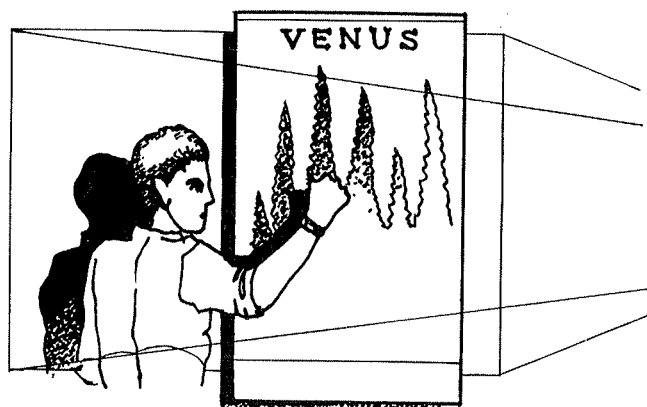
1. Black on yellow.
2. Green on white.
3. Red on white.
4. Blue on white.
5. White on blue.
6. Black on white.
7. Yellow on black.
8. White on red.
9. White on green.
10. White on black.
11. Red on yellow.
12. Green on red.
13. Red on green.
14. Blue on red.

Illustrations

Sometimes your chart or poster can be improved with a picture or illustration. You could use simple line drawings or pictures and illustrations by projecting the image onto your chart with an opaque or overhead projector.



Line Drawing



Projected Illustration

If you have neither the formal training nor the inborn talent to feel competent to illustrate your posters, there are various places you can get ideas to help you. Borrow ideas from:

1. Books.
2. Cartoons.
3. Magazines.
4. Catalogs
5. Coloring books.
6. Greeting cards.
7. Extension publications.
8. Purchased bulletin board aids.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DEMONSTRATION AND AN ILLUSTRATED TALK

Are you going to give a demonstration or an illustrated talk? That will depend upon the purpose of your presentation and the subject you select. The basic differences between these two types of presentations are:

DEMONSTRATIONS

Most of the time you are **DOING** something.

You are **SHOWING** how to do something. As you show how, you tell what you are doing.

You **MAKE** or **DO** something and there is a finished product.

You expect your audience to "**GO AND DO LIKEWISE.**"

ILLUSTRATED TALK

Most of the time you are **TALKING** about something.

You are **TELLING** or **EXPLAINING** how with the use of visual aids.

You use **VISUAL AIDS** to explain something, but there is no finished product.

You expect your audience to have a better understanding of the **SUBJECT** and **INFORMATION** presented.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Demonstrations focus upon showing people how to do something, such as how to groom an animal, arrange a table setting or wire a light switch. You follow a step-by-step process that is easily understood by the audience so they will be able to do the same thing on their own later. As you give a demonstration, be sure you are telling the audience:

- What you are doing.
- Why you are doing each step in a particular way and in a particular order.
- How to do each step.

A demonstration needs to be backed up with solid information and you need to be able to explain why you have chosen the steps necessary to create the finished product.

ILLUSTRATED TALKS

An illustrated talk is a presentation which makes use of visuals to get a particular message across when there is no finished product such as in a demonstration. You are talking, telling and explaining with the use of visual aids.

Landscaping a home would be a good topic for an illustrated talk. You could describe the process of selecting, planting, arrangement, balance and beauty by using charts and slides because it would not be possible to bring a home and its surroundings to a meeting.

An illustrated talk emphasizes "telling how" rather than "showing how." You talk with the use of visuals, such as charts, posters, models, miniatures, photographs, slides, cut-outs, flannel boards, overhead projectors, etc.

GIVING A TEAM PRESENTATION

In Level I, you were encouraged to give an individual demonstration. Remember, it was sort of like "Show and Tell" at school. You selected a topic that you could demonstrate alone.

Some presentations might require the help of another person because of the amount of equipment used, the length to adequately cover the topic or help needed to demonstrate a technique. In these cases, you should consider giving a team presentation.

When giving a team presentation, first select a teammate who is about your same age and lives close to you. If you are about the same age, you will be more likely to have equal abilities in presenting the material. A teammate who lives close to you will make it easy to get together often to practice.

Next, you need to divide the material in your presentation so each person has about the same amount to say and do. This way each of you will be making a real contribution to the presentation.

