

PERCEPTIONS OF 4-H CLUB MEMBERS, PARENTS, AND  
LEADERS OF COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES IN  
MAYES COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

By

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
Statement of the Problem . . . . .	2
Purpose. . . . .	3
Objectives . . . . .	3
Scope of the Study . . . . .	4
Assumptions. . . . .	4
Definition of Terms. . . . .	4
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE. . . . .	6
Value of Competitive Activities to 4-H Club Work . . . . .	7
Value of 4-H Competitive Activities to Everyday Life . . . . .	9
Summary. . . . .	12
III. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY. . . . .	13
Introduction . . . . .	13
IRB Approval . . . . .	13
The Population . . . . .	14
Development of the Instrument. . . . .	14
Data Collection Method . . . . .	15
Method of Data Analysis. . . . .	15
IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA . . . . .	17
4-H Member Responses . . . . .	17
Parents. . . . .	28
4-H Adult Leaders. . . . .	37
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	46
Summary. . . . .	46
Introduction. . . . .	46
Major Findings. . . . .	47
Conclusions. . . . .	58
Recommendations. . . . .	59

Chapter	Page
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	60
APPENDIXES . . . . .	62
APPENDIX A - IRB FORM . . . . .	63
APPENDIX B - QUESTIONNAIRE. . . . .	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. 4-H Members' Perceptions Concerning the Educational Value of Selected Competitive Events . . . . .	18
II. 4-H Members' Perceptions Concerning Benefits of Competitive Events . . . . .	21
III. 4-H Members' Responses Concerning How Competitive Events Relate to Project Work. . . . .	23
IV. 4-H Members' Responses Concerning the Value of 4-H Events for Help in Everyday Life of Members. . . . .	25
V. 4-H Members' Responses Regarding Their Perceptions of Actions Needed on Selected Competitive Events. . . . .	27
VI. 4-H Parents' Perceptions Concerning the Educational Value of Selected Competitive Events . . . . .	29
VII. 4-H Parents' Responses Concerning Benefits of Competitive Events . . . . .	31
VIII. 4-H Parents' Responses Concerning How Competitive Events Relate to Project Work. . . . .	33
IX. 4-H Parents' Responses Concerning the Value of 4-H Competitive Events for Help in Everyday Life of Members . . . . .	34
X. 4-H Parents' Responses Regarding Their Perceptions of Actions as Needed on Selected Competitive Events . . . . .	36
XI. 4-H Leaders' Perception Concerning the Educational Value of Selected Competitive Events . . . . .	38
XII. 4-H Leaders' Perceptions Concerning Benefits of Competitive Events . . . . .	39
XIII. 4-H Leaders' Responses Concerning How Competitive Events Relate to Project Work. . . . .	41

Table	Page
XIV. 4-H Leaders' Responses Concerning the Value of 4-H Competitive Events for Help in Everyday Life of Members. . . . .	43
XV. 4-H Leaders' Responses Regarding Their Perceptions of Actions Needed on Selected Competitive Events . .	45
XVI. A Summary of All Groups' Perception Concerning the Educational Value of Selected Competitive Events . .	48
XVII. A Summary of All Groups' Responses Concerning Benefits of Competitive Events. . . . .	50
XVIII. A Summary of All Groups' Responses Concerning How Competitive Events Relate to Project Work. . . . .	52
XIX. A Summary of All Groups' Responses Concerning the Educational Value of 4-H Competitive Events for Help in Everyday Life of Members . . . . .	55
XX. A Summary of All Groups' Responses Regarding Their Perception of Selected Competitive Events . . . . .	56

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The 4-H program originated as the youth educational arm of the Cooperative Extension Service and through the years has grown to be a major part of Extension's work. In the beginning and for many years the main focus of the 4-H program was toward agriculture. It was originally designed with rural youth in mind, starting as corn and tomato clubs, as early as 1856. The main emphasis was in gardening, canning, raising livestock and farming.

In 1909, Seaman Knapp, Special Agent with USDA, realized the importance of these corn and tomato clubs and challenged county agents with the management of these clubs. With the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, 4-H clubs grew at a rapid rate nation wide. The Smith-Lever Act created the Cooperative Extension Service and designated land-grant universities in each state to administer extension programs in cooperation with county and state governments. Funding for Extension programs is provided at three levels; federal, state and county. 4-H also receives many dollars from private funding through businesses, and other friends of 4-H (Anderson, 1976).

The main goal of the 4-H program is the development of youth to become self directing, productive and contributing members of society and to increase leadership capabilities of each member. The



youth involved range in age from nine to 19. The traditional programs in agriculture and home economics are still of vital importance to the 4-H program. However, the program has diversified to appeal to boys and girls in the urban areas. Projects such as consumer education, computers, model rocketry, bicycles, arts and crafts and many others have surfaced to fit the needs of both urban and rural youth.

Since the inception of 4-H club work competitive activities have been used as a major teaching tool by 4-H agents and leaders. Through participation in competitive event members gain knowledge in that project, can develop a positive self esteem at completion of that project, can learn that success does not come easy and can learn to be a good winner or loser. Also members can develop leadership abilities in helping other 4-H members with their projects.

#### Statement of the Problem

All too often the education experience aspect of 4-H competitive events is not stressed by parents, leaders and agents. If this happens and youth do not experience success then they become reluctant to enter future events and even drop out of 4-H. As a result, they are deprived of important self development opportunities, therefore; it appeared that it would be of benefit to obtain the opinions of 4-H members, parents and leaders as to the value of competitive 4-H events as a means of making them more attractive to prospective participants.

With the information gained from the members, parents and leaders, 4-H events can be altered and changes made to fit the needs of the members today. Educational programs can be developed and presented to the members, leaders and parents that will stress the importance of the 4-H program. These programs can be a reminder that our goals are to raise a blue ribbon member not a blue ribbon project.

#### Purpose

The major purpose of this study was to gain insight into the value and benefits of 4-H competitive events as perceived by 4-H club members, parents and leaders in Mayes County.

#### Objectives

To aid in accomplishing the purpose of this study it was necessary to determine respondents' perceptions regarding:

1. The educational value of competitive 4-H activities in 4-H club work.
2. The benefits of competitive 4-H activities in relation to 4-H project work.
3. The benefits of competitive 4-H events in relation to everyday life of members.
4. To compare the perceptions of the three respondent groups concerning 4-H competitive events.

### Scope of the Study

This study involved Mayes County, Oklahoma, 4-H members, parents and leaders. The 4-H leaders were asked to complete the survey at a leaders training session in April. The 4-H members and parents were surveyed at the May 4-H meeting held at each community club. Also, any leader present at the community club meeting who had not completed a survey was asked to do one at the May 4-H Club meeting.

The composition of the groups studied consisted of 97 4-H members, 20 4-H leaders and 53 parents.

### Assumptions

The following assumption were made about the study:

1. That the respondents indicated honest expressions of their opinions.
2. That each respondent was knowledgeable of each activity studied.

### Definition of Terms

Community 4-H Clubs - For the purpose of this study, are those 4-H clubs which have elected officers, volunteer 4-H adult main leaders and volunteer project leaders. These clubs usually meet once a month and are out-of-school activities.

Parents of 4-H Club Members - These are either men or women who have a child or guardian currently enrolled in community 4-H Club. Four-H members are girls and boys between the age of nine and

19 currently enrolled in the project of their choice and a member of a local community 4-H club.

Competitive Activities - These are defined in this study as activities which 4-H members may participate in on a local level, county level, district level, state level, or national level. They are competitive in nature, with members competing against one another, by teams or individual efforts.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Four-H Club work was officially established in 1914 through the passage of the Smith-Lever Act appropriating funds for establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service, of which 4-H club work is a part. The first names used for 4-H were Corn Clubs, Tomato Clubs and Nature Clubs. The name 4-H appeared around 1920. Some of the first 4-H clubs were part of the public school system and teachers were often the first club leaders.

Hackett stated that no single Extension sponsored organization is more widely known or recognized than the 4-H clubs. The technique of organizing boys and girls into clubs which extension programs could be conducted was one of the innovations, and it succeeded admirably. The 4-H clubs gave identity to program activity; that enhanced the basic competitive nature of the project work; and they established a formal vehicle for involvement of adults (p. 8).

In looking at today's society, youth can be seen competing at all ages and in many different areas; individually and as team members. People today are very competitive in nature and each individual is encouraged to contribute as a competitor in some specific area.

There have been studies conducted concerning competition in 4-H club work and how it affects the attitudes of 4-H club members. Reviews of some of these are presented in the following sections.

Value of Competitive Activities  
to 4-H Club Work

In the study, "Meeting the basic needs of first year 4-H club members", it was stated that through recognition and competition, several basic needs of 4-H club members might be partially satisfied. Such needs as desires for attention, prestige, to excel and for a feeling of accomplishment are mentioned (Sabrosky, 1952).

4-H club members will tend to ignore competition if they do not see a possibility for success. If left up to the 4-H members they will compete in activities of their interest or in those in which they have experienced success (Nichols, 1972).

