

Summary Report of the KEAA 4-H Task Force Committee
February 1, 2007

At the Kansas Extension Agent Association Annual Meeting in October 2005, concerns were shared about the Kansas 4-H program. It was approved to appoint a KEAA 4-H Task Force Committee to work on these concerns. President Mark Ploger asked Bill Wood to chair the committee, which would be made up of representatives from the following groups: Kansas 4-H Advisory (only agents), State 4-H Livestock Advisory, KACAA 4-H Committee, and KEAA board members from each of the three agent associations. Eighteen agents were invited to serve on the Task Force.

We held a conference call on November 8, 2005. It was a consensus that a number of groups were concerned about the Kansas 4-H program, that there was a need for better communication between the county and state 4-H staff, and that this Task Force should work to build bridges among county and state staff, and help create solutions for the concerns. The Task Force developed a plan to help reach these goals. They would create a list of the concerns, share this with all agents, ask them to rank the concerns in order to prioritize them, create or develop possible solutions to solve the concerns, and then meet with the State 4-H staff to work together to “Make the Best Better” for the Kansas 4-H program. We started a list of the concerns and then agreed to meet together for our next Task Force meeting.

KEAA President and Task Force Committee member, Mark Ploger, contacted Pat McNally, State 4-H Leader, to let her know what we were doing and hoped to accomplish. Pat indicated she would like to meet with us to find out how we can work together on our top concerns.

The Task Force met on December 1, 2005 in Manhattan. A list of concerns was developed and discussed. It was agreed that we should read the Kansas 4-H Youth Development Strategic Plan prior to our next meeting to see if our concerns might be already included in the plan, and/or could fit into the plan. Homework for the next meeting included reading the Strategic Plan and the 4-H chapter in the Extension Administrative Handbook, and to come with examples of what is going well with the Kansas 4-H program.

The Task Force met by conference call on January 18, 2006. Discussion was held on the Strategic Plan and Administrative Handbook 4-H chapter, and how our concerns tie into them. More discussion was held on the concerns. A list/survey was created that listed eight areas of concerns. The survey was shared with the FACS, 4-H, and KACAA associations at their Spring Workshops in the Spring of 2006, and the members were asked to rank the eight concerns. The Task Force felt it would be good to inform Fred Cholick, Daryl Buchholz, and the area directors what this Task Force is, and then intent of it. They also felt a small group should meet with Pat McNally to share our progress.

Mark Ploger contacted Fred Cholick, Daryl Buchholz, and the area directors, and three Task Force members met with Pat McNally.

A short conference call was held on March 1, 2006, with Pat McNally. She was positive with the efforts of the Task Force.

The three agent associations survey results were tabulated and compiled. All three associations had the same three concerns as their top three. The cumulative top three ranking was:
1. Communication on Events/Projects. 2. Curriculum. 3. Records.

The Task Force met at Discovery Days on May 31 to discuss the survey results and how to develop solutions to solve the concerns. Three members of the Task Force met and shared the results of the survey with Pat McNally. The KEAA Directors met with Fred Cholick and Daryl Buchholz at Discovery Days and shared the survey results with them.

Pat McNally shared the survey results with the State and Area 4-H staff at their staff retreat on June 15, 2006. A couple of Task Force members visited with them via a conference call.

A Task Force report was placed in the Tuesday Letter in July 2006 to keep all Extension staff aware of the Task Force work.

The Task Force and State and Area 4-H Staff met at Rock Springs on August 17, 2006 for a Work Day to discuss the top three concerns from the survey and develop plans to address the concerns. It was a productive day and some progress was made. It was agreed that we would need to meet again to continue our work.

A Task Force Committee report was made at the KEAA Annual Meeting in October.

Another update article was run in the Tuesday Letter in October.

The Task Force met on November 7, 2006 by conference call to evaluate the August 17 Workday. It was agreed that some progress had been made, but we should meet with the State and Area 4-H staff for another Workday. A list of questions needing to be answered would be developed, sent out ahead of the workday, and used as the agenda.

The second Workday was held on December 13, 2006 in Lindsborg. We again focused on the top three concerns from the survey results.

Records: Gary Gerhard is forming a Task Force to look at and evaluate our present process for KAA's, state awards, and achievement plans.

Curriculum: Jim Adams has started the Q & A about Curriculum in the 4-H Newsletter and Tuesday Letter. He asked for agents to submit questions to him. He is forming a Curriculum Task Force that will evaluate curriculum and help plan curriculum training for staff. Beth Hecht and Beth Hinshaw reported they had received an ESP grant to help pay for some 4-H training.

Communications: It was pointed out that some communication concerns could be solved by staff utilizing the State 4-H web site. Action Teams are the current process for providing strong

leadership for projects. A faculty member is a part of each team. Criteria for Action Teams is on the web site. Justin Wiebers shared an “Events Matrix” calendar of events and activities. A calendar is also on the web site. Justin stated the online registration system is getting better. Continued training for it will be needed. 4-H Advisory was discussed. It was a consensus that Pat McNally lead an evaluation and reorganization of 4-H Advisory (that process has been started). An “Action Team Summit” was discussed, and there appeared to be agreement that it might be good to have one every three years or so.

The Task Force had a conference call on January 18, 2007. Committee members felt like the December Workday was very productive and that we had helped create plans that were being implemented to help solve the top three survey concerns. It looked like the other five survey concerns had been incorporated into our discussion, except for Sportsmanship, and it should fit under the Character Counts training/program. It was a consensus to create a final report to share with the county and 4-H Area and State staff, and Fred Cholick and Daryl Buchholz.

A couple of concluding notes that Task Force Committee want to make:

The State and Area 4-H Staff are commended for their cooperation and partnership with the Task Force work. Thanks to them in helping us all “Make the Best Better.

County staff are encouraged/challenged to :

1. Read the 4-H newsletter in a timely manner.
2. Check out the 4-H web site weekly to keep up to date with what is happening in 4-H.
3. Volunteer/sign up for/serve on 4-H Advisory, Project Action Teams, the Record and Curriculum Task Forces, or other 4-H committees.
4. Continue to strive to improve communication between staff at all levels, county, area and state.

Respectfully submitted

Bill Wood, Chair of KEAA Task Force

Douglas County Extension Agent, Agriculture