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August 12, 2020

Dear 4-H Nova Scotia Members, Adult Volunteers, and Families:

RE: 21-YEAR-OLD MEMBERS' REQUEST FOR ANOTHER FINAL YEAR IN 2020-2021

In order to help contain the spread of COVID-19, 4-H Nova Scotia suspended all regular in-person activities for the remainder of the 2019-2020 program year. As the effects became better known, this decision prompted some members and concerned adults to request that 4-H Nova Scotia consider permitting the aging-out 21-year-old members to register for the 2020-2021 4-H Nova Scotia year.

The Board has deliberated over an extended period of time to consider all the arguments which came before it both in favour of such action and not in favour. The Directors considered the ramifications, potential and actual, including assessment of the possible impact on program and on other members. The Board also reviewed whether the additional year would allow the competitive component or simply completion.

One of the most telling arguments against allowing this year's group to have another year is the domino effect on those aging out next year: their year will not be 'regular' or 'normal.' As well, at this time there continues to be considerable uncertainty due to the possibility of a second wave. It is still too early to predict whether or not 2020-2021 will be a 'regular and normal' 4-H Nova Scotia year, because of the possibility of shifting guidelines and potential changes to program delivery, which may well prompt the next group to request similar accommodation.

The Board has responsibility for the organization as a whole and its decisions must be holistic, equitable, and fair. Having taken all of the matters into consideration the Board has come to the conclusion that the unintended consequences of permitting aging out 2019-2020 members to register either for completion or completion and competition would be contrary to the spirit and purpose of the 4-H movement by negatively impacting some to provide an advantage for others. Having taken all matters into consideration, the Board has come to the conclusion not to allow aging-out members to register for the 2020-2021 4-H year.

We understand and share the disappointment this disruption caused Nova Scotia's 4-Hers. We applaud your resilience and adaptability in navigating an exceptionally unusual year. We wish you well.

Yours in 4-H,

Scott Masters
President, 4-H Nova Scotia Board of Directors