In a study of seventh, eight and ninth grade 4-H members, these relationships between level of participation and attitudes toward 4-H work were found:

1. Level of participation was significantly related to the number of task 4-H'ers already knew how to do. A higher level of participation was achieved by boys and girls who know how to do 11 or more tasks.
2. Participation level was significantly related to the desire for competition by boys and girls. Participation level was higher among those who like to compete.
3. Participation level was significantly related to emphasis desired in public speaking, out-of-county trips, giving ribbons and publicity awards. High participation wanted more emphasis on these areas. (Nichols, 1972, p. 10).

The local 4-H leader can be a major factor in stimulating 4-H members to take part in projects and other 4-H activities. It is very important that the 4-H member be given help in completing

his/her project so that he/she can compete in classes in which he has a chance to win.

In a study entitled, "Opinions of members and leaders concerning the effectiveness of awards in the 4-H program in Iowa", it was found that the opinions of 4-H members were evenly divided as to whether they increased their participation in the total club program because of the availability of awards. It stated that 4-H leaders have an important influence in the use of awards and they can be used as a powerful factor in improving individual and club achievements if they are in accord with the basic objectives of the 4-H program (Boehnke, 1953).

In regard to the effect 4-H competitive activities have on project work, over 95 percent of all members agreed and 3.5 percent of the members reported being undecided as to whether or not competitive activities provide a challenge for a 4-H member to do a better job with related projects. Boys were not as strongly in agreement as girls that activities provide additional information for 4-H members favorite projects. Boys were in a higher level of agreement than girls that activities encourage younger members to take part in new projects (Sestak, 1965).

Larkin (1988) stated:

Leaders and parents were in a high level of agreement on the benefits that competitive activities had on project work. They all agreed that competitive events provide a challenge for a 4-H member to do a better job with related projects, provides additional information for members favorite projects. A majority of all the groups agreed that activities encourage younger 4-H members to take part in new projects and provide an opportunity for older members to assist younger members in project work (p. 60).

Value of 4-H Competitive Activities  
to Everyday Life

The ultimate and primary purpose of Extension work is development of men, women, boys and girls. Developing leadership to grow and develop the participation has a dual purpose - the local leaders derive satisfaction and personal development through helping others and the group benefits from the guidance of leaders (Sallee, 1960, p. 13).

As stated earlier, the major goal of the 4-H program is to help members become self directing, productive and contributing members of society and to increase their leadership abilities.

A study conducted in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma indicated that both members and parents agreed that "help with personal development" and "help to develop leadership skills" were the primary reasons for member participation. Selected 4-H activities resulted in positive attitude changes on the part of the member. Attitude improvement included such areas as improved attitudes toward themselves and others", "gained confidence", "learned to work with each other" and "learned good sportsmanship" (Vick, 1984).

In a study conducted in 1957 it was revealed that competitive activities provide educational value for both urban and rural members and members have an opportunity to meet and become acquainted with 4-H members from other areas. There was also a high level of agreement indicated that competitive activities provide educational value to members, in leadership and citizenship. Responding members, leaders, and parents considered competitive activities to be valuable as a help to members in their school work (Moss, 1971).



Vick (1984) stated in his thesis that:

1. 4-H provides co-educational learning experience which contributes to both personal and social development.
2. 4-H encourages individual initiative and provides opportunities for young people to experience success which raises the level of their aspirations and contributes to the feeling of self worth (p. 8).

In a study titled, "Who's the Real Teacher?" teenagers reported that they had learned life skills through 4-H. Of the skills measured, the respondents said they learned "very much" about relationship skills; "much" about communication, problem solving, decision making, and inquiry skills; and "some" about relating to change. They also perceived that skills are learned through 4-H experiences (Collins, 1986).

Larkin (1988) stated:

A good-teaching learning situation is one where there is a conscious provision for success on the part of the learner. Sound judgement about one's own success or failure is an essential part of a healthy adult personality; therefore children should be taught to evaluate themselves and their accomplishments in terms of goals.

Goals should be set high enough for the individual to achieve with devoted efforts but low enough to permit the individual to succeed with reasonable effort (p. 8).

In this same area, Kruse (1976) in 4-H for Century III stated:

4-H programs are also based on the characteristic of individual personal success. We want all youth who participate in 4-H programs to experience a feeling of achievement. To often achievement in 4-H has implied winning a blue ribbon, or

first place. In any competitive event, only one individual will win first place. Does this mean that all the others who participated are losers? Not at all!! All 4-H members are winners because they're involved a process of improving themselves and developing new abilities. However, they may see themselves as losers if the emphasis is on winning awards rather than achieving personal goals. We must continually emphasize to both leaders and members that achievement through 4-H results from setting and reaching individual goals related to personal development. These goals must be personal to each member and they must be reachable. When members set and achieve these kinds of goals they begin to see themselves as winners, even when their project work doesn't place in competition with others. (pp. 7-8).

In a recent study, it was stated that there was an overall consensus that too much emphasis is not being placed on winning instead of the educational value gained. However, 69% of the leaders felt it could happen (Larkin, 1988).

One Oklahoma study conducted on six central Oklahoma counties found that competitive activities were generally rated valuable as an educational experience helpful to 4-H members in their schoolwork. It also stated that the most valuable personal experiences for members were assuming responsibilities, making individual decisions, developing leadership, citizenship, and special interest. Furthermore, it stated that competitive activities encouraged self confidence, sportsmanship, self development, and expressing an individual's own ideas and thoughts to a group (Sestak, 1965).

### Summary

This review of literature has cited several authors who pointed out that 4-H competitive events can be helpful to 4-H members.

Through participation in competitive events members can develop a positive personal image and also improve leadership and citizenship skills. In addition, members can improve skills in personal relationships, communication, problem solving and decision making.

It was also found the 4-H members must learn that winning a blue ribbon or placing 1st is not the most important thing. But doing the best that they can possibly do is what is important in development of life skills.

By taking part in 4-H competitive events 4-H members are acquiring knowledge, developing life skills and forming attitudes that will help become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of 4-H club members, parents and leaders from Mayes County concerning 4-H competitive events.

To aid in accomplishing the purpose of this study it was necessary to determine the respondents perception regarding:

1. The educational value of competitive 4-H activities in 4-H club work.
2. The benefits of competitive 4-H activities in relation to 4-H project work.
3. The benefits of competitive 4-H events in relation to everyday life of members.
4. To compare the perceptions of the three respondent groups concerning 4-H competitive events.

#### IRB Approval

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University policy require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators can begin their research. The Oklahoma State University Research Services and the IRB conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved

in biomedical and behavioral research. In compliance with the aforementioned policy, this study received the proper surveillance, was granted permission to continue, and was assigned the following number: AG-92-018 (Refer to Appendix A).

#### The Population

The population of this study was comprised of Mayes County 4-H members, leaders and parents who were present at the last 4-H meeting of the year held at each community club. Also, all leaders who attended a special leaders training program were included in this survey. No person completed a survey more than one time.

A total of 170 questionnaires were returned from the three groups. Responding were 97 4-H members, 20 4-H leaders, and 53 parents.

#### Development of the Instrument

The format of the questionnaire was divided into five basic sections. Section one gave all respondents an opportunity to rate the educational value of 4-H competitive events. Section two covered opinions of 4-H competitive events. In section three, respondents indicated their opinions regarding the relationship between competitive events and 4-H projects. By completing section four respondents revealed their perceptions according to the degree of educational value they felt 4-H competitive activities have on the everyday life of the 4-H member. In section five they indicated if they thought the competitive event should be continued at it's

present level, revised or discontinued. Questionnaires were identical for each of the groups except for specific questions asked at the end of the survey.

#### Data Collection Method

Data were collected by administering a questionnaire to each 4-H member and parent in attendance at their end of year community club meeting. The questionnaire was developed from a review of related literature as well as advisory suggestions to refine the instrument.

Leaders were asked to complete the survey at a 4-H leaders training meeting held for all county 4-H leaders in April at the Mayes County Extension Center.

A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix B, and provides the specific questions asked to each group.

#### Method of Data Analysis

Item counts, percentages and visual comparisons were used to analyze and present the data obtained. Comparisons were made within and across the respondent groups utilizing mean scores.

The questions on the survey were designed to evaluate the educational value and benefits of 4-H club work in Mayes County.

The respondents were given a choice of response categories dealing with either value or extent of agreement for each competitive event and statements concerning 4-H competitive events. Each response category was assigned a point value so that the

responses for each statement could be totaled and then an average or mean calculated for each. The response categories and their point values were as follows: High Value and Strongly Agree had a value of 3 for each response and a range of real limits of 2.5 to 3.0. Average Value and Agree had a value of 2 and a range of real limits of 1.5 to 2.49. Limited Value and Disagree were given a value of 1 and a range of real limits of .50 to 1.49. No Value and Strongly Disagree were given a value of 0 with a range of real limits of zero to .49.

