“Lions, tigers and bears. Oh, my!” These do not make good pets, but many other animals do.

The 4-H pet project helps you explore what kind of pet fits into your family’s lifestyle and how to be an excellent caretaker for

- Identify breeds as well as characteristics of potential pet species that may work for you.
- Learn about the selection, care and needs of pets and basic principles of pet behavior.
- Demonstrate care and management in feeding, handling, grooming and fitting/showing.
- Explore health regulations, first aid and simple treatments for ailments.
- Learn and practice animal ownership responsibilities.

**Here’s what you can do all year!**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Starting Out</th>
<th>Learning More</th>
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<td>Basic/Level 1</td>
<td>Intermediate/Level 2</td>
<td>Advanced/Level 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Gather information and determine the best pet for your family.</td>
<td>- Plan a training and exercise program for your pet.</td>
<td>- Develop a business plan for a pet care or pet-sitting business.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Learn about the proper care, grooming and feeding of your pet.</td>
<td>- Prepare for participation in a pet show.</td>
<td>- Assess careers related to pets and pet businesses.</td>
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<td>- Learn to identify the parts of your pet for conversations with your vet and a judge.</td>
<td>- Make a decision about breeding or not breeding your pet.</td>
<td>- Help a friend make a decision about pet ownership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Create a plan to prevent your pet from getting lost or finding it if it gets lost.</td>
<td>- Compare the labels on pet foods to make an informed decision on content and price.</td>
<td>- Research diseases in pet mammals, birds and fish.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Purchase and use the appropriate grooming equipment and techniques.</td>
<td>- Keep a diary of your pet’s health and eating habits.</td>
<td>- Identify symptoms and a course of action for a disease in your pet.</td>
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<td>- Practice appropriate training for your pet.</td>
<td>- Do some comparison shopping for setting up an aquarium.</td>
<td>- Learn how pets affect the environment.</td>
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*Pass it on!*
Now that you know how, share it with others. Here are ideas to get you started.

**Communication**
- Create a speech or demonstration about:
  - How to approach a pet safely
  - How to prepare a pet for showing
  - How to select a nutritional diet
  - How to select a cat, gerbil, hamster, etc., as a pet
  - How to make a carrying cage

**Citizenship**
- Clean up after your pet.
- Volunteer at an animal shelter.
- Write a letter to your local newspaper about the importance of having household pets spayed or neutered.

**Leadership**
- Organize a pet show for your club.
- Organize a fundraiser to help benefit an animal shelter.
- Research and share with others why keeping wild animals as pets is not a good idea
- Develop a plan to foster pets of deploying service members.

**Entrepreneurship**
- Start a dog walking or animal business.

Learn more at [www.ndsu.edu/4h/](http://www.ndsu.edu/4h/) or contact your county NDSU Extension office.

Updated 12-2016
Opportunities to explore the pet project:

- Contact your county NDSU Extension office for information about local pet-related events.
- Learn about service animals and how they compare and contrast with pets.
- Job shadow at a local business (pet store, veterinary clinic, breeder, etc.) in a career that interests you.
- Explore health safety issues with pets. What diseases do pets have that might make humans ill?
- Research all the kinds of parasites your pet might get and how to protect you and your pet.
- Sometimes people give bunnies and chicks for presents. Explore the pros and cons of this tradition.
- Explore the subject of animal-assisted therapy, how it is used and its benefits.
- Interested in a college education in animal science, veterinary technology or veterinary medicine? Schedule a visit with North Dakota State University (www.ndsu.edu) to explore those majors.

**4-H Resources**

- National Curriculum
- Pet
  - Pet Pals (GBK161)
  - Scurrying Ahead (GBK162)
  - Scaling the Heights (GBK163)
  - Pets Helper's Guide (GBK267)
- Dog
  - Wiggles and Wags (GBE131)
  - Canine Connection (GBE133)
  - Leading the Pack (GBE133)
  - Dog Helper’s Guide (GBE236)
- Cat
  - Purr-fect Pals (GBD131)
  - Climbing Up (GBD132)
  - Leaping Forward (GBD133)
  - Cat Helper’s Guide (GBD231)
- Educational Trunks
  - Dogs (check out by contacting local Extension office)

**Other Resources**

- Association of Pet Dog Trainers
- Healthy Pets
- Pet Columns
- American Veterinary Medical Association
- For Cat Fanciers
- eXtension Companion Animals

**Recordkeeping**

- Planning for My Project Adventure (PA093) (Ages 8-10)
- 4-H Project Plan (PA095)
- 4-H Plan of Action (PA096) (Ages 11-18)
- ND 4-H Participation for 11-19 (PA098)

**Exhibit Ideas**

- Make a first aid kit for a pet. Tell why and how each item is used.
- Share diet and nutrition information for raising a healthy pet.
- Interview your veterinarian about a microchip to identify your pet; develop a video about options.
- Attend a pet show, take photos and make a notebook about pet breeds.
- Write a story about famous pets (Garfield, Lassie, Snoopy) for a younger sibling.
- Visit a pet store and find as many pieces of pet equipment as you can. Identify necessary equipment and costs.
- Make a poster on diseases your pet can get. Tell about the diseases’ discovery, effects, treatments, etc.
- Research jobs related to pets; make a poster showing three jobs that interest you.
- Develop a video showing the steps in training a pet.
- Research the country or area your pet came from. Take special note of the people, traditions and other types of animals that live in the area. Design a poster showing your pet’s origin.
- Design a toy for your pet; tell about your decisions related to safety and cleanliness.

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