

Your Money Your Choice

What do Power Bars, Energy Efficient Light Bulbs, MP3 Players, and Bank Accounts have in common? They're all the topics of this years Consumer Choices competition. Considering the state of our current economy people are pinching pennies and wanting to get the best deal possible. Would you like to be a better shopper and know by what standards to compare products? Does the cheapest price really mean the best bargain? Well I've gotten a 4-H project for you that's not only fun but will save you money for years to come.

When I was 11 I participated in my first Consumer Choices Competition at the Central Florida Fair. For a month a met at my Ag office every Tuesday learning the topics for that year's competition. I was given 3 minutes and 4 items to compare and rank, on two of the topics I was allotted 5 minutes and not only had to rank the items but had to present my reasons in front of a judge. Many of you may not know, but back in the day I was scared to death of public speaking. In fact, the night before the competition I was going to back out, but after some encouragement decided to try. When I presented one of my topics in front of the judge I got through the first placement and then cried through the rest of them. I was so nervous and scared, but it's through experiences like this that I've grown into the speaker I am (granted I still have much to improve on...at least I've gotten past crying).

You need to be apart of this awesome project. It's a team competition so grab some of your friends and do it together. Most agents have training that they do to prepare you to compete at the Central Florida Fair. Consumer Choices will truly educate you about current products and improves your public speaking skills. I hope that you will ask your agent or me about this project and participate. See you at the Fair!

In this 4-H Consumer project contest, you will demonstrate:

1. How to process information to make the best economical choices for a given situation;
2. How to comparison shop by price, product quality, or store/manufacture;
3. How to use skills or improved practices related to financial literacy and money management;
4. The rights and responsibilities of consumers;
5. How to effectively communicate with others;
6. Skills such as decision-making, getting along with others, planning and organizing, and responsibility.

Go on line to [www. florida4h.org](http://www.florida4h.org) and search Consumer Choices to get this year's manual and more information.