CLOVERBUDS
Judge’s Information Sheet

CLOVERBUDS
The University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Cloverbud Program is an informal education program designed specifically for children in grades K–2. Children of this age are a distinct audience for 4-H, with learning characteristics and developmental needs that are different from older children and youth. They are not “mini 4-H members.” Their needs and interests require that activities at events like the fair be designed especially for them.

The purpose of the University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Cloverbud Program is to support the positive development of children as they explore their world, discover the possibilities, build self-esteem, and practice the basic social skills which will be the basis for a future where they will become competent, caring, contributing citizens.

The focus in Cloverbuds is on the positive growth of the children, not the activities or projects used as vehicles to foster that growth and development. Being in a Cloverbud program should provide a strong sense of belonging in a safe, caring environment. It is different from, not less than, 4-H project work.

JUDGES ROLE IN WORKING WITH CLOVERBUDS
It is important that 4-H Cloverbud evaluators understand the importance of their role, and represent positive models of the behavior we wish children to develop.

“... I could see her seed of self-esteem blooming before my eyes!.....I could clearly see that 4-H Cloverbud judging was the first interview of her life.” Cloverbud Parent

• Cloverbuds is a non-competitive experience. The ribbon placing for Cloverbuds is based on participation; blue, red, white ribbons are not awarded.

• Welcome Cloverbuds to the judging experience by asking them questions relating to themselves, their club, their project experience.

• Congratulate and encourage them to continue their project experience.

• Thank them for sharing and participating.

• If you are viewing unsafe or inappropriate practices, please connect with the show committee or the program coordinator. You may need to step in when appropriate.
• This is a time to experiment with new skills and experiences, not to strive for perfection. Children in K-2 grades and age range have only begun to deal with the concept of being less than the best.

RULES FOR CLOVERBUD PARTICIPATION IN ANIMAL SCIENCE PROJECTS

For the safety of K-2 participants, the following rules apply to Cloverbud experiences. Parents/guardians/mentors are responsible for ensuring their “Cloverbud” understands and follows the rules. Extension 4-H staff members and designated volunteer(s) are positioned to intervene when rules are not followed and/or if safety becomes a concern for another reason. Definitions used in outlining the rules are noted at the end of the document.

A. Cloverbuds must wear appropriate safety helmets when riding horses or bicycles.

B. When Cloverbuds and animals (including beef, cats, dairy, dogs, goats, horse, lama, pets, poultry, rabbit, swine and sheep) are together at a 4-H program or participating at the county fair as a 4-H member, the following rules apply:

• The responsible person must be in control of the animal at all times and never turn the control over to the Cloverbud.

• It is not acceptable to use more than one lead rope or halter with any animal as this turns at least some control over to the Cloverbud.

• During judging, the Cloverbud should walk next to the parent/responsible person, available to learn from the project leader and/or to dialog with the evaluator/judge.

C. Cloverbuds may safely interact with their animal through participation in a limited number of non-competitive classes at 4-H sponsored practice sessions/clinics, fun shows and county fairs. The purpose is to provide youth an opportunity to experience being in the ring with a judge present and to feel the pride that comes with this experience. Appropriate participation is described as follows:

• Cloverbuds may participate with beef, dairy, dog, goats, pets, poultry, rabbits, and swine in a Cloverbud Showmanship Class.

• Cloverbuds may participate with a sheep in one of two classes: Cloverbud Showmanship or Cloverbud Lamb Lead.

• Cloverbuds may participate with a lama in one of two classes: Cloverbud Costume or Cloverbud Showmanship.

• Cloverbuds may participate with a horse in one of the three classes: Cloverbud Halter/Showmanship, Cloverbud Western Pleasure or Cloverbud Barrels. If the horse is used in a riding setting, the Cloverbud may sit on the back of the horse.
DEFINITIONS USED IN OUTLINING THE RULES

1 A “responsible person” is defined as a screened adult volunteer, youth leader 6th grade and older, parent or other adult who may appropriately assist with the group.

2 “At all times” includes but is not limited to the following: during all portions of project workshops, club events, club meetings, public showcases which includes county fairs, demonstrations, or a community event where youth are representing 4-H with an animal.

3 “Control” means assuming responsibility for handling and/or leading the animal. It is the responsibility of the parent/responsible adult to control the animal at all times.

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