

DATE: September, 2003

TO: 4-H Community Club and Committee Volunteers

FROM: Jeff King
State 4-H Leader and
Assistant Director, Ohio State University Extension

RE: Ohio State University Extension, 4-H Cost Recovery Plan

Providing quality youth development programs in partnership with volunteers is an important component of the Ohio 4-H Youth Development program. You have a tremendous impact on the youth that you work with. Not only is it an impact for today, but it is truly an investment in our future. It is unfortunate that Ohio State University Extension's 4-H program must look for additional cost recovery measures. I am writing this letter to provide you with background information on the financial challenges facing OSU Extension and share Ohio 4-H's plan.

Background

Ohio State University Extension's 4-H Youth Development program provides educational experiences for Ohio youth both within and beyond the county. 4-H also offers youth opportunities for leadership, volunteerism, and participation in learning experiences through community clubs, school enrichment, special emphasis programming and camping. Our ultimate goal is to provide positive youth development experiences where youth: develop marketable skills for lifelong success, engage in community service and citizenship programs to transform local communities, appreciate and build upon diversity to foster a harmonious global society, and build sustained relationships with adults to enable them to become positive citizens.

In today's economy, federal, state, and local government support can no longer provide adequate funding to maintain the high quality of programming OSU Extension strives to provide. We appreciate and depend upon governmental funding as base support for Extension personnel. Given the current economic environment, OSU Extension was fortunate to receive a modest increase of state funding. However, with budget cuts in fiscal years 2001, 2002, and 2003 from both state and federal funding, the fiscal year 2004 budget is still \$2 million less than we depended upon in fiscal year 2001. Considering inflation, this leaves fewer dollars to support the direct costs of delivering Extension programs. These direct costs include curriculum development, printed materials, meeting space, and technology enhanced delivery of programs to name a few.

Ohio 4-H Strategies for Cost Recovery

As a result of and in response to the above information, Ohio 4-H Youth Development must implement the following curriculum fee structure. They include: (1) an additional \$2 fee for all member project books and resource guides; (2) a \$10 annual classroom fee; (3) a \$10 annual special emphasis group fee; (4) a \$5 state fee to each Carteen participant; and (5) an additional \$5 fee for each state 4-H event.

Our goal in 4-H Youth Development is to reinvest these valuable resources back into the program. As a result you will benefit from: additional and enhanced curriculum, project

materials, and literature for 4-H programming; volunteer training and development; and additional access to material through the more effective use of technology.

More on the \$2 4-H Publication Cost Recovery

I have had many questions from volunteers regarding the \$2 cost recovery curriculum fee added to the sale of 4-H publications. Let me share more details on how that decision was made and other insights that I have observed. First, since our organization decided that additional cost recovery measures were needed to maintain a premier educational system, I have heard the most negative feedback on a state 4-H membership fee. Within the 4-H program there was considerable discussion regarding the implementation of a statewide 4-H membership fee. There was some support for this type of fee, but a majority of individuals within the 4-H program were not supportive of adopting that approach. In reality, the additional \$2 curriculum fee for 4-H publications replaces a state 4-H membership fee. Secondly, the \$2 fee also provides advantages to county staff and volunteers because a system already exists to collect and manage the books. No additional paperwork or processing time needs to be completed for this aspect of the cost recovery plan.

From some of the questions I have received, I know that you sincerely care for the youth participating in your local programs. You are looking for ways to reduce the cost to the members by sharing project books, copying resources locally, etc. The current Ohio 4-H plan relies on the sale of 4-H publications. If this is unsuccessful, additional cost recovery measures will need to be explored. The same is also true with the other curriculum fees (school enrichment, special emphasis, Carteens, and state events).

4-H is not being singled out in the Ohio State University Extension cost recovery plan. All program areas (Agriculture & Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Science, and Community Development) are struggling with similar questions regarding the development and implementation of cost recovery plans. It is certainly a challenging issue for the organization but is a necessary step because of significantly less public funds. Your leadership and cooperation is truly needed to effectively implement the 4-H plan and strengthen our organization.

In closing, I want to again say your ongoing partnership is important to us. Should you have any questions or wish to contact me directly, please do so. My phone number is 614.292.6996 and my email address is king.20@osu.edu. We look forward to continue providing you with high quality programs that make a positive difference in the lives of youth and in the communities where they live.