

Ohio State University Extension and the County Junior Fair: Partners and their Respective Roles*

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Ohio State University Extension and Junior Fair Overview

Young people want to be engaged in positive activities that help them develop a sense of responsibility and build self-esteem. The Junior Fair is a successful learning laboratory that enhances youth development using a hands-on approach. Ohio State University Extension is committed to continued 4-H member participation in Junior Fairs because of the opportunities to:

- Extend each 4-H member's (and volunteer's) learning opportunities related to the specific project and development / enhancement of life skills;
- Evaluate the level of each 4-H member's accomplishments in both competitive and non-competitive events;
- Recognize 4-H members; and
- Showcase Ohio State University Extension and Ohio 4-H Youth Development.

What is Junior Fair? "Fair" means the annual exhibition held by the Ohio expositions commission, pursuant to division (A)(1) of section 991.03 of the Revised Code, or a county agricultural society or independent agricultural society, as reported to the director of agriculture pursuant to rule 901-5-11 of the Ohio Administrative Code. ([OAC 901-19-01](#))

"Junior livestock show / exhibition" means a show limited to exhibitors eight years of age and in the third grade through nineteen years of age, or as authorized to participate in either 4-H, FFA, or other youth organization. ([OAC 901-19-01](#))

Junior Fair is one of the major components of most county and independent fairs. 4-H Youth Development is one of several youth organizations involved, or potentially involved, in Junior Fairs. Furthermore, we acknowledge that the Agricultural Society does not manage or conduct the Ohio 4-H Youth Development Program, nor does Ohio State University Extension and the 4-H Youth Development Program manage the Agricultural Society or conduct Junior Fairs. Ohio State University Extension personnel serve as a resource for the total fair, as well as leadership for 4-H's involvement in Junior Fair programs.

Partner Roles

There is no one Ohio State University Extension / 4-H Youth Development and Agricultural Society agreement that applies to all county and independent fairs. However, the following description of partner roles regarding Junior Fairs was developed to strengthen working relationships and ensure positive experiences for youth participants and their families. A Junior Fair Committee and Junior Fair Board are also included as critical partners for an effective Junior Fair program.

Roles of Ohio State University Extension / 4-H Youth Development

1. Provide support of, and a positive attitude toward, fairs.
2. Design educational opportunities for 4-H members.
3. Maximize the opportunities of the Junior Fair environment to teach and demonstrate improved ideas and practices related to specific project areas and leadership development.
4. Implement Ohio Youth Quality Assurance programming (OAC 901-19-07; Appendix A)
5. Provide organizational counsel / advice on:
 - a. Ideas and organizational guidelines for the Agricultural Society.
 - b. Junior Fair Committee and assisting with Junior Fair Board.
 - c. Adult and youth training in leadership skills, organization, communication, public relations, etc.
 - d. Designing and managing programs to encourage 4-H members and volunteers to excel, learn, grow, and have fun through:
 - Non-competitive and competitive events.
 - Incentives for youth to develop desire, confidence, new knowledge and skills, and personal development.
 - Involvement of volunteers, Junior Leaders, and Junior Fair Board members.
6. Serve as one of the advisors to the Junior Fair Board and serve on the Junior Fair Committee of the Senior Fair Board.
7. Provide input and support for the Junior Fair program book including appropriate classes and activities which meet the objectives of the 4-H program that are conducted at the fair.
8. Provide resources for judge selection and recommend types of recognition such as ribbons, trophies, and plaques.
9. May assist with preparing the Junior Fair budget request and provide guidance on financial management and accountability; however, this cannot include custodial responsibility for any funds generated in support of Junior Fair activities.
10. Work with the Junior Fair Board members to fulfill their leadership responsibilities.
11. Communicate information to members and their families, as well as volunteers.
12. Organize and manage events specifically for 4-H that are not open to all Junior Fair members, provide leadership and guidance for those events. (i.e. Cloverbuds, 4-H project judging, etc.)
13. Assist as appropriate with other Junior Fair and / or open class activities as time and expertise permit (see Appendix A).