The percentages and mean values were then used as a basis for assessing certain aspects of 4-H competitive events as perceived by 4-H members, parents and leaders.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The major purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of 4-H club members, parents and leaders from Mayes County concerning 4-H competitive events.

Data presented in this chapter were obtained in the spring of 1992 by administering a questionnaire to 4-H members, parents and leaders. A total of 170 questionnaires were completed. Responding were 97 4-H members, 53 parents and 20 4-H leaders.

It was felt this study could provide information which might be helpful to a county 4-H agent to use in deciding which competitive events have educational value, which should be changed or possibly even dropped as a county event.

#### 4-H Member Responses

Each 4-H member in attendance at the end of the year 4-H community club meeting was asked to complete the questionnaire. The length of enrollment and the number of competitive events participated in varied for 4-H members in this study. The mean years of 4-H participation for members surveyed was 3.14 years, while they had participated in an average of 12.43 competitive events in their 4-H career.

Table I is intended to provide a summary of the members' perceptions concerning the educational value of selected 4-H events.



**TABLE I**  
**4-H MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING**  
**THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF SELECTED**  
**COMPETITIVE EVENTS**

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY VALUE ASSIGNED										
County Events	High Value		Average Value		Limited Value		No Value		Mean Response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Demonstration Contest	55	63.9	27	31.4	3	3.5	1	1.2	2.58	High Value
Talk Contest	35	43.2	35	43.2	6	7.4	5	6.2	2.23	Average Value
Dress Revue	37	41.6	29	32.6	15	16.9	8	8.9	2.07	Average Value
Appropriate Dress	41	48.8	21	25.0	15	17.9	7	8.3	2.14	Average Value
Livestock Shows	70	75.3	19	20.4	4	4.3	0	0	2.71	High Value
Share The Fun	63	64.9	26	26.8	5	5.2	3	3.1	2.57	High Value
County Record Books	50	56.8	19	21.6	10	11.4	9	10.2	2.25	Average Value
County Fair	79	84.9	13	14.0	1	1.1	0	0	2.84	High Value
Overall									2.43	Average Value

Almost 64 percent felt that Demonstration Contests were of "High Value". On the other hand, a little less than 5 percent felt that the Demonstration Contests had "Limited" or "No Value". Overall the respondents' rating of this item was calculated to be 2.58, which translated to "High Value".

Eighty-six percent of the respondents felt that the Talk Contest was "Average" or "High" value with 7.4 percent rating it as "Limited" and 6.2 percent said it had "No Value". The mean rating of this item was 2.23 or "Average Value".

The Dress Revue was rated by 41.6 percent of the respondents as "High Value", 32.6 percent as "Average Value", 16.9 percent as "Limited Value" and 8.9 percent rated the Dress Revue as having "No Value". The percentages of respondents by category for the Appropriate Dress Contest were as follows: 48.8 percent "High Value"; 25 percent "Average Value"; 17.9 percent "Limited Value"; with 8 percent saying it had "No Value".

One of the highest rated events was Livestock Shows with 95 percent of those surveyed indicating it had a "High or Average Value" with only 4.3 percent indicating a "Limited Value" and no respondents assessed these as of "No Value." The mean rating of these events was 2.71 or "High Value".

Share-The-Fun was indicated to have a "High Value" value by 64.9 percent of the respondents, with 26.8 percent indicating it was of "Average Value". Only 8.3 percent felt it had either "Limited or No Value".

County Record Books competition was one of the lowest rated events with 56.8 percent feeling it was a "High Value", 21.6 percent "Average Value", 11.4 percent "Limited Value" and 10.2 percent "No Value", the highest "No Value" response of all events studied. This event had an overall rating of 2.25, "Average Value".

According to respondents, the most valuable event studied was the County Fair. "High Value" was the rating selected by 85 percent and 14 percent selected "Average Value". Only 1 respondent, 1 percent, felt it had "Limited Value". The mean value rating was 2.84, or "High Value". For this group of competitive events, the overall rating was determined to be 2.43. This indicated respondents placed an "Average Value" on these events overall.

Table II was developed as a means of illustrating 4-H members' responses to certain statements concerning competitive activities. Three of these statements were purposely couched in a negative vein. In each of these cases, members "Disagreed" with the negative statements, in effect, indicating positive feelings toward the concepts dealt with in those statements. Regarding the contention that competitive events take too much of the members' time for preparation, the mean response was 1.11. For the indication that competitive events benefit only a few members, a mean response of 1.15 was calculated. Finally, to a statement that such events cause jealousy within a club, the members responded at the 1.24 level as a group. As mentioned, all of these responses fell in the "Disagree" category.

TABLE II  
4-H MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING BENEFITS OF  
COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Statements Concerning 4-H Competitive Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT TO AGREEMENT								Mean Response
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Provides benefit to only a few select members	13	13.4	20	20.6	43	44.3	21	21.7	1.15 Disagree
Takes too much time on the part of the members to prepare for the contest	8	8.2	26	26.8	32	33.0	31	32.0	1.11 Disagree
Causes jealousy or friction among members within a club	13	13.4	20	20.6	41	42.3	23	23.7	1.24 Disagree
Provides an educational value for 4-H members	56	57.7	33	34.0	5	5.2	3	3.1	2.46 Agree
Does much to encourage individual effort on the part of the member	54	55.6	34	34.1	6	6.2	3	3.1	2.43 Agree
Provides an opportunity for members to acquaint themselves with 4-H member from other areas	52	53.6	38	39.2	7	7.2	0	0	2.46 Agree
Provides educational benefits to members in developing leader- ship/citizenship skills	55	56.7	37	38.1	3	3.1	2	2.1	2.49 Agree
Helps the member assume responsibilities	63	64.9	28	28.9	4	4.1	2	2.1	2.57 Strongly Agree

The remaining statements to which members responded were intended to measure perceptions regarding positive aspects of competitive events. Of these, the highest rating 2.57, "Strongly Agree", was assigned to the statement, "Helps the member assume responsibilities". A 2.49 or "Agree" response was calculated for the statement contending the events provide educational benefits to members in developing leadership/citizenship skills. Two statements, "Provides an educational value for 4-H members" and "Provides an opportunity for members to acquaint themselves with 4-H members from other areas" each received a 2.46 or "Agree" mean response. The members as a group assigned a 2.43, "Agree" response to the contention that events encourage individual effort on the part of members.

As was pointed out regarding some statements in Table II, three statements contained in Table III were approached in a negative manner. In each case members "Disagreed" with the negative statements indicating a positive feeling toward the concepts dealt with in the statements. In looking at the statement that placing low in a competitive event causes members to become discouraged and to quit 4-H, it was found that the over all mean rating was .91 or "Disagree". Also, the statement that 4-H members enter events only for the awards offered received a rating of 1.01 or "Disagree". The members responded at the 1.11 level, "Disagree", as a group to the statement that events place too much emphasis on winning and not the educational value gained from the experience. The mean response of members to a statement contending that events encouraged younger

**TABLE III**  
**4-H MEMBERS' RESPONSES CONCERNING HOW COMPETITIVE EVENTS**  
**RELATE TO PROJECT WORK**

Statements Concerning 4-H Competitive Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT TO AGREEMENT								Mean Response	
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Provide additional information for 4-H members projects	41	42.3	52	53.6	3	3.1	1	1.0	2.37	Agree
Provide challenges for the 4-H members to do a better job in 4-H projects	52	53.6	40	41.3	1	1.0	4	4.1	2.44	Agree
Provide opportunities for older members to assist younger members in project work	40	41.3	42	43.3	7	7.2	8	8.2	2.18	Agree
Cause members to be discouraged & quit 4-H if they place low in a contest	12	12.4	11	11.3	30	30.9	44	45.4	.91	Disagree
Encourage younger 4-H members to take part in new projects	53	57.0	35	37.6	4	4.3	1	1.1	2.51	Strongly Agree
4-H members enter the events only for the awards offered	12	12.4	9	9.2	44	45.4	32	33.0	1.01	Disagree
Place too much emphasis on winning and not the educational value gained from the experience	11	11.3	12	12.4	51	52.6	23	23.7	1.11	Disagree

members to take part in new projects was 2.51 or "Strongly Agree". The next highest rating was 2.44, "Agree", to the statement that competitive events "provide challenges for the 4-H members to do a better job in 4-H projects". Receiving respective mean responses of 2.37, "Agree" and 2.18, "Agree", were statements indicating that 4-H competitive events "Provide additional information for 4-H members' projects" and "Provide opportunities for older members to assist younger members in project work".

Table IV is a compilation of the responses concerning levels of agreement regarding the value of competitive events for help in everyday life. The statements in this Table received an overall mean rating of 2.44 or "Agree".

