

Says Recognize All 4-H'ers For Achievements at All Levels

College—Awards are only one means of accomplishing the overall objective of 4-H workgrowth and development of boys and girls to successful citizens, according to Harlem D. Sandberg, State 4-H & Youth Program Leader, at the University of Alaska.

Awards encourage young people to do things they normally would not do, and then recognize that they have met certain criteria, says Sandberg. But when our measure of success becomes the number and size of awards received, then we are counting the wrong thing and promoting a mistaken

standard for success, Sandberg comments.

To a great many people, he believes, there is a direct relation between succeeding and receiving an award while those who do not win an award have failed. It is not awards themselves that constitute value or harm to 4-H'ers, but how they are used, the state 4-H leader explains. He lists these principles in using prizes and awards in 4-H work:

- 1) The contest must result in learning. This means assisting youth in changing their behavior in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

- 2) The situation must offer the members a possibility of success. Arranging for competition based on age and experience and establishing different standards to meet these conditions help to develop this principle.

- 3) The rules must be fair and known to all participants. The standards must be high to stimulate the desire to learn and make possible a learning experience.

- 4) A maximum number of participants should be involved to "spread" the value of the learning experience and provide leaders with experience in conducting contests and events.

- 5) Awards are presented to all members who accomplish or achieve, not just a "winner." The group-award system makes individual identification possible by providing awards denoting different degrees of recognition.

Awards, properly understood and used, are an effective tool in meeting three purposes of an effective educational system in 4-H, Sandberg says.

The three purposes are to help 4-H'ers learn to accomplish or achieve, to encourage and motivate them to achieve, and to recognize 4-H'ers upon their achievement at all levels.