

Ethical Compass

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Does the practice break FDA law?
2. Does the practice falsely represent the animal? Is it fraud?
3. Does the practice harm the animals?
4. Does it have anything to do with “Real World Agriculture”?
5. Do you have to lie to cover up the practice?
6. Would the public be upset if they knew about it?

If any of these questions are answered yes, the practice is probably unethical.

The 4-H Youth program is one of the oldest and largest informal educational efforts in public education in the United States. The mission objectives of 4-H are to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society. These skills are much more than physical skills and are a combination of acting, thinking, and feeling. They help youth function as adults in society and accept responsibilities, gain ability to communicate, inquire, solve problems, make decisions, and work with other people.

The National FFA Organization is a dynamic youth leadership organization that strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agriculture education. Agricultural Education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

There is probably no other activity that has more potential for educational and personal development of youth than junior livestock projects and shows.

The junior livestock program is a unique opportunity to use live animals to help youth develop. The main objectives of the program deal with the young person, not the animal. Youth do learn something about agriculture and livestock production and develop an appreciation for the livestock industry, but the main objectives are to teach life skills and help youth become productive citizens of our society. The experience of youth owning and working with animals, being responsible for their care, health, and growth, and exhibiting them in a competitive environment is a tremendous character building process.

Sort these livestock show practices as ethical or unethical

- Use of a tranquilizer on a show animal
- An injection of an anti-inflammatory agent to help a cripple animal walk at a show
- Falsified birth dates
- Keeping the grand champion animal after your county fair and taking them to NILE (3 months after the county fair)
- Your chicken dies after the 60 date fair ownership requirement deadline. You decide to use your friends chicken for the show
- Cleaning or polishing the hooves of an animal
- Leaving your hamster in a cage for a week without exercise
- Injection of an antibiotic
- Picking up your rabbit by the ears to pull them out of their cage
- Clipping, fitting and grooming an animal in order to exhibit the animal at its best natural; advantage
- Clipping the hair on a pig

Discussion points

Use common sense

Make us aware of what is going on

Public perception is important - People ask at fair why an animal does not have food all the time – why are the lambs wearing muzzles?

- Use of a tranquilizer on a show animal – HERBAL IS NOT OKAY – Spend time working with the animal
- An injection of an anti-inflammatory agent to help a cripple animal walk at a show – If a horse needs it because of arthritis you need a vet letter – be sure that you tell the Div. Chairman/ Supt./ Agent
- Falsified birth dates
- Keeping the grand champion animal after your county fair and taking them to NILE (3 months after the county fair)
- Your chicken dies after the 60 date fair ownership requirement deadline. You decide to use your friends chicken for the show
- Cleaning or polishing the hooves of an animal – You can make the same color the same
- Leaving your hamster in a cage for a week without exercise
- Injection of an antibiotic – take care of the animal first - watch the withdrawal time – Call to visit with the Agent to be sure it is okay and guidelines can be set up to take the animal home for a few days prior to slaughter and after the sale. We had a pig carcass come back with antibiotics in it – it was from the goat's milk they fed it.
- Picking up your rabbit by the ears to pull them out of their cage
- Clipping, fitting and grooming an animal in order to exhibit the animal at its best natural; advantage
- Clipping the hair on a pig – do it at home – not at fair because they make too much noise.

Excessive Adult Involvement

- Use common sense
- Steers can be walked to the back by adults – kids should be with them – it is a safety issue
- Practice and fit at home
- Share chores with other kids