



## What is the real purpose of 4-H and FFA livestock projects?



The primary purpose of the youth livestock program is to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development of the young person. A secondary purpose is to teach young people how to feed, fit and show their animals. In the process of feeding and caring for an animal, young people have the opportunity to develop many positive character traits.

### **Trustworthiness:** Includes honesty, promise keeping and loyalty.

- ❖ *Feeds and waters the animals daily (promise keeping)*
- ❖ *Adheres to possession deadlines (honesty)*
- ❖ *Adheres to withdrawal times on drugs and dewormers*
- ❖ *Use only the appropriate use of approved drugs*
- ❖ *Supports the ethical decisions of fellow members, leaders, judges and officials*
- ❖ *Keeps complete and accurate records*

### **Respect:** Includes courtesy and proper treatment of people and things.

- ❖ *Handles and treats animals humanely*
- ❖ *Cares for animals properly*
- ❖ *Listens to and follows advice of advisors*
- ❖ *Recognizes that animal project is dependent on 4-H/FFA member and provides daily feed and water*

### **Responsibility:** Includes the pursuit of excellence, accountability and perseverance.

- ❖ *Feeds and waters the animal daily (even on busy and difficult days)*
- ❖ *Goes beyond providing the daily needs of the animal in giving additional time and attention to produce a high-quality project*
- ❖ *Adheres to entry deadlines and arrival to livestock shows*
- ❖ *Never gives up in the show ring (perseverance)*
- ❖ *Takes pride in personal efforts*
- ❖ *Sets a good example for other youth*

### **Fairness:** Involves consistently applying rules and standards appropriate for different age groups and ability levels.

- ❖ *Keeps an open mind to new ideas*
- ❖ *Looks and listens to both sides of an issue*
- ❖ *Feeds only approved livestock rations*
- ❖ *Uses only approved drugs*
- ❖ *Accepts winning and losing with grace*

- ❖ *Follows recommended procedure in the show ring*
- ❖ *Follows recommended procedures for fitting and grooming an animal*

**Caring:** Promoting the well-being of people, animals and things in a young person's world. It denotes actions and not just feelings.

- ❖ *Treats others like they want to be treated*
- ❖ *Helps younger and less experienced youth*
- ❖ *Feeds and waters animal daily*
- ❖ *Provides clean barn/stall for animal*
- ❖ *Treats animal humanely at all times*

**Citizenship:** Includes making the home, community and country a better place to live for themselves and others.

- ❖ *Accepts and follows instructions*
- ❖ *Be a team player*
- ❖ *Winning and losing with grace*
- ❖ *Helping others at shows*
- ❖ *Teaching younger members*
- ❖ *Treating animals humanely*
- ❖ *Ensuring that your animal is safe for consumption*

The opportunities for exercising character listed are not intended to be complete but to express the idea that the 4-H and FFA livestock projects offer numerous ways for young people to build character. It is the responsibility of adults to ensure that all exercises that children are practicing are building positive character traits. The list is offered to help children, parents and advisors to see that if an adult does any part of the work necessary for a successful project, the child does not have that opportunity. While recognizing that a young child must have some help to halter break a calf or to shear a lamb, the idea is for the parents and advisors to insist that the child does all he or she is capable of doing.

It should be pointed out that the tasks of daily feeding and watering contribute to the strengthening of at least four of the six core values. It is important also to recognize that the size of the animal does not have any effect on the value of the project for the young person to develop character. Therefore, a child may learn the same things and have the same opportunity to exercise character with a rabbit as with a steer project.