Interactive Displays
Have you ever visited a museum or other educational facility where you were given the opportunity to “learn by doing”? Sounds familiar doesn’t it? “Learn by doing” is the 4-H way. This is your opportunity to teach the public something about what your club does and for fair visitors to try their hand at your project area. The public is coming to you, how they interact with 4-H depends on careful planning and presentation.

Fair booths are intended to be a youth/adult partnership, 4-H members should have an active role in the planning and execution of their booth and should plan to participate in staffing their booth with a supervising 4-H adult volunteer. As you decide who will staff your booth, think about planning activities for that time period that have the potential to get the public involved and interested in 4-H.

What qualifies as Interactive?
Quiz boards (game boards), skill-a-thons, make and take activities are just some ideas for ways to engage a fair visitor. Simply distributing printed material or displaying club memorabilia is not considered interactive; it may be promotional or educational but it is not interactive. Distributing printed materials can also lead to litter problems in the building and may not be the best choice. Develop an activity that requires a visitor to leave their mark at your booth—such as a comment board or a design board that proudly displays a visitor’s end product (see Example 2). Brainstorm ways to teach a complete stranger what you have learned in your projects and incorporate them into your booth presentation.

Important to Remember
• People will form an impression about 4-H from your booth. Attractive, well-made posters, exhibits and other items contribute to a positive image for your club and for all 4-Hers.
• Be sure everyone working the booth knows what to do and how to relate to the public. Generally there should be no more than 4 youth staffing a booth at a time. When dealing with visitors—it is common courtesy to be attentive, listen to their questions and assist/encourage them in any interactive displays.
• Be sure that everyone is dressed appropriately to represent 4-H. Neat, tasteful clothing reflects positively on the 4-H program.
• Booths should prominently display a 4-H Clover or mention 4-H. When using the official clover with H’s, federal guidelines should be followed (no pink clovers).
• Booth content should be educational and fun—Some appropriate themes for content include: promotion/demonstration of a specific 4-H project, 4-H life skill development, Community Service, Florida 4-H history (related to the centennial).
• You never know what impact you might have on a visitor. What can you do to transform a public visitor into a future 4-Her or volunteer, or convince them to participate in the youth livestock auction?

If you have questions or would like further resources in active learning strategies, contact Tim Pehlke, Orange County 4-H Program Coordinator, for more information 407-254-9200 or email Orange4H@ifas.ufl.edu.
Examples of Interactive Displays

Example 1. Forest products are explained through pictures and smell in a simple Question/Response format. Visitors test their existing knowledge while engaging their senses. Scent chips are behind doors and visitors match the scent to the part of the tree that is responsible that product. In this example the visitor that chocolate comes from a seed.

Example 2. Visitors are given an opportunity to reflect what they have learned through making a “leaf rubbing” that is included as part of the exhibit.

Example 3. Design for 2008 Booth Application. This exhibit explained the water cycle and what steps homeowner could follow in order to save water, reduce environmental impacts, and save money.

REMEMBER for your application you must INCLUDE a drawing of your booth design and describe how interactive exhibits are incorporated.