For two of the statements, "Help encourage sportsmanship" and "Help member assume responsibility", respective responses of 2.59 and 2.53 were noted. Both of these values fall in the "Strongly Agree" category. Group responses to all other statements of value for everyday life were determined to be at the "Agree" level. The order of the statements by level of calculated mean responses is as follows: "Help develop leadership and citizenship", 2.49; "Promote getting along with others" and "Help members express own ideas and thoughts to a group", 2.47 each; "Help develop special interests", 2.44; "Help in making individual decisions" and "Promote working together in a group", each 2.39; "Encourage self-development", 2.36; and "Promote record keeping", 2.23.

TABLE IV  
4-H MEMBERS' RESPONSES CONCERNING THE VALUE OF 4-H EVENTS  
FOR HELP IN EVERYDAY LIFE OF MEMBERS

Statements as to Value	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT OF AGREEMENT									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean Response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Promote getting along with others	52	53.6	40	41.2	4	4.1	1	1.0	2.47	Agree
Help member assume responsibility	54	55.7	41	42.3	1	1.0	1	1.0	2.53	Strongly Agree
Promote working together in a group	51	52.6	36	37.1	7	7.2	3	3.1	2.39	Agree
Help in making individual Decisions	45	46.4	47	48.4	3	3.1	2	2.1	2.39	Agree
Help members express own ideas and thoughts to a group	52	53.6	40	41.3	4	4.3	1	1.0	2.47	Agree
Promote record keeping	46	47.4	34	35.1	11	11.3	6	6.2	2.23	Agree
Encourage self development	47	48.4	41	42.3	6	6.2	3	3.1	2.36	Agree
Help develop leadership & citizenship	54	55.7	37	38.1	6	6.2	0	0	2.49	Agree
Help develop special interests	47	48.4	46	47.4	4	4.3	0	0	2.44	Agree
Help encourage sports- manship	59	60.8	36	37.1	2	2.1	0	0	2.59	Strongly Agree
Overall									2.44	Agree



Members' perceptions of actions needed on selected competitive events are reported in Table V. For all of the events listed, the large majority of the 4-H members felt they should be continued. County Fairs received the strongest support for continuance, with 89.1 percent recommending such. The event receiving the next highest amount of support for continuation was "Demonstration Contests" with 87.5 percent of the respondents so indicating. Respectively, 86.4 and 82.7 percent of the members recommended continuing present practice with regard to Livestock Shows and Dress Revue. Almost 80 percent made this recommendation for Share-the-Fun. County Record Book and Appropriate Dress should be continued as indicated by 72.6 and 70.9 percent of the members respectively. Talk Contests received the lowest level of support for continuance, but even in this case, 62 percent of the members felt this should continue to be offered. In assessing need or revisions in events, 32.4 percent of the members felt changes were needed for Talk Contest. For all others in the list, 17.7 percent or fewer of those surveyed, perceived that revisions were needed. Of the 4-Hers responding, the largest population advocating discontinuings of an event was only 11.9 percent for the County Record Books. This was followed rather closely by the 11.4 percent who recommended to discontinue the Appropriate Dress event. For the remainder, of the events, such a recommendation was proposed by no more than eight percent of the respondents for Dress Revue, down to no recommendations to discontinue County Fair.

TABLE V  
4-H MEMBERS' RESPONSES REGARDING THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF ACTIONS  
NEEDED ON SELECTED COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES BY RECOMMENDATION					
	Continue Present Practice		Revision of Event Needed		Discontinue Event	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Demonstration Contest	70	87.5	9	11.3	1	1.2
Talk Contest	44	62.0	23	32.4	4	5.6
Dress Revue	62	82.7	7	9.3	6	8.0
Appropriate Dress	56	70.9	14	17.7	9	11.4
Livestock Shows	76	86.4	11	12.5	1	1.1
Share The Fun	70	79.5	14	15.9	4	4.6
County Record Books	61	72.6	13	15.5	10	11.9
County Fair	82	89.1	10	10.9	0	0

### Parents

Parents of 4-H members were surveyed if they were at the last community club meeting held in May of 1992. Fifty-three parents completed the questionnaires. The group included both men and women.

In Table VI are listed the data collected regarding perceptions of 4-H parents concerning the educational value of competitive events. For all of the events assessed, an overall mean rating of 2.48 or "Average Value" was calculated. Over 77 percent of the respondents felt the Demonstration Contest, Talk Contest and County Fair had a "High Value" while over 22 percent felt each had an "Average Value". All three of the events had a calculated mean value of 2.77, or "High Value".

Slightly more than 49 percent felt that the Dress Revue was of "High Value", 43.4 percent "Average Value" and 7.5 percent "Limited Value". The mean for the Dress Revue was 2.41, "Average Value". The Appropriate Dress event drew very similar "High Value" responses with 45.3 percent rating it timely. "Average Value" was assigned by 35.8 percent and 13.2 percent rated this as being of "Limited Value". This event had one of the lowest mean values at 2.20 or "Average".

The livestock Shows and Share-the-Fun events had results very much like Appropriate Dress. As indicated by their mean values of 2.18 and 2.20 respectively, both of which classified into the "Average Value" category.

**TABLE VI**  
**4-H PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING**  
**THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF SELECTED**  
**COMPETITIVE EVENTS**

County Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY VALUE ASSIGNED								Mean Response
	High Value		Average Value		Limited Value		No Value		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Demonstration Contest	41	77.4	12	22.6	0	0	0	0	2.77 High Value
Talk Contest	41	77.4	12	22.6	0	0	0	0	2.77 High Value
Dress Revue	26	49.1	23	43.4	4	7.5	0	0	2.41 Average Value
Appropriate Dress	24	45.3	19	35.8	7	13.2	3	5.7	2.20 Average Value
Livestock Shows	26	49.1	15	28.3	8	15.1	4	7.5	2.18 Average Value
Share-the-Fun	25	47.2	18	34.0	6	11.3	4	7.5	2.20 Average Value
County Record Books	31	58.5	18	34.0	3	5.7	1	1.8	2.49 Average Value
County Fair	41	77.4	12	22.6	0	0	0	0	2.77 High Value
Overall									2.48 Average Value

Ninety-two percent of the parents felt that the County Record Books had a "High" or "Average Value". Only five percent felt it had "Limited Value" and one parent felt it had "No Value". The mean value for this event was 2.49 or "Average".

Table VII contains a report of 4-H parents' responses to certain statements to assess perceptions of benefits of 4-H competitive events.

Eighty-three percent of the parents "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that events provide benefits to only a few select members. This statement had an overall mean value of .93 placing it in the "Disagree" category. Also, 90.6 percent "Disagree" that it takes too much time to prepare for contests and 92.5 percent "Disagree" that events cause jealousy or friction among members within a club. The mean values for these two statements are 1.09 and 1.07 respectively. The above statements were approached in a negative manner. In each case parents "Disagreed" with the negative statements indicating a positive feeling toward the concepts dealt with.

The parents expressed a "Strongly Agree" that competitive events provide an educational value; encourage individual effort; help develop leadership and citizenship skills; and help members assume responsibilities. The first statement received an overall mean score of 2.58 and the remainder 2.53 each. An overall response of 2.15, "Agree", was determined when parents were asked if 4-H events provided opportunities for members to meet other members.

TABLE VII  
4-H PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING BENEFITS  
OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Statements Concerning 4-H Competitive Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT OF AGREEMENT								Mean Response	
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Disagree			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Provide benefits to only a few select members	0	0	9	17.0	31	58.5	13	24.5	.93	Disagree
Take too much time on the part of the members to prepare for the contest	0	0	5	9.4	48	90.6	0	0	1.09	Disagree
Cause jealousy or friction among members within a club	0	0	4	7.5	49	92.5	0	0	1.07	Disagree
Provide an educational value for 4-H members	31	58.5	22	41.5	0	0	0	0	2.58	Strongly Agree
Do much to encourage individual effort on the part of the member	28	52.8	25	47.2	0	0	0	0	2.53	Strongly Agree
Provide an opportunity for members to acquaint them- selves with 4-H members from other areas	8	15.1	45	84.9	0	0	0	0	2.15	Agree
Provide educational benefits to member in developing leadership/ citizenship skills	28	52.8	25	47.2	0	0	0	0	2.53	Strongly Agree
Help the member assume responsibilities	28	52.8	25	47.2	0	0	0	0	2.53	Strongly Agree

Table VIII reflects the parents' opinions on how competitive events relate to project work. This was determined by their indications of the extent to which they agreed to a group of statements.

Parents were in agreement that competitive events provide additional information for members' projects; encourage younger members to initiate new projects; and provide challenges for members to do a better job; and provide opportunities for older members to assist younger members to take part in new projects. These statements had mean ratings of 2.21, 2.34, 2.22, and 2.43 respectively, all of which were classified as "Agree".

The results also show that on the average, the parents "Disagree" that events can cause members to be discouraged and quit 4-H if they place low in a contest. This statement had a calculated mean value of .81. Also, the parents "Disagree" that 4-H members enter events only for the awards offered; and that too much emphasis is placed on winning and not on the educational value that can be gained from the experience. The mean values for these two statements were 1.06 and 1.08, respectively. By selecting "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" to the above three negative statements the parents are in reality indicating a positive feeling toward the concepts being dealt with.

