Happy Spring!

The Mercer County 4-H program has had a great start this year. We have some new clubs (see pg. 4), and the kitchen at the extension office will be remodeled over the coming months. This will benefit several clubs and our summer camps. As you know, fair preparations are under way; please feel free to contact the office with suggestions. We are looking forward to seeing your fair theme designs by the end of April. The theme this year is “4-H: your road to success!” The exhibitor catalog is available on our website, please check it out in preparation for fair.


Chad Ripberger
County 4-H Agent

Altaira Bejgrowicz
4-H Program Assistant

4-H EVENTS

**NJ 4-H Goat Extravaganza**

Thirty-four 4-H members representing ten clubs from seven counties (Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, Salem, Somerset) participated in the 2011 NJ 4-H Goat Extravaganza on January 8 in Flemington. The event included 52 goat themed art exhibits, a poster-presentation contest (8 teams), skill-a-thon, and a goat trivia game.

Mercer’s own Alex Potosky took first place in the Senior division for the skill-a-thon which consisted of 8 stations with topics on Goat Breeds, Feed and Digestion, Fiber, Hoof Trimming, Judging, Kidding, Milking and Showmanship. **Congratulations Alex!**

Also a big thank you to the Clever Clovers Goat Advisor, Rebecca Potosky for an outstanding job chairing the skill-a-thon and for her work on the Goat Advisory Council!
Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF) is held each summer at the National 4-H Youth Center in Chevy Chase Maryland. It is a weeklong event (Sunday - Saturday) for 4-H members in grades 9 – 12 (14 – 19 years old). The program is based on the principle that democracy requires skills and strategies that must be learned and practiced and it teaches participants to be active, responsible citizens and leaders. The program utilizes Washington, D.C. as a “working classroom” to learn about the government, citizenship and civic education and provides hands-on opportunities for our teens to promote “Better Citizens Today, Better Leaders Tomorrow.” If you would like to learn more about CWF, visit the website at: www.4hcwf.org.

New Jersey plans to send a group of approximately 30 4-H members and 3 adult chaperones to the conference. This year, Mercer County will be sending Emily Dallas of the Clever Clovers and Hot Shots Shooting Sports clubs.

At the Lindley G. Cook 4-H camp in Stokes Forest, campers have the opportunity to register for three daily classes from any of four course areas; Arts & Crafts, Environmental Education, Shooting Sports and Waterfront. Campers will participate in a variety of traditional camp activities and they will have the enjoyable experience of bunking with their peers in one of eleven rustic cabins at the camp! There are six 1 week sessions starting July 4th and running through August 13th. Teen Week is August 22nd-27th.

Also offered is an overnight science camp program at the state 4-H camp. The program begins on June 28th and ends with presentations and demonstrations on Friday, July 1st. Parents are invited to attend the workshop demonstrations.

Campers will spend four days at camp for hands on learning experiences in one of the S.E.T. initiative subject areas. Each camper will chose one workshop topic to explore, and will have six sessions in that topic area.

For more information visit the website at:  http://www.nj4hcamp.rutgers.edu
4-H EVENTS

Public Presentation Workshop

We had a small but mighty turnout for the Public Presentation Workshop held at the county office in February. After watching a video and reviewing how to put together a successful talk; there was plenty of enthusiasm as each member had an opportunity to create an impromptu presentation for the group.

Great work to all who participated!
NEW CLUBS

An animal club has begun meeting at the RCE office in the large meeting room on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 1 pm. At the first meeting the new club members familiarized themselves with a guinea pig named S’more (courtesy of leader Barbara Leone.) Members had a chance to hold him and feed him some lettuce.

At the next meeting, which will be April 12th, the 4-H’ers will choose a club name and compile a list of guinea pig facts that are being researched by the 4-H’ers. The club will then choose a new animal to research and learn more interesting facts for the next meeting!

Join in the fun!

A new robotics club is meeting in the Hopewell Borough on the 2nd and 4th Monday evenings of the month. If you are interested, please contact the office for more details. The new club is open to youth in grades 4 – 8. The youth are working with LEGO WeDo and Mindstorm robotics kits.

If you or someone you know is interested in co-leading this club, please contact Altaira at the office.
The Rusty Bolts Tractor Restoration 4-H Club meets on Friday evenings to work on restoring an old tractor they hope to have ready in time for the fair! This is a big undertaking but the members are excited to take on the challenge! We will all be rooting for them and looking forward to seeing their work this summer.

NEW CLUBS

A new club will be starting this fall. It will be called the "Back Yard Farmer 4-H Club" and will be lead by Denise Kamer. The club will primarily focus on chickens and chicken showmanship but will also include topics like local farming, plant science and animal husbandry. The club will begin recruiting new members at this year’s fair. Look for details about meeting dates, times and location as we approach the start of the new 4-H year in September.

