

Achievement Days 2020 Cancelled

Good morning 4H families,

The current times we are living in have provided many obstacles. I am very proud of how hard you all have worked during the 2020 4H year to date. I do however have some very sad news. Given all the guidelines set by the CDC, state, county and 4H, we have decided to cancel the 2020 Burleigh County Achievement Days (AD). We have gone through multiple options to have the 4H'ers showcase their projects but do not have a safe enough solution that can work for all areas of exhibitors. Monday afternoon, you should all have received the email from state 4H about being in Tier-1 and all the guidelines. When you combine that information with all the other guidelines in place, it made the decision to cancel our final choice. We wanted to be fair across the board with all events and there was not a single event that could have functioned with a maximum of 10 people. We also knew the State Fair was canceled which takes away that element of showing projects past AD this summer.

We are very appreciative of the feedback we received from the surveys about going virtual or nothing. We sent out 2 surveys, one to all of you and the result was to have a virtual AD. We also sent out another survey to the exhibitors themselves and they stated they wanted to not have AD this year. One quote from a member spoke loudly to the situation, "4H'ers work so hard on their projects that a virtual judging would not do them justice. With the state fair being cancelled why mess with achievement days." Below are the reasons why we decided to not have it go virtual;

1. Ethics. We believe that the potential for dishonesty with exhibits is too easy and the level of scrutiny for accusing others of not making their exhibit could present itself. For example, an exhibitor could find a nice picture somewhere and claim it as their own or borrow a heifer from someone who is better than the one they had set aside for their project. Pictures of projects could be taken in a way that could hide the defect that might be present that could make a red ribbon be a Grand Champion.
2. Process and Procedure. The ability to coordinate the judging in itself will be extremely daunting. Judges would need to be technologically savvy to judge in an online format. Not all of the judges we have may be able to perform the technological piece even though they are the right person to judge the specified project area. We have 213 members and depending upon how many projects they intended to bring to static night for example, the timeline to complete judging on all the projects could take an extended amount of time. Virtual overload has also been something many people I have talked to have been experiencing with online classes, meetings, etc. Software issues with computers and other forms of technology not matching between the different projects could leave some areas for unwarranted discrepancies.
3. Timeline. We currently have 2 weeks until the horse day and 7 until the static, small animal and livestock days. We needed to make a determination so the a switch of 4H involvement did not occur the day before the event.
4. Unknowns. When will this COVID 19 Situation end? The current answer is unknown. There are so many things that we cannot answer that might affect the livelihoods and health of 4H families that require a more cautious approach than many may want.

Above all, we at the office do not want that effort to go unnoticed. We are currently working through ways to showcase your projects. Subsequently, we are asking for volunteers to be on a committee to help exhibitors get the much deserved recognition for their accomplishments. The office has a few great ideas we are looking at but would like more input from you all. At this time, we are working on something for the graduating seniors so they know all their years should be celebrated and appreciated. All other 4H'ers will be receiving other forms of recognition that will be determined, with help from the committee volunteers that speak up in relation to this email.

I thank you all for your time and involvement and hope that we can learn from the hard lessons in 2020. We have so much promise in the 4H'ers in Burleigh County and I hope we can all move forward and enhance the great abilities the youth possesses. Thank you all for your time and I look forward to hearing from you to be volunteers for the committee.

Tyler