Inspection of the data in Table IX reveals that from a low of nearly 87 percent up to 100 percent of the parents selected either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" as responses to statements seeking to determine their perceptions of the value of 4-H events for help in

**TABLE VIII**  
**4-H PARENTS RESPONSES CONCERNING HOW COMPETITIVE EVENTS**  
**RELATE TO PROJECT WORK**

Statements Concerning 4-H Competitive Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT OF AGREEMENT									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Disagree		Mean Response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Provide additional information for 4-H members projects	15	28.3	34	64.2	4	7.5	0	0	2.21	Agree
Provide challenges for the 4-H members to do a better job with 4-H projects	22	41.5	29	54.7	2	3.8	0	0	2.34	Agree
Provide opportunities for older members to assist younger members in project work	25	47.2	26	49.0	2	3.8	0	0	2.43	Agree
Cause members to be discouraged and quit 4-H if they place low in a contest	1	1.8	4	7.5	32	60.3	16	30.2	.81	Disagree
Encourage younger members to take part in new projects	13	24.5	39	73.6	1	1.8	0	0	2.22	Agree
4-H members enter the events only for the award offered	2	3.8	6	11.3	38	71.7	7	13.2	1.06	Disagree
Place too much emphasis on winning and not the educational value gained from the experience	4	7.5	6	11.3	33	62.3	10	18.9	1.08	Disagree



TABLE IX  
 4-H PARENTS' RESPONSES CONCERNING THE  
 VALUE OF 4-H COMPETITIVE EVENTS FOR  
 HELP IN EVERYDAY LIFE OF MEMBERS

Statements as to View	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT OF AGREEMENT								Mean Response	
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Disagree			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Promote getting along with others	10	18.9	39	73.9	4	7.5	0	0	2.11	Agree
Help member assume responsibility	23	43.4	29	54.7	1	1.8	0	0	2.42	Agree
Promote working together in a group	19	35.9	27	50.9	7	13.2	0	0	2.23	Agree
Help in making individual decisions	20	37.7	33	62.3	0	0	0	0	2.38	Agree
Help member express own ideas and thoughts to a group	20	37.7	33	62.3	0	0	0	0	2.38	Agree
Promote record keeping	22	41.5	25	47.2	4	7.5	2	3.8	2.26	Agree
Encourage self development	24	45.3	27	50.9	2	3.8	0	0	2.42	Agree
Help develop leadership and citizenship	21	39.6	32	60.4	0	0	0	0	2.40	Agree
Help develop special interests	15	28.3	38	71.7	0	0	0	0	2.28	Agree
Help encourage sportsmanship	14	26.4	36	67.9	2	3.8	1	1.9	2.19	Agree
Overall									2.32	Agree

the everyday lives of members. The mean response to each of the statements fell into the "Agree" category. As a consequence, the overall mean response to these items was also in the "Agree" range as determined by the calculated mean response of 2.32. The value statement receiving the lowest rating, 2.11 "Agree", was that contending events "Promote getting along with others". The highest rated statements were, "Help members assume responsibility" and "Encourage self development", each receiving a 2.42.

Table X is a compilation of responses of parents concerning their perceptions of actions needed on selected competitive events. For Demonstration and Talk Contests, "Continue present practice" was recommended by all 53 parents surveyed. None of this group indicated revisions were needed for these events. A "Continue present practice" with respect to County Fair, Livestock Shows, County Record Books and Dress Revue was the choice of 94.3, 90.6, and 88.7 and 84.9 percent respectively of the parents. The Appropriate Dress and Share-the-Fun events received the lowest proportions of recommendations to "Continue present practice" by 60.4 and 52.8 percent of the respondents respectively. For the Share-the-Fun event, 41.5 percent of the parents felt it needed revision, but only 5.7 percent said it should not be continued. The Appropriate Dress activity should be revised in the opinion of 30.2 percent of the parents, with 9.4 percent opting to "Discontinue event". The only other event for which such action was recommended was Dress Revue, but that was only by one person.

TABLE X  
 4-H PARENTS' RESPONSES REGARDING THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF  
 ACTIONS AS NEEDED ON SELECTED COMPETITIVE EVENTS

County Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES BY RECOMMENDATION					
	Continue Present Practice		Revision of Event Needed		Discontinue Event	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Demonstration Contest	53	100	0	0	0	0
Talk Contest	53	100	0	0	0	0
Dress Revue	45	84.9	7	13.2	1	1.9
Appropriate Dress	32	60.4	16	30.2	5	9.4
Livestock Shows	48	90.6	5	9.4	0	0
Share The Fun	28	52.8	22	41.5	3	5.7
County Record Books	47	88.7	6	11.3	0	0
County Fair	50	94.3	3	5.7	0	0

#### 4-H Adult Leaders

The 4-H adult leaders' questionnaire was distributed at a 4-H leaders training meeting that was held for all Mayes County 4-H leaders. The respondents included both men and women and all either had children or grand children presently enrolled in the 4-H program.

Table XI is a summary of the perceptions of the leaders toward the educational value of selected 4-H competitive events. Across all the events, the calculated mean value was 2.54 or "High Value". One hundred percent of the leaders considered the County Fair, Demonstration Contest, and Talk Contest to be of "Average or High Value". These three contests had mean value ratings of 2.85, 2.75, and 2.65 respectively. Over 90 percent of the leaders felt the Dress Revue and Appropriate Dress contests were of either "Average or High Value", with five percent saying the Dress Revue had "Limited Value", and ten percent feeling the Appropriate Dress was of "Limited Value". These two contests received the lowest mean value ratings of 2.25 and 2.10 respectively, both of which fit in the "Average Value" category.

Livestock Shows, Share-the-Fun, and County Fair received "High Value" ratings as determined by the respective means of 2.50, 2.60, and 2.65. None of the competitive events received a "No Value" rating by the 4-H leaders.

A summary of 4-H leaders' responses concerning levels of agreement with selected statements describing possible benefits concerning competitive events is reported in Table XII. As

TABLE XI

**4-H LEADERS' PERCEPTION CONCERNING THE EDUCATIONAL  
VALUE OF SELECTED COMPETITIVE EVENTS**

County Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY VALUE ASSIGNED									
	High Value		Average Value		Limited Value		No Value		Mean Response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Demonstration Contest	15	75.0	5	25.0	0	0	0	0	2.75	High Value
Talk Contest	13	65.0	7	35.0	0	0	0	0	2.65	High Value
Dress Revue	6	30.0	13	65.0	1	5.0	0	0	2.25	Average Value
Appropriate Dress	4	20.0	14	70.0	2	10.0	0	0	2.10	Average Value
Livestock Shows	12	60.0	6	30.0	2	10.0	0	0	2.50	High Value
Share-the-Fun	13	65.0	6	30.0	1	5.0	0	0	2.60	High Value
County Record Books	17	85.0	3	15.0	0	0	0	0	2.85	High Value
County Fair	14	70.0	5	25.0	1	5.0	0	0	2.65	High Value
Overall									2.54	High Value

TABLE XII  
4-H LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING  
BENEFITS OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Statements Concerning 4-H Competitive Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT OF AGREEMENT								Mean Response	
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Provide benefits to only a few select members	0	0	3	15.0	11	55.0	6	30.0	.85	Disagree
Take too much time on the part of the members to prepare for the contest	0	0	0	0	15	75.0	5	25.0	.75	Disagree
Cause jealousy or friction among members within a club	0	0	4	20.0	9	45.0	7	35.0	.85	Disagree
Provide an educational value for 4-H members	11	55.0	8	40.0	1	5.0	0	0	2.50	Strongly Agree
Do much to encourage individual effort on the part of the member	8	40.0	10	50.0	2	10.0	0	0	2.30	Agree
Provide an opportunity for members to acquaint themselves with 4-H members from other areas	10	50.0	10	50.0	0	0	0	0	2.50	Strongly Agree
Provide educational benefits to member in developing leadership/ citizenship skills	10	50.0	10	50.0	0	0	0	0	2.50	Strongly Agree
Help the member assume responsibilities	10	50.0	10	50.0	0	0	0	0	2.50	Strongly Agree

discussed earlier, in Tables II, III, VII, and VIII some statements were approached in a negative manner. As in each of the previous tables the respondents "Disagree" with the negative statements which in effect indicates a positive feeling toward the concepts dealt with. For the statements that competitive events "Provide benefits to only a few select members" and that "Cause jealousy or friction among members within a club", the mean rating of .85. As for the statement that events take too much time on the part of the members the mean value was determined to .75. Each of the mean values translated to "Disagree".

All leaders surveyed "Strongly Agree", as indicated by the mean ratings of 2.50 that 4-H events "Provide an educational value for 4-H members", "Provide an opportunity for members to acquaint themselves with 4-H members from other areas". "Help members assume responsibility", and "Provide educational benefits to members in developing leadership and citizenship skills." On the average, 4-H leaders "Agree" that 4-H events encourage individual effort on the part of members.