(the after photo will appear in the Fall newsletter)
The 4-Leaf Clover 4-H Club is focused on gardening and crafts. The club has members from the West Windsor and Hamilton area of Mercer County. Their meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month at the homes of members and leaders. The club is accepting new members from K-12.

Annmarie Potts, one of the club leaders, says the club “normally makes crafts to enter at the fair.” When doing their annual planning, members go through the exhibit catalog and match crafts/projects that they are interested in with specified categories. Starting in April the club does projects like planting seeds and arranging planters. In the fall, members usually do a craft to donate to nursing homes (small items to put on dinner trays). The club also does community service (i.e. making items for nursing homes, packing lunches or just wrapping plastic ware to donate to Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK), this year they also collected items for the animal shelter in Ewing).
CLUB OFFICER PRIMER

**President**
Checks on arrangements for meetings (location, agendas, etc.) Keeps in contact with the leader and other officers to plan meetings. Learns Parliamentary Procedure and conducts business meetings. Calls for motions on questions which require decisions. Casts the deciding vote in the event of a tie. Asks for volunteers or appoints committees. Arranges for the vice-president to take over in the president’s absence. Keeps meeting running smoothly. Helps to keep all members involved in club decisions and activities. Makes guests and new members feel welcome and important.

**Vice President**
Serves as the assistant to the president. Learns Parliamentary Procedure to ensure a smooth meeting. Presides over meetings when the president is absent. Keeps informed of all club activities. Serves as chairperson of the program committee (finds speakers and other resources for club meetings and activities with the assistance of the club leader). Works with the leader(s) and the president to help plan meetings and other activities.

**Treasurer**
Receives and keeps a record of money in the 4-H Treasurer’s Record Book. Deposits the money in a special club bank account. Pays out money only when approved by the club.

**Secretary**
Keeps minutes (a written record) of everything that is done at club meetings. Keeps a complete and accurate list of all active members in your club. Keeps attendance records for all meetings and club events. Makes sure each member knows when/where the next meeting/event is going to be. Calls, writes, or e-mails members to remind them of meetings/events. Writes all letters from the club to other individuals and organizations. Reads all letters to the club at the business meeting.

**Historian**
Takes photographs or requests them from others to update the club history. Checks local newspapers for articles about the club and its members. Keeps an album or scrapbook of the pictures and newspaper articles for the club.

**Putting it all together:**
Club officers are very important to the success of a club. They set the tone for the club, which carries down to the newest member. In general terms, the duties of a club officer are to guide and encourage fellow members, to help plan activities, to attend all meeting and to help fellow members or leaders.

Club officers work together to run club business meetings using Parliamentary Procedure. Business meetings should take place monthly and use club meeting agenda format.

**Health officer**
Educates, inspires, and leads members in achieving “Health for Better Living!”
Provides information and activities to assist members to achieve their healthy living goals.
Online Health Officer Training at the New Jersey 4-H website:
http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/health-officers

**Reporter**
Sends club news to the 4-H office before the newsletter submissions deadline. The 4-H Forum is published quarterly and can be found on the Mercer County website. Keeps notes on club events and meetings. Checks with other officers to see what information they would like included in a club report. Writes about new members joining, elections, trips, special projects, community service activities, and anything else you would like to share with others. May also write about special activities for local newspapers to help promote the club to non-4-Hers. Follows guidelines for writing news stories.
Website Calendar Reminder

Please visit our websites for more information on upcoming events.

mercer.njaes.rutgers.edu & nj4h.rutgers.edu

When searching the calendar, be sure to make selections for both county and statewide pages. Most animal events are listed on the statewide calendar.

Upcoming Events

Horse Judging & Hippology ~ Saturday & Sunday, April 9 & 10 ~ Gloucester County Office
Record Book Workshop ~ Tuesday, April 12 ~ Mercer County Extension Office
Dairy & Livestock Judging ~ Saturday, April 16 ~ Delaware Valley College
Rutgers Ag Field Day ~ Saturday, April 30 ~ Rutgers Campus
4-H County Public Presentations ~ Friday, May 13 ~ Mercer County Extension Office
4-H Middle School Conference ~ Saturday, May 14 ~ Somerset County Extension Office
Becoming An Outdoor Family Camp ~ Fri.-Sun., May 20-22 ~ Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp
State 4-H Public Presentations ~ Sat., June 11 ~ Rutgers Cook Campus

4-H Staff

Chad Ripberger, County 4-H Agent
Miss Harmon, Program Associate
LouAnn Mastromarino, Program Assistant

Sharon Gore, Program Associate
Altaira Bejgrowicz, Program Assistant
Adele Dinges, Secretary