WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?
Dogs make great pets! Dogs are also used for sport such as agility and rally competitions, and they assist in working livestock. The 4-H dog project helps you explore what kind of dog fits into your family’s lifestyle. It will enable you to be an excellent trainer and caretaker of your dog.

» Learn major dog breeds and identify their characteristics.
» Study responsibilities of dog ownership.
» Demonstrate dog care and management in feeding, handling, keeping records, grooming and fitting.
» Learn dog health regulations, first aid and simple treatments for ailments.
» Explore careers related to animal science.

THE BIG PICTURE

Starting Out:
» Gather information and determine the best dog for your family.
» Learn about the proper care, grooming and feeding of your dog.
» Learn to identify the parts of a dog.
» Create a plan to prevent your dog from getting lost or find it if it gets lost.
» Purchase and use the appropriate grooming equipment and techniques.
» Practice appropriate training for your dog.

Learning More:
» Plan a training and exercise program for your dog.
» Prepare for participation in a dog show.
» Make a decision about breeding or not breeding your dog.
» Compare the labels on dog foods to make an informed decision on content and price.
» Keep a diary of your dog’s health and eating habits.
» Research kennel facilities in your area and decide if one is right for your dog.

Expanding Horizons:
» Create a trainer’s diary to assist you when you work with your dog.
» Interview someone who uses a service dog to assist them.
» Create a dog ownership budget.
» Help a friend make a decision about dog ownership.
» Research diseases in dogs.
» Identify symptoms and a course of action if your dog gets sick.

CURRICULA & RESOURCES

Michigan 4-H Curricula
http://4h.msue.msu.edu/
» 4-H Dog Junior Showmanship Manual (4H 1523)

National 4-H Curricula
http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/
» Dogs
  • Wiggles and Wags: Dog 1 (08166)
  • Canine Connection: Dog 2 (08167)
  • Leading the Pack: Dog 3 (08167)
  • Dog Helper’s Guide (08169)

Other Resources
» American Kennel Club: www.akc.org
» United Kennel Club: http://www.ukcdogs.com/WebSite.nsf/WebPages/Home
FOCUS ON DOGS

Science

» Explore the parts and function of a dog’s digestive system.
» Monitor the effect of environmental conditions on your dog.
» Learn about pack behavior and compare it to your own dog’s behavior.

Citizenship & Leadership

» Volunteer at an animal shelter.
» Write a letter to your local paper about the importance of having dogs spayed or neutered.
» Organize a dog show for your club.
» Develop a plan to foster dogs of deploying soldiers.

Communication

» Prepare a poster or demonstration on:
  » How to approach a dog safely.
  » How to prepare a dog for showing.
  » How to train a dog for showing.
  » How to select a nutritional diet.
  » How to select dog species for your family.

Life Skills

» Use critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills to help you make good decisions about project management.
» Keep records on your project expenses and income.
» Practice personal resiliency through successes and challenges in your project.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

» Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for workshops, activities and events.
» Learn about service animals and the process of fostering and training one.
» Job shadow at a local business (pet store, veterinary clinic, breeder or groomer) in a dog-related career that interests you.
» Go to local and area dog shows, and explore the differences in dog breeds and the different ways they are shown.
» Explore health safety issues with dogs and the diseases dogs have that might make humans ill.
» Explore what kinds of dogs make the best pets and what breeds make the best inside dogs or outside dogs.
» Learn how local pet stores acquire puppies.
» Research all the kinds of parasites your dog might get, and find out how to protect yourself and your dog.
» Do some comparison shopping for dog supplies.
» Explore what kind of restrictions and laws your community might have on dogs.
» Find out the requirements for licensing a dog in your community.
» Explore the uses and benefits of animal-assisted therapy.
» Attend a 4-H dog project meeting.
» Show at your county fair.
» Complete a dog project record book to track your income, expenses and experiences in your dog project.
» Contact your local MSU Extension 4-H staff to be nominated to serve on the State 4-H Companion Animal Committee.
» If you are interested in a college education in animal science or veterinary medicine, visit Michigan State University's website at www.msu.edu to explore those majors.