Table XIII contains the perceptions of the leaders on how competitive events relate to project work. The leaders felt that competitive events do provide additional information for projects and that they also challenge 4-H members to do a better job with projects. These statements had mean value scores of 2.15 and 2.35 respectively, both of which were classified as "Agree". Ninety-five percent felt that competitive events do encourage younger members to take part in new projects. The calculated mean value for this

TABLE XIII

**4-H LEADERS' RESPONSES CONCERNING HOW COMPETITIVE  
EVENTS RELATE TO PROJECT WORK**

Statements Concerning 4-H Competitive Events	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EXTENT OF AGREEMENT									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Mean Response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Provide additional information for 4-H members projects	3	15.0	17	85.0	0	0	0	0	2.15	Agree
Provide challenges for the 4-H members to do a better job with 4-H projects	7	35.0	13	65.0	0	0	0	0	2.35	Agree
Provide opportunities for older members to assist younger members in project work	5	25.0	13	65.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	2.10	Agree
Cause members to be discouraged and quit 4-H if they place low in a contest	0	0	0	0	13	65.0	7	35.0	.65	Disagree
Encourage younger members to take part in new projects	5	25.0	14	70.0	1	5.0	0	0	2.20	Agree
4-H members enter the events only for the award offered	0	0	2	10.0	11	55.0	7	35.0	.75	Disagree
Place too much emphasis on winning and not the educational value gained from the experience	0	0	1	5.0	12	60.0	7	35.0	.70	Disagree



statement was 2.20 or "Agree". Furthermore, 90 percent of the leaders felt that competitive events provide opportunities for older members to assist younger members in project work. This statement's mean value was 2.10 or "Agree".

The following three statements again represent a negative approach and by the respondents showing "disagree" with the statements, they are actually taking a positive position towards the concepts of the statements. The leaders "Disagree" that events cause members to be discouraged and quit 4-H if they place low in a contest. This statement had a mean value rating of .65. Also, the statement that "4-H members enter the events only for the award offered" received a mean value of .75. To a related statement that too much emphasis is placed on winning and not the educational value gained from the experience, one leader indicated "Agree", 12 "Disagree" and seven "Strongly Disagree" for a mean value of .70 or "Disagree".

Leaders' perceptions concerning the value received from events by 4-H members for help in their everyday life are reported in Table XIV. The calculated mean response across all the statements of value included in this table was 2.42 or "Agree". The leaders expressed "Strongly Agree" to the statement that competitive events "Help develop leadership and citizenship". The mean value was 2.55, the highest of the group. Receiving 2.45, "Agree", ratings were the statements, "Help members assume responsibility", "Help members express their own ideas and thoughts to a group", and "Help in making individual decisions". Leaders assigned an "Agree" response

**TABLE XIV**  
**4-H LEADERS' RESPONSES CONCERNING THE VALUE OF 4-H**  
**COMPETITIVE EVENTS FOR HELP IN EVERYDAY**  
**LIFE OF MEMBERS**

Statements as to Value	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT								Mean Response	
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Promote getting along with others	8	40.0	12	60.0	0	0	0	0	2.40	Agree
Help member assume responsibility	9	45.0	11	55.0	0	0	0	0	2.45	Agree
Promote working together in a group	9	45.0	10	50.0	1	5.0	0	0	2.40	Agree
Help in making individual decisions	9	45.0	11	55.0	0	0	0	0	2.45	Agree
Help member express own ideas and thoughts to a group	9	45.0	11	55.0	0	0	0	0	2.45	Agree
Promote record keeping	7	35.0	11	55.0	2	10.0	0	0	2.25	Agree
Encourage self development	9	45.0	11	55.0	0	0	0	0	2.45	Agree
Help develop leader- ship and citizenship	11	55.0	9	45.0	0	0	0	0	2.55	Agree
Help develop special interests	7	35.0	13	65.0	0	0	0	0	2.35	Strongly Agree
Help encourage sports- manship	9	45.0	10	50	1	5.0	0	0	2.40	Agree
Overall									2.42	Agree

to the statements contending that for everyday life 4-H competitive events "Promote getting along with others", "Promote working together in a group", and "Help encourage sportsmanship". The mean rating for each of these was 2.40. The lowest mean response, 2.25, was to the statement advocating that events, "Promote record keeping"; however, this was still classified as "Agree".

The questionnaire completed by 20 4-H leaders also asked them to indicate if certain competitive events should be continued as at present, be revised, or be discontinued. As shown in Table XV no leader felt that any event should be discontinued. For the Talk Contest, Livestock Shows, and County Fair "Continue present practice" was stressed by all 20 leaders. Ninety percent of the leaders felt the Demonstration Contest, Share-the-Fun, and County Record Books should "Continue present practice" with ten percent indicating "Revision of event needed".

As to the Dress Revue and Appropriate Dress Contest 75 percent of the leaders recommended to "Continue present practice" and 25 percent indicated "Revision of event needed".

TABLE XV

4-H LEADERS' RESPONSES REGARDING THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF  
ACTIONS NEEDED ON SELECTED COMPETITIVE EVENTS

County Events	Continue Present Practice		Revision of Event Needed		Discontinue	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Demonstration Contest	18	90.0	2	10.0	0	0
Talk Contest	20	100.0	0	0	0	0
Dress Revue	17	75.0	3	25.0	0	0
Appropriate Dress	17	75.0	3	25.0	0	0
Livestock Shows	20	100.0	0	0	0	0
Share The Fun	18	90.0	2	10.0	0	0
County Record Book	18	90.0	2	10.0	0	0
County Fair	20	100.0	0	0	0	0

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

##### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the perceptions of 4-H club members, parents and leaders from Mayes county concerning 4-H competitive events.

To accomplish the purpose of the study it was necessary to determine respondents perception regarding:

1. The educational value of competitive 4-H activities in 4-H club work;
2. The benefits of competitive 4-H activities in relation to 4-H project work;
3. The benefits of competitive 4-H events in relation to everyday life of members;
4. To compare the perceptions of the three respondent groups concerning 4-H competitive events.

Since the inception of 4-H club work competitive activities have been used as a major teaching tool by 4-H agents and leaders. Through the use of a competitive event members gain knowledge in that project, can develop a positive self esteem at completion of that project, can learn that success does not come easy and can learn to be a good winner or loser. Also, members can develop

leadership abilities in helping other 4-H members with their projects.

But, all too often the education experience is not stressed by parents, leaders and agents. If this happens and youth do not experience success then they become reluctant to enter future events and even drop out of 4-H. Therefore, it was felt that obtaining the perceptions of 4-H members, parents and leaders as to the value of competitive 4-H events would provide a basis for making improvements.

Data were collected by administering a questionnaire to each Mayes County 4-H member in attendance at their end of year community club meeting in May of 1992. Parents were also surveyed if they were in attendance at the last community club meeting. Leaders were asked to complete the survey at a 4-H leaders training meeting held for all Mayes County 4-H leaders.

#### Major Findings

Table XVI contains a summarization of the perceptions of the three groups surveyed with regard to the value of selected competitive 4-H events. The rank order of each event according to mean value is included. Also presented is the mean response of all groups combined for each event. It should be noted that none of the events were rated by any group or overall at a level less than "Average Value". All three groups assigned a "High Value" rating to Demonstration Contest and County Fair. They were also in agreement at the "Average Value" level on Dress Revue and Appropriate Dress.

TABLE XVI

A SUMMARY OF ALL GROUPS' PERCEPTION CONCERNING THE  
EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF SELECTED COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Events	MEAN RESPONSES AND RANKINGS BY GROUP								Overall Rank
	Members		Parents		Leaders				
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
Demonstration Contest	2.58 High Value	3	2.77 High Value	1	2.75 High Value	2	2.67 High Value	2	
Talk Contest	2.23 Average Value	6	2.77 High Value	1	2.65 High Value	3	2.47 Average Value	4	
Dress Revue	2.07 Average Value	8	2.41 Average Value	5	2.25 Average Value	7	2.20 Average Value	7	
Appropriate Dress	2.14 Average Value	7	2.20 Average Value	6	2.10 Average Value	8	2.16 Average Value	8	
Livestock Shows	2.71 High Value	2	2.18 Average Value	8	2.50 High Value	6	2.52 High Value	3	
Share-the-Fun	2.57 High Value	4	2.20 Average Value	6	2.60 High Value	5	2.44 Average Value	5	
County Record Books	2.25 Average Value	5	2.49 Average Value	4	2.85 High Value	1	2.40 Average Value	6	
County Fair	2.84 High Value	1	2.77 High Value	1	2.65 High Value	3	2.75 High Value	1	
Overall Mean	2.43 Average Value		2.48 Average Value		2.54 High Value		2.46 Average Value		

Overall, the top ranked event in terms of value was County Fair, receiving a "High Value" rating. This was also the top choice of the Members and Parents, while its rank by Leaders was third. Demonstration Contest was the number two ranked event overall, being designated as of "High Value". This was ranked third, first and second by Members, Parents, and Leaders respectively. One other event, Livestock Shows, received a "High Value" rating overall and ranked third. Members ranked this event second, while Parents ranked it eighth and Leaders ranked it sixth. In terms of overall mean responses, all the remaining events were assigned "Average Value" ratings.

