

4-H Club Program Teaches Responsibility

Thumble Fingers, Tricky Trotters, Cudchewers—these are only a few of the original names given by 4-H club members to their clubs in the Rogue Valley. Four-H is a voluntary youth organization designed to give young people training in citizenship, leadership, and responsibility.

It was started in the early twentieth century, and at about the same time in most parts of the country. Originally it was handled through the offices of the county school superintendent. In Oregon it is now a feature of the extension service of Oregon State university.

The program was started as a rural program, but as cities grew and suburbs developed, the rural aspect of the clubs lessened. There are now many clubs in Medford and the immediately surrounding area. In the Central Point area alone are about 300 of the 900 Rogue Valley 4-H club members.

Own Project Expenses

This government supported youth program has members from nine to 21 years of age. Although printed materials and extension agent fees and salaries are paid from federal funds, the youngsters pay for their own project expenses.

Each 4-H club has a volunteer adult leader. The purpose of the leader is to provide some supervision, help with the projects, and to encourage formation of democratic club organization.

The overall program for the clubs is set up at Oregon State university. There, extension leaders and 4-H committee members meet in the form of an advisory board to write a general program from which clubs operate. This general structure serves approximately the same function as a course of study in a school. It provides a general pattern from which the clubs may work. Within this course each club is free to plan and execute its own program, setting its own pace. The maximum amount of personal responsibility is left the clubs themselves.

Two Extension Agents

Working with the leaders of the clubs in Jackson county are two county extension agents, Miss Phyllis Kirkland and Jerry Brog. Other agents contribute their services when the clubs are working with something within their specialty. These agents meet with the club leaders, teaching them the projects so that they can pass the information on to the club members.

The leaders then supervise the meetings of some 117 clubs in the valley. They study in such fields as agriculture, home economics, woodworking, and photography. Individual projects being studied may include sewing, cooking, farm implement operation, or livestock raising.

Besides the responsibility of working out their own program, club members elect their own officers, preferably every six months. This gives young people the experience of office-holding and what it entails.

It is reported that a high percentage of youngsters who have belonged to 4-H clubs enter and successfully complete college. Their study in the 4-H program, however, does not necessarily correlate with their major field of study in college. Part of their success may be attributed, it is felt, to the fact that the type of children who join 4-H are many times those of high initiative, since it is a voluntary organization requiring a good deal of time and effort.

An additional factor is that few of those belonging to 4-H have any trouble with juvenile authorities. As the 4-H program is not at all selective, this may be due to the sense of responsibility and well-being given by membership in the club.

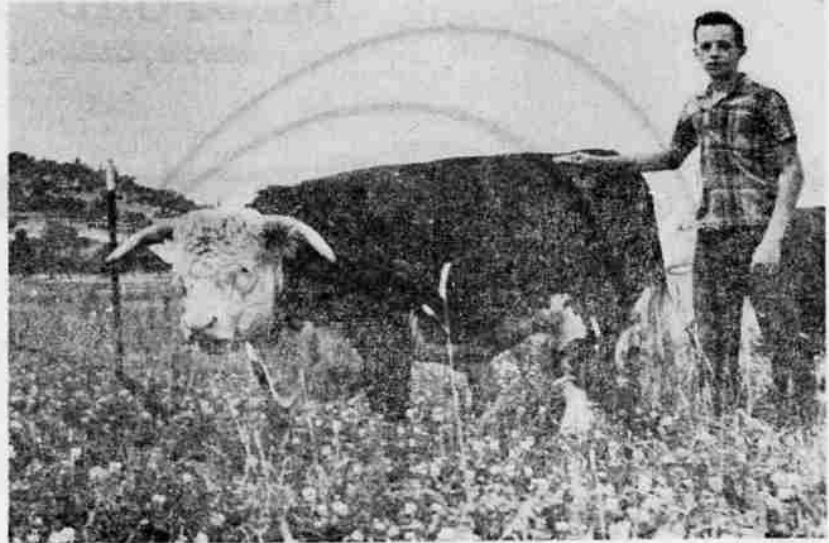
From the local membership level, 4-H club members can progress to attendance at such statewide activities as the annual 4-H summer school, held in June; the Know Your State Government conference in Salem, held in February; and the national 4-H club conference, held each summer in Washington, D.C. Outstanding 4-H club members are chosen to attend these various upper level activities.

In addition, both state and national scholarship are available to outstanding club members.

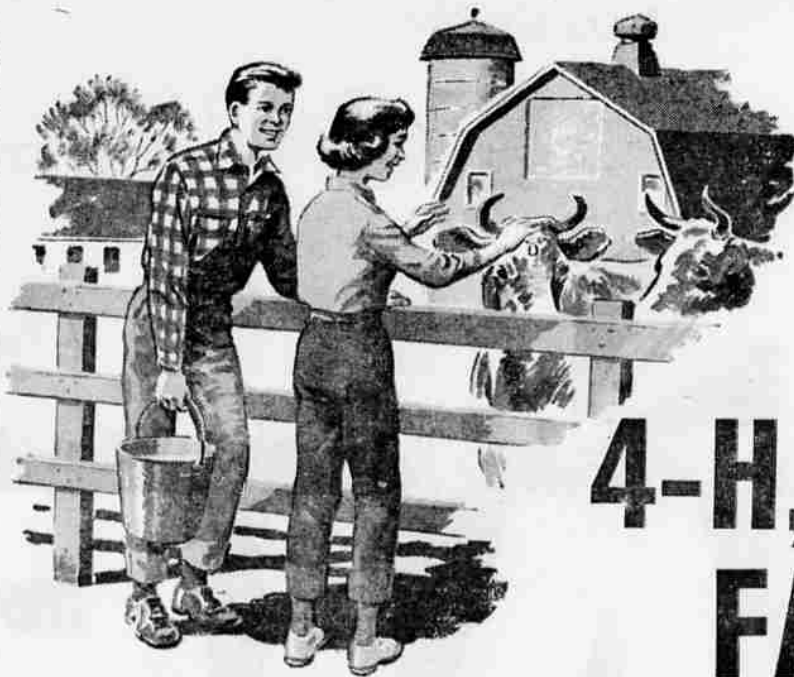
Barbecue Dinner Scheduled Aug. 18

Members of valley 4-H clubs and the Jackson county fair board will sponsor a barbecue dinner Saturday, Aug. 18, at 6 p.m. at the 4-H fairgrounds.

The barbecue is held for 4-H members, their parents, and purchasers of 4-H animals at the auction, also held Saturday.



BEEF ENTRY—Dick Field, member of Westside 4-H Beef club and Crater FFA, participated in both the beef showmanship and fitting events during the Central Point-Westside 4-H Pre-fair recently. He is in the senior division.



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