A team presentation should only have one center of attention. That's why the next important step is to start practicing together.

The member doing the demonstrating should also be doing the talking. The other team member should be standing back and **watching** the presentation. If materials and equipment must be moved "in or out" by the other team member, be careful not to get in each other's way.

As you practice your team presentation, you need to develop a smooth working relationship between speakers. Therefore, the last important step to practice is a smooth and varied way of shifting from one speaker to the other. One time you might say, "Brenda will now show you how ..."; another time you could say "To add the final touch to this..., Brenda will be using..." Shifts between speakers can also be done without calling attention to the shift.

Changing speakers too frequently can be distracting, so check this point when you practice.

If questions are asked that are not directed to an individual team member, then one team member needs to be prepared to answer the first question. The next question should be answered by the partner, thus allowing both team members the opportunity to contribute answers.

GIVING A FOODS PRESENTATION

There are some additional practices that need to be followed when giving a foods presentation. Usually, these presentations require the use of more supplies and equipment, so organization is very important. A lot of practice is needed to skillfully use the equipment, talk, move equipment and supplies in and out of the work area and to show various stages in the development of a product. Some ideas you need to consider are as follows:

1. Recipe — Have a chart showing the recipe if your presentation requires a recipe. A simple recipe with limited steps would be the easiest to explain. Your chart should show ingredients in order used, baking temperature (if required), and baking time (if required). Don't try to list each preparation step on your chart. Have printed recipes to hand out to the audience at the end of your presentation.

2. Measuring Ingredients — Most of your ingredients should have been premeasured and placed in labeled containers. Tell your audience you have pre-measured these ingredients. However, you should show how to measure one or two ingredients to demonstrate the proper technique in measuring. If possible, show how to measure both dry and liquid ingredients.

3. Mixing and Stirring — Use wooden or plastic spoons instead of metal. Metal spoons make too much noise. Consider using an electric mixer if a lot of mixing is required.

4. Stages of Development — Many foods presentations require lengthy cooking or baking and you will not want to wait for this to happen. You will need to pre-prepare the various stages of development that you want to show the audience, such as bread dough that has risen and is ready to be shaped into rolls or loaf; shaped rolls or loaf that has risen and is ready to bake; and baked rolls or loaf of bread (finished products). This technique (pre-preparation of stages of development) can also be used in clothing construction, refinishing, and livestock grooming presentations.

5. Supplies and Equipment — Consider using trays to keep the supplies and equipment together for each step or stage of the presentation. Trays will make moving the items in and out of the work area easier. A small towel can be used to cover the trays not in use, especially the “used” trays to avoid the messy and cluttered look.

6. Work Area — Keep your work area clean and neat. A wash cloth or paper towel will come in handy for cleaning up. You could place three or four layers of paper on the work area and discard them as they become dirty. It is especially important to have a clean and neat area to display your finished product.

7. Finished Product and Samples — At the end of your presentation, show the finished product in an attractive manner as it would be served. You can offer samples of the finished product to the audience. If you plan to do so, be prepared ahead of time with the proper supplies to make the task **quick** and **easy**.

8. And Remember — Cost comparisons, nutritional information, energy conservation ideas and suggested menus are features that can be added to many foods presentations.



GIVING A LIVE ANIMAL PRESENTATION

Live animal presentations can be fun and challenging, however, they do require some special considerations because you have a live animal that is not always predictable. This animal is the center of your presentation. Some things you need to be aware of are:

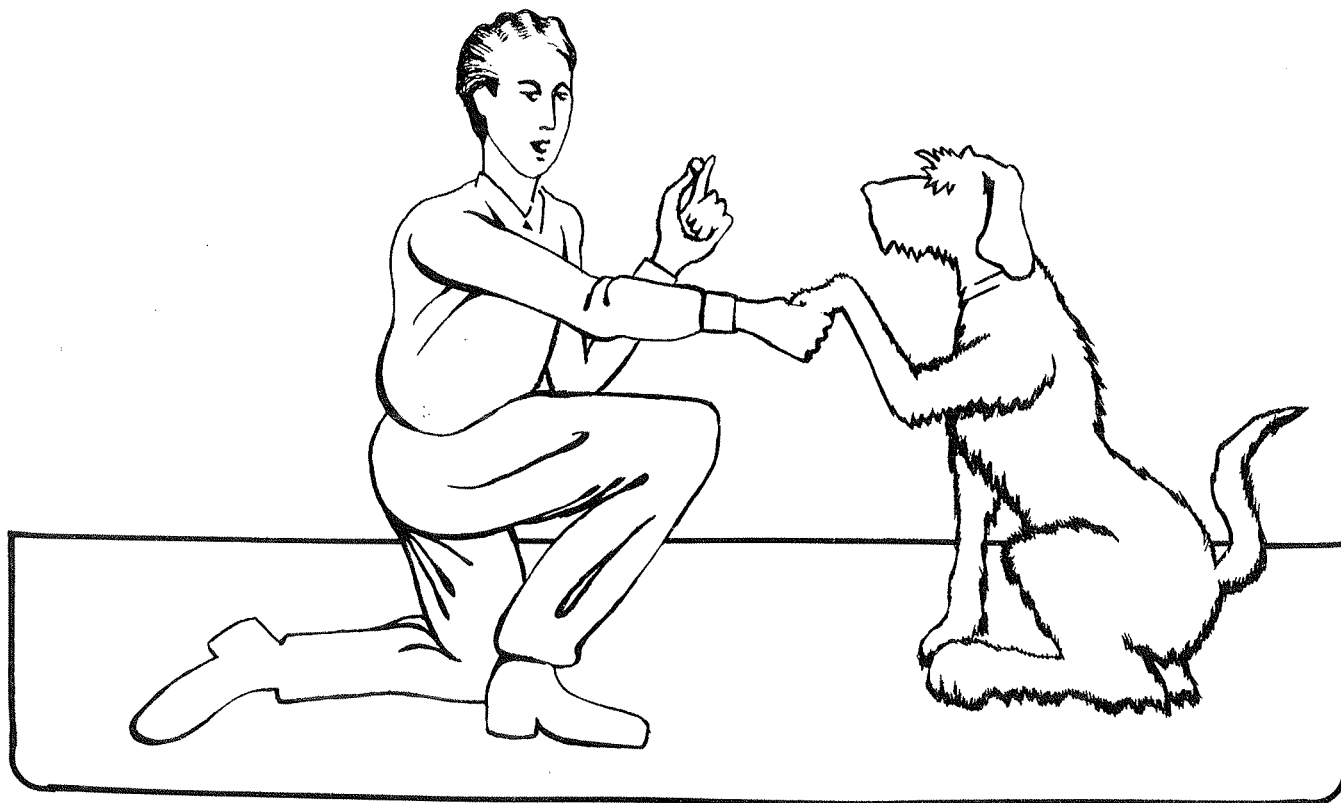
1. The Animal — Select a tame, healthy animal with which you have previously worked (dog, steer, horse, etc.). Be prepared for potential distractions, such as noises, other animals, people, and a change of environment.

2. Safety — You are responsible for the safety of your animal, your audience and yourself. A restraining device (squeeze chute, blocking stand, etc.) needs to be used if the situation calls for it. It might be necessary to have someone (family member or another 4-H member) hold the animal while you are involved in other parts of the presentation.

3. Eye Contact — Even though the animal is the center of attention, you must maintain control and keep eye contact with the audience.

4. Be Calm — The temperament of your animal can be conditioned by your actions. Try to remain calm and natural to keep your animal calm. Do not be afraid to talk to your animal occasionally as you progress through your presentation.

5. Work Area — Keep your work area clean and neat. When using an animal placed on a table or in a restraining device, be prepared with newspapers, paper towels or other necessary equipment to clean up urine and fecal material during and after the presentation.



AND THERE IS STILL MORE

You are now developing more self confidence and poise in front of a group and have improved your 4-H presentation skills. But there is more. If you are interested in contests, the next level will explain how your 4-H presentation will be judged against the criteria of 1) Introduction, 2) Topic, 3) Appearance, 4) Presentation, 5) Subject Matter, 6) Workmanship, 7) Equipment, and 8) Conclusion.

Move on to "4-H Presentations For A Purpose" to learn more about how 4-H Presentations can be a benefit to you and others.