As a group, Leaders valued events higher than the other two groups, placing a "High Value" assessment on all but Dress Revue and Appropriate Dress. In contrast, Parents had mean responses of "High Value" on but three of the events, with the remaining five being "Average Value". Members and Leaders selected the same category of mean value for six of the eight events.

The purpose of Table XVII is to display and permit a comparison of the mean responses of the groups to statements concerning benefits of competitive events. Three statements were purposely couched in a negative vein. Since all three groups responded "Disagree" to each of these statements, they were in fact indicating they felt that the opposite of what was stated was the case for describing benefits of events. In other words, by their responses, they actually were contending that competitive events benefit more than a few members, do not take too much of members'



TABLE XVII  
 SUMMARY OF ALL GROUPS' RESPONSES CONCERNING  
 BENEFITS OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Statements Concerning 4-H Competitive Events	MEAN RESPONSE BY GROUP							
	Members		Parents		Leaders		Overall	
	Mean		Mean		Mean		Mean	
Provide benefits to only a few select members	1.15	Disagree	.93	Disagree	.85	Disagree	1.11	Disagree
Take too much time on the part of the members to prepare for the contest	1.11	Disagree	1.09	Disagree	.75	Disagree	1.06	Disagree
Cause jealousy or friction among members within a club	1.24	Disagree	1.07	Disagree	.85	Disagree	1.14	Disagree
Provide an educational value for 4-H members	2.46	Agree	2.58	Strongly Agree	2.50	Strongly Agree	2.51	Strongly Agree
Do much to encourage individual effort on the part of the member	2.43	Agree	2.53	Strongly Agree	2.30	Agree	2.45	Agree
Provide an opportunity for member to acquaint themselves with 4-H members from other areas	2.46	Agree	2.15	Agree	2.50	Strongly Agree	2.37	Agree
Provide educational benefits to members in developing leadership/citizenship	2.49	Agree	2.53	Strongly Agree	2.50	Strongly Agree	2.51	Strongly Agree
Help the member assume responsibilities	2.57	Strongly Agree	2.53	Strongly Agree	2.50	Strongly Agree	2.55	Strongly Agree

time, and do not cause jealousy or friction among members.

All three respondent groups expressed "Strongly Agree" that competitive events "Help the member assume responsibilities", with mean scores between 2.50 and 2.57, with an overall mean of 2.55. Also, the statements "Provide an educational value for 4-H members" and "Provide educational benefits to member in developing leadership and citizenship skills" fell into the "Strongly Agree" category overall with mean scores of 2.51.

In regard to the statement, "Do much to encourage individual effort on the part of the member" the means fell between 2.30 for Leaders and 2.53 for Parents with a combined mean of 2.45, "Agree". In comparing the groups' responses regarding "Provide an opportunity for members to acquaint themselves with 4-H members from other areas" the members and leaders indicated a higher agreement, means of 2.46 and 2.50, than did parents with a mean of 2.15. Combined, the mean response was 2.37, "Agree".

Both parent and leader groups, on the average, expressed higher levels of agreement to the benefit statements than did the members. Each of the former groups responded "Strongly Agree" to four of the eight statements. On three of these, "Provide an educational value for members", "Provide educational benefits to member in developing leadership/citizenship skills", and "Help the member assume responsibilities" the parents and leaders both indicated a "Strongly Agree" response.

The results summarized in Table XVIII show that overall the respondents were in a high level of agreement with the following

TABLE XVIII

A SUMMARY OF ALL GROUPS' RESPONSES CONCERNING HOW  
COMPETITIVE EVENTS RELATE TO PROJECT WORK

MEAN RESPONSES BY GROUP				
Statements Concerning 4-H Competitive Events	Members Mean	Parents Mean	Leaders Mean	Overall Rank
Provide additional information for 4-H members projects	2.37 Agree	2.21 Agree	2.15 Agree	2.29 Agree
Provide challenges for the 4-H members to do a better job with 4-H projects	2.44 Agree	2.34 Agree	2.35 Agree	2.41 Agree
Provide opportunities for older member to assist younger members in project work	2.18 Agree	2.43 Agree	2.10 Agree	2.25 Agree
Cause members to be discouraged and quit 4-H if they place low in a contest	.91 Disagree	.81 Disagree	.65 Disagree	.85 Disagree
Encourage younger members to take part in new projects	2.51 Strongly Agree	2.22 Agree	2.20 Agree	2.40 Agree
4-H members enter the events only for the award offered	1.01 Disagree	1.06 Disagree	.75 Disagree	.94 Disagree
Place too much emphasis on winning and not the educational value gained from the experience	1.11 Disagree	1.08 Disagree	.70 Disagree	1.05 Disagree

statements as to the effect competitive events have on project work: "Provide additional information for 4-H members' project"; "Provide challenges for the 4-H members to do a better job with 4-H projects"; "Provide opportunities for older members to assist younger members in project work"; and "Encourage younger members to take part in new projects". The combined means of these statements fell between a small range of 2.25 to 2.41. These values all were categorized as "Agree".

Also disclosed in Table XVIII is the fact that all groups of the respondents "Disagree" that competitive events "Cause members to be discouraged and quit 4-H if they place low in a contest"; that "4-H members enter the events only for the award offered"; or that competition "Place too much emphasis on winning and not the educational value gained from the experience". This was derived from the group means of .85, .94, and 1.05 respectively for members, parents, and leaders. These three statements each had a negative focus. By disagreeing with the statements, respondents actually expressed a positive orientation toward the concepts addressed in these items. Specifically, by their negative responses to the negatively stated items each of the groups indicated they perceived that placing low in contests do not cause members to become discouraged and quit, that members do not enter events only for the award, and that too much emphasis is not placed on winning rather than the educational value gained from the experience.

Although only the members expressed a "Strongly Agree" response and that to only one item, there was an extensive degree of consistency among the group responses on all the items included in this portion of the survey. Except for that one instance the responses of each group to each item were all found to fall into the same category.

As summarized in Table XIX, there was a strong extent of agreement among the groups regarding the value of 4-H competitive events for help in everyday life of members. The overall mean across all groups for each of the statements fell into a range of 2.24 to 2.48. All of these numerical means were within the "Agree" category.

The mean responses of all three groups on seven of the ten statements were in the same category, "Agree". The leaders indicated a "Strongly Agree" to the statement that events, "Help develop leadership and citizenship". The other variations were for members, whose mean responses to "Help members assume responsibility", and "Help encourage sportsmanship" were at the "Strongly Agree" level.

Table XX was developed to permit a comparison of how the three groups perceived actions which should be taken on selected 4-H competitive events. The respondents were asked to indicate for each of the events if present practice should be continued, if revision was needed in the event, or if the event should be discontinued.

The highest level of agreement to "Continue present practice" with the events was expressed by the leaders group, with 100 percent

TABLE XIX

A SUMMARY OF ALL GROUPS' RESPONSES CONCERNING THE EDUCATIONAL  
VALUE OF 4-H COMPETITIVE EVENTS FOR HELP  
IN EVERYDAY LIFE OF MEMBERS

Statements as to Value	Members Mean		Parents Mean		Leaders Mean		Overall Mean	
Promote getting along with others	2.47	Agree	2.11	Agree	2.40	Agree	2.35	Agree
Help member assume responsibility	2.53	Strongly Agree	2.42	Agree	2.45	Agree	2.48	Agree
Promote working together in a group	2.39	Agree	2.23	Agree	2.40	Agree	2.34	Agree
Help in making individual decisions	2.39	Agree	2.38	Agree	2.45	Agree	2.39	Agree
Help member express own ideas and thoughts to a group	2.47	Agree	2.38	Agree	2.45	Agree	2.44	Agree
Promote record keeping	2.23	Agree	2.26	Agree	2.25	Agree	2.24	Agree
Encourage self development	2.36	Agree	2.42	Agree	2.45	Agree	2.38	Agree
Help develop leader- ship and citizenship	2.49	Agree	2.40	Agree	2.55	Strongly Agree	2.47	Agree
Help develop special interests	2.44	Agree	2.28	Agree	2.35	Agree	2.38	Agree
Help encourage sportsmanship	2.59	Strongly Agree	2.19	Agree	2.40	Agree	2.44	Agree
Overall Mean	2.44	Agree	2.32	Agree	2.42	Agree	2.40	Agree

TABLE XX

A SUMMARY OF ALL GROUPS' RESPONSES REGARDING THEIR PERCEPTIONS  
OF ACTIONS NEEDED ON SELECTED COMPETITIVE EVENTS

County Events	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES BY GROUP BY PERCEIVED ACTION NEEDED								
	Continue Present Practice			Revision of Event Needed			Discontinue		
	Members	Parents	Leaders	Members	Parents	Leaders	Members	Parents	Leaders
Demonstration Contest	87.5	100	90.0	11.3	0	10.0	1.2	0	0
Talk Contest	62.0	100	100	32.4	0	0	5.6	0	0
Dress Revue	82.7	84.9	75.0	9.3	13.2	15.0	8.0	1.9	0
Appropriate Dress	70.9	60.4	75.0	17.7	30.2	15.0	11.4	9.4	0
Livestock Shows	86.4	90.6	100	12.5	9.4	0	1.1	0	0
Share-the-Fun	79.5	52.8	90.0	15.9	41.5	10.0	4.6	5.7	0
County Record Books	72.6	88.7	90.0	15.5	11.3	10.0	11.0	0	0
County Fair	89.1	94.3	100	10.9	5.7	0	0	0	0

of them advocating no change for three of the events. Parents were strong supporters of this recommendation also on all but one of the events, "Share-the-Fun", where just over 52 percent felt that what was being practiced should continue. The percentages of 4-H members feeling that present practices should continue was somewhat lower on most of the events than was true for the other two groups.

