UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Goal Setting
Youth Guide

Would you take a trip without first deciding where you want to go? Of course not. That would be pretty hard to do! Setting goals for your 4-H projects and experiences is very much the same as deciding where you want to go on a trip. While there are lots of fun and educational activities planned by your 4-H club/group, you are the one who's in the driver's seat with your 4-H experience.

Like planning a trip, it's important to plan what you want to learn and do and what you want to accomplish. Answer the following questions to help you set some goals.

What are some things that I really like to do?

How good am I already at these things? How much do I know about this already?

Are there one of these things that I'd like to learn more about or learn to do better?

Are there completely new things that I want to learn to do?

A good goal can be measured or checked and has three parts:

1. Action - how you will do something,
2. Result(s) - what you are going to do, and
3. Timetable - when you are going to do it.

For example "I want to learn how to bake two kinds of cookies by Christmas." - **I want to learn** is the action portion of the goal. What you intend to do is the result - I want to learn **to bake two kinds of cookies.** When is the amount of time it will take to complete the goal - I want to learn to bake two kinds of cookies **by Christmas.**

	ACTION	RESULT	TIMETABLE
I want	to learn	to bake two kinds of cookies	by Christmas.
I want	to give	two demonstrations for my club	by June 1.
I want	to train	my dog to sit and lay down	before the county dog show.

Now lets try to apply this to your project. You will need to have your ***4-H County Record, Project Page*** and the ***4-H Goal Calendar.***

Step 1

Identify, as goals, two things you want to learn or do this year in 4-H and then write them on the proper line of the ***Project Page.*** Make sure that your goal(s) have action, result and a timetable.

If you're not certain that you can carry out a goal easily, you can give it a "control test." Do you have control over what you want to do? Does the action part of your goal tell what you will do? You have control over a goal such as "I will learn to identify ten kinds of trees on my property this fall." However, if the action mentioned in the goal is what someone else will do, it does not pass the control test. The goal statement, "I will win the high point trophy at the state 4-H Horse Show," does not pass the control test because the judge provides the action that decides who will win the high point trophy. Do your goals pass the control test?

Step 2

After you identify each goal, think about what skills and knowledge you will need to reach your goals. Write these in the *Skills* and *Knowledge* blocks of the ***Project Page.*** Remember that skills are things you physically do - like planting seeds and weeding. Knowledge is using your brain - like knowing what a healthy garden needs to grow.

Step 3

Now think about what you need to do to reach your goal. Do you need to read or do research about something? Do you need to learn a special skill to meet your goal? How much practice will it take? Also think about who will help you reach your goals. It might be your parents, your 4-H leader or a more experienced 4-H member. Write this in the block on your ***Project Page.***

Step 4

Now it's time to think about your project year. Think about when you will do things to reach your goal. You may need to break things down into smaller tasks. Use your ***4-H Goal Calendar*** to help you decide when you will do each task. You may have to plan "backwards" based on the timetable you've established.

Step 5

It's time to share your goals with someone else. Talk about your goals with another 4-H member, share them with your leader and your family. When we talk to others about our goals, it helps us get a better idea of what we are going to do, so don't worry about changing any part of your plan if you need to.

Step 6

Keep a journal of what you do in your project(s) to help you remember the experiences. These short notes can be done on a calendar with large date blocks that allow you to write things down, in a small pocket journal you keep with you as you work on your project, or a larger notebook or journal you keep in your room. It doesn't matter as long as it is handy enough so that you remember to jot notes down as you work toward your goals. Things to keep track of include: date, what you did or learned, how you felt, costs, time spent, other things you feel are important.

Writing is not the only method of completing records. Think about using your computer, an audio tape or video tape to record progress toward your goals.

Step 7

Transfer the important things from your journal to your ***Project Page*** and ***County 4-H Records***. You may submit your record for county evaluation or just keep it for your own use. A few pictures or mementos added to your journal could be a great start a for a 4-H memory book or portfolio.

Step 8

Once you've made progress toward or reached your goal, you should celebrate and be proud of what you've accomplished. Every now and then think about how you feel about your progress. Sometimes goals are hard to stick to. It takes a long time to see results. So as you complete a step and meet a deadline you need to give yourself a boost or energizer. An energizer can be anything you like and enjoy: going to a movie with a friend, talking on the phone, listening to a CD, eating a healthy snack, etc.

Step 9

You've spend a whole year on your 4-H project. You have learned many new things. Take some time to think back and review your journal. Write one or two main things you feel good about as you have worked toward your goals. Evaluating helps you feel good about what you've accomplished and set direction for the future. Ask yourself questions like: "As you look back over the past year, which of your goals were you able to accomplish?" "Is there anything about your project that you would change?" "What changes did you make on your project as you went along?" " How do you feel about what you have learned?" "What is something you learned about yourself?" What ideas would you like to build on for next year?" Now it's time to start the cycle over again with a new plan for next year!

Adapted from Iowa State University, Ames Iowa

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