Role of Senior Fair Board/Agricultural Societies

1. Provide support of, and a positive attitude toward, the objectives of the different Junior Fair youth programs.
2. Conduct overall management for the county / independent fair's Junior Fair program.
3. Provide financial management of all activities related to the Junior Fair including collection, deposit, and payment of any funds as appropriate for:
 - a. Judges and other Junior Fair employees.
 - b. Ribbons, trophies, premiums, and other awards.
 - c. Junior Fair sales.
 - d. Facilities and maintenance.
 - e. Financial management of the Junior Fair.
4. Final approval of all rules (in alignment with respective youth organizations) related to Junior Fair activities, shows, and sales, etc., as recommended by the Junior Fair Committee and Junior Fair Board.
5. Enforcement of Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) / Ohio Revised Code (ORC) exhibition rules (OAC 901-19, etc.) and Junior Fair rules (See Appendix B for examples).

6. Approve and support Junior Fair activities.
7. Involve Ohio State University Extension personnel in decisions that affect participation of 4-H youth and adults such as entry verification, fair passes, premiums, housing of exhibits, show schedules, and facility usage.
8. Provide and maintain adequate facilities for Junior Fair events.
9. Maintain control of scheduling, maintenance, and improvements of the fair facilities on a year-round basis even though 4-H members and adults may be instrumental in constructing or improving those facilities.
10. Employ or recruit a volunteer to serve as a Junior Fair Coordinator to assist in the management and implementation of the Junior Fair program.
11. Provide supervision and management of volunteers assisting with Junior Fair.
12. Role of Junior Fair Committee (if applicable)

A Junior Fair Committee is appointed by the Senior Fair Board and may include Senior Fair Board members, Ohio State University Extension personnel, school superintendent(s), and representatives of other youth programs who participate in the Junior Fair Division. This committee's roles may include:

- a. Provide support of and a positive attitude toward the objectives of the different Junior Fair youth programs, including effective leadership development opportunities for Junior Fair Board members.
 - b. Work with the Junior Fair Board to develop the Junior Fair Division of the fair and report directly to the county or independent Senior Fair Board.
 - c. Works cooperatively with all youth groups participating in the Junior Fair Division.
 - d. Work closely with the Junior Fair Board to develop recommendations for all operations of the Junior Fair Division.
 - e. Provide support to Junior Fair Board and serve as liaison with Senior Fair Board.
13. Role of Junior Fair Board
 - a. The Junior Fair Board should be organized with representation from Junior Fair youth organizations.
 - b. Provide support of and a positive attitude toward the objectives of the different Junior Fair youth programs.
 - c. Provide leadership to the development and implementation of the Junior Fair program.
 - d. The Junior Fair Board, in consultation with the Junior Fair Committee, will submit plans, budget and financial accounting for audit to the Senior Fair Board.
 - e. The Junior Fair Board is responsible and accountable to the Senior Fair Board.

**Originally created for the OFMA Convention on January 4, 2005 by Keith L. Smith, Director of OSU Extension, and Jeff King, State 4-H Leader. Revised January 2016 by Dr. Roger Rennekamp, Director of OSU Extension, and Dr. Tom Archer, State 4-H Leader. Further revised and updated by the Junior Fair Partners Task Force in Spr2024. Junior Fair Partners Task Force members: Bob Buxton, Michelle Fehr, Christy Leeds, Lisa Manning, Lisa McCutcheon, Morgan Parcher, Elizabeth Share, Joy Sharp, Jacci Smith, Nancy Snook, Tom Stocksdale and Travis West.*

Appendix A

A description of roles Extension should, may, and cannot play in supporting Junior Fair Programs within Ohio.