Almost one-third of the 4-H members felt the Talk Contest event needed revision. For the remaining vents, only 17.7 percent or fewer of the members wanted revisions. Revisions were recommended for the Share-the-Fun event by 41.5 percent of the parents, while 30.2 percent of them felt revisions were needed in Appropriate Dress. None of the parents wanted revisions in Demonstration Contest and Talk Contest, with only 13.2 percent or less advocating change in the remaining events. None of the leaders felt change was needed for Livestock Shows, Talk Contest, and County Fair. For all the other events, 15 percent or less of the leaders saw the need for revision.

There was rather widespread agreement across all groups that all events should continue. None of the leaders recommended discontinuance of any event. While some 4-H members indicated that all but one of the events, County Fair, should be discontinued, the percentages responding in this manner on each were only 11.9 or less. Appropriate Dress was recommended to be discontinued by 9.4 percent of the parents, with 5.7 percent making the same recommendation on Share-the-Fun and 1.9 percent doing so for Dress



Revue. For the remainder, none of the parents opted for discontinue.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions were considered as basic outcomes from the study.

1. All three respondent groups perceive competitive events to have a positive educational value, with the County Fair and Demonstration Contests considered as the most valuable.
2. 4-H members, parents, and leaders were in agreement that competitive events do provide positive benefits for the members.
3. A strong consensus exists among all three respondent groups that competitive events do have a positive relationship to project work.
4. 4-H members, parents, and leaders were in a high level of agreement that competitive events provide beneficial experiences which help 4-H members meet the challenges of every day life.
5. The respondents felt that competitive events were a positive entity in the 4-H program and should be continued in the present form. However, some revisions were indicated.
6. 4-H is a strong youth organization in Mayes County and support and interest exist among all respondent groups concerning the value of competitive events.

### Recommendations

Recommendations are opinions based on facts presented in this study.

1. Steps should be taken to determine how to improve members' perceptions of the educational value and benefits of the Talk Contest.

2. Steps should be taken to determine how the Appropriate Dress Contest and Share-the-Fun contest can be revised so that the members and parents will see more benefit from member participation.

3. Steps should be taken to determine how the County Record Book can be revised so that parents and members will see the benefit from member participation.

4. Training sessions are needed so parents and leaders will continue to see the importance and benefits gained from 4-H Competitive Events.

5. 4-H competitive events should be continued in Mayes County as they do have an educational value and do benefit 4-H members in club work and every day life.

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**APPENDIXES**

APPENDIXES A

IRM FORM

**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**

Proposal Title: Perceptions of 4-H Club Members, Parents, Leaders and Agents  
of Competitive Activities in Mayes, Co. Oklahoma

Principal Investigator: Dr. Robert Terry/ Stan Fimple

Date: April 28, 1992 IRB # AG-92-018

-----  
This application has been reviewed by the IRB and

Processed as: Exempt  Expedite  Full Board Review

Renewal or Continuation

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):

Approved

Deferred for Revision

Approved with Provision

Disapproved

Approval status subject to review by full Institutional Review Board at  
next meeting, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

-----  
Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reason for Deferral or  
Disapproval:

Signature: *Maria S. Tilley* Date: May 5, 1992  
Chair of Institutional Review Board

**APPENDIX B**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**



PART 1: Please indicate the educational value you would place on each of the following 4-H competitive events that your county has.

	High Value	Average Value	Limited Value	No Value
A. Demonstration Contest				
B. Talk Contest				
C. Dress Revue				
D. Appropriate Dress				
E. Livestock Shows				
F. Share-The-Fun				
G. County Record Book				
H. County Fair				
I. Other (Specify)				

PART 2. Please complete the following regarding Competitive Events.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Provides benefits to only a few select members				
B. Takes too much time on the part of the members to prepare for the contest				
C. Causes jealousy or friction among members within a club				
D. Provides an educational value for 4-H members				
E. Does much to encourage individual effort on the part of the member				
F. Provides an opportunity for members to acquaint themselves with 4-H members from other areas				
G. Provides educational benefits to member in developing leadership & citizenship skill				
H. Helps the member assume responsibilities				

PART 3: Please indicate your opinions about how competitive events support the 4-H Projects (example: Demonstration and/or Speech Contest to Public Speaking Project)

Strongly Agree Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

A. Provides additional information for 4-H members projects				
B. Provides challenges for the 4-H member to do a better job with 4-H projects				
C. Provides opportunities for older members to assist younger members in project work				
D. Causes member to be discouraged and quit 4-H if they place low in a contest				
E. Encourages younger 4-H members to take part in new projects				
F. 4-H members enter the events only for the awards offered				
G. Places too much emphasis on winning and not the educational value gained from the experience				

PART 4. Please indicate your opinion of the effect that you feel 4-H competitive events have on the everyday life of the 4-H member.

Strongly Agree Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

A. Promotes getting along with others				
B. Helps the member assume responsibilities				
C. Promotes working together in a group				
D. Helps in making individual decisions				
E. Helps the member express their own ideas & thoughts to groups				
F. Promotes record keeping				
G. Encourages self development				
H. Helps develop leadership and citizenship				
I. Helps develop special interest				
J. Helps encourages sportsmanship				

PART 5. Please evaluate the following list of competitive events you have in your county and indicate your opinion regarding each.

Continue Revision Discontinue  
Present of Event Event  
Practice Needed

- A. Demonstration Contest
- B. Talk Contest
- C. Dress Revue
- D. Appropriate Dress
- E. Livestock Shows
- F. Share-The-Fun
- G. County Record Book
- H. County Fair
- I. Other (Specify)


If you listed revision or discontinue event, please specify what revision you would suggest or why it should be discontinued!

TO BE COMPLETED BY 4-H MEMBERS

How many years have you been in 4-H \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever taken part in any competitive events in 4-H

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many times have you participated in the following 4-H competitive activities in your 4-H career:

- A. Demonstration Contest \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Talk Contest \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Dress Revue \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Appropriate Dress \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Livestock Shows \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Share-the-Fun \_\_\_\_\_
- G. County Record Book \_\_\_\_\_
- H. County Fair \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

PART 5. Please evaluate the following list of competitive events you have in your county and indicate your opinion regarding each.

Continue Revision Discontinue  
Present of Event Event  
Practice Needed

- A. Demonstration Contest
- B. Talk Contest
- C. Dress Revue
- D. Appropriate Dress
- E. Livestock Shows
- F. Share-The-Fun
- G. County Record Book
- H. County Fair
- I. Other (Specify)


If you listed revision or discontinue event, please specify what revision you would suggest or why it should be discontinued!

How many times has your oldest child in 4-H participated in these events?

- A. Demonstration Contest \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Talk Contest \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Dress Revue \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Appropriate Dress \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Livestock Shows \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Share-The-Fun \_\_\_\_\_
- G. County Record Book \_\_\_\_\_
- H. County Fair \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

PART 5. Please evaluate the following list of competitive events you have in your county and indicate your opinion regarding each.

Continue Revision Discontinue  
Present of Event Event  
Practice Needed

- A. Demonstration Contest
- B. Talk Contest
- C. Dress Revue
- D. Appropriate Dress
- E. Livestock Shows
- F. Share-The-Fun
- G. County Record Book
- H. County Fair
- I. Other (Specify)


If you listed revision or discontinue event, please specify what revision you would suggest or why it should be discontinued!

Leaders - What percent of your members have participated in these contests?

- A. Demonstration Contest \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Talk Contest \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Dress Revue \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Appropriate Dress \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Livestock Shows \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Share-The-Fun \_\_\_\_\_
- G. County Record Book \_\_\_\_\_
- H. County Fair \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Years a 4-H Leader

VITA <sup>2</sup>

Stan Q. Fimple

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Master of Science

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF 4-H CLUB MEMBERS, PARENTS, AND LEADERS  
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