Should	May	Cannot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate to 4-H members fair rules, expectations, dates, and deadlines. - Be responsible for Quality Assurance programming and tracking of attendance for QA sessions taught by Extension. - Engage with Agricultural Society Board members. This can include attendance at meetings, committee meetings, etc. - Be responsible for 4-H Events, which can include 4-H Project Judging, Cloverbud events, etc. - Enforce 4-H rules, expectations, and Code of Conduct. - Collaborate with Junior Fair Partners on rules and requirements. - Be involved with Junior Fair Board. This can include providing leadership or guidance, attending meetings, training, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate with judges. - Order awards. - Develop class lists. - Collect and verify entries. - Be involved in Junior Fair events / contests including Outstanding Exhibitor, Skillathon, Livestock Judging, royalty, etc. - Be involved with the Junior Fair auction / sale. - Provide leadership to Junior Fair Board. - Assist at events such as tagging, weigh-ins, etc. - Creation and distribution of sale bills. - Order livestock tags. - Distribute fair passes. - Check-in of exhibitors and projects. - Provide ring management day of show. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have custodial responsibility for any funds generated in support of Junior Fair activities. - Enter into contracts on behalf of Junior Fair activities (e.g., contracting livestock judges). - Print or sign sale checks. <i>OSU Extension MAY help distribute these, as long as they follow Ohio 4-H Financial Guidance on tracking disbursements and a chain of custody takes place.</i> - Print, sign, or distribute Junior Fair premium cash payments. - Be liable for Junior Fair rule determinations or interpretations. - Be responsible for fair facility management. - Be responsible or liable for determining show cancellation (due to inclement weather, public health issues, etc.). - Be responsible for or manage any overnight activities for Junior Fair. This would include activities that have youth and / or adults staying overnight on fair property. This would not include activities such as accompanying Junior Fair Board members to OFMA Convention, as long as university policies are followed. - 4-H youth CANNOT be required to stay overnight in barns, or on the grounds. <p><i>When needed, additional clarification can be obtained through the State 4-H Office.</i></p>

OSU Extension personnel can assist as appropriate with other Junior Fair and/or open class activities as time and expertise permit. Communication of responsibilities and time available is critical between both OSU Extension and Agricultural Society partners in order to establish and maintain a successful partnership.

Appendix B

Disciplinary action scenarios:

Scenario	Who is Responsible?	
	Agricultural Society	OSU Extension
<i>A Junior Fair exhibitor violates a Junior Fair rule on grooming their animal.</i>	The Agricultural Society is responsible for enforcing Junior Fair rules and adherence to OAC 901-19 . There is also an expectation that the Agricultural Society communicate this with the youth organization with which the offender is associated.	If the exhibitor is also a 4-H member, may follow up with additional consequences based upon compliance with 4-H rules, expectations, and Code of Conduct .
<i>A Junior Fair Exhibitor, parent, or fair volunteer violates the Junior Fair Code of Conduct during the fair.</i>	The Agricultural Society is responsible for enforcing Junior Fair rules. There is also an expectation that the Agricultural Society communicate this with the youth organization with which the offender is associated.	If the youth or adult is also a 4-H member, parent, or volunteer, may follow up with additional consequences based upon compliance with 4-H rules, expectations, and Code of Conduct .
<i>A 4-H member, parent, or volunteer violates the 4-H Code of Conduct at 4-H project judging (separate from Junior Fair judging).</i>	The Agricultural Society may follow up with additional consequences based upon compliance with their own rules and guidelines.	OSU Extension is responsible for enforcing 4-H Youth Development Program rules.
<i>A 4-H members is not in good standing but makes a Junior Fair entry.</i>	The Agricultural Society is responsible for communicating that they are not eligible to exhibit according to OAC 901-19 regulations as they are not in good standing within their respective youth organization.	OSU Extension is responsible for enforcing 4-H Youth Development Program rules and communicating to the fair that the member is not in good standing.
<i>A Junior Fair exhibitor misses the deadline to complete Quality Assurance training.</i>	The Agricultural Society is responsible for communicating that they are not eligible to exhibit according to OAC 901-19 regulations.	As the organization responsible for Quality assurance training, it is recommended that support is given in this situation.
<i>A 4-H member misses the enrollment deadline for 4-H projects.</i>	The Agricultural Society may follow up with additional consequences based upon compliance with their own rules and guidelines.	OSU Extension is responsible for enforcing 4-H Youth Development Program rules and deadlines.
<i>A Junior Fair exhibitor misses the entry deadline for Junior Fair exhibitions.</i>	The Agricultural Society is responsible for enforcing Junior Fair rules.	

It is preferable that both organizations work together in situations where the Junior Fair exhibitor is also a 4-H member. However, Agricultural Societies are responsible for the enforcement of OAC / ORC exhibition rules (OAC 901-19, etc.) and Junior Fair rules. In the case that an Extension professional is also considered the Junior Fair Coordinator, the Agricultural Societies are still ultimately responsible for the enforcement of Junior Fair rules and regulations and should be involved in decisions regarding the Junior Fair.