



Youth and 4-H

Guidelines for Care of Animals in a Public Setting

4-H'ers participating in livestock shows have a chance to practice responsible behavior while taking care of their animals and themselves. 4-H'ers need to work cooperatively to provide an environment that meets the needs of exhibit animals and is conducive to encouraging the public to view exhibits.

Before the fair

1. Extension staff should involve 4-H'ers, the youth committee, fair board members, and county animal show superintendents in an annual review of their local situation, including care of animals in a public setting.
2. Communicate with 4-H members, and advise them on how to react according to educational material provided. This is an educational opportunity.
3. Develop herdsmanship guidelines that reflect accepted standards for care of animals. Print the guidelines in the fair book.
4. Provide educational materials to animal show exhibitors that include withdrawal periods and penalties associated with off-label use of drugs. Refer exhibitors to the Food Safety and Quality Assurance materials.
5. Arrange for veterinary care, and work with animal show superintendents on procedures for immediate contact with a veterinarian in case of an animal care emergency.
6. Provide appropriate facilities for the types and numbers of animals that will be exhibited. Refer to Extension publication AE-3071 "Suggested Housing Considerations for Animal at County Exhibitions."

7. Provide copies of local and state anti-cruelty laws to fair board members, volunteer animal show superintendents, and Extension staff.
8. Develop a strategy with animal show superintendents to ensure a high level of care for exhibit animals during the fair. Learn procedures to follow if animal cruelty laws are violated.
9. Talk to local law enforcement officials about concerns related to animal welfare at fairs. Ask for advice on how to respond to individuals or group protests to conditions at the fair.
10. Designate one person as the spokesperson for 4-H on the issue of animal care. Ask all other 4-H'ers, parents, and staff to refer inquiries to this person. The spokesperson should relate facts as provided in educational materials.

During the fair

11. Provide these references at the fair office:
Name of the designated spokesperson
 - Educational materials referred to in this publication
 - Local and state anti-cruelty laws
 - Strategy to ensure a high level of care for exhibit animals during the fair
 - Herdsmanship guidelines
 - Withdrawal periods and penalties associated with off-label use of drugs
 - Procedures for immediate contact with a veterinarian in case of emergency, including name and phone number.

12. If a 4-H member is asked numerous questions about care of the animal on exhibit, have the 4-H'er refer the person to the county Extension staff member for more information about animal care.
13. If a 4-H'er thinks the person asking the question is being disruptive, the 4-H'er should ask the person to visit with the county Extension staff member or designated spokesperson.
14. If a person disagrees with practices observed at the county fair, do not argue and do not overreact. Refer the person to factual material. Offer the person the opportunity to write his or her opinions to the fair board. Provide the address for the fair board president.

After the fair

15. Document with the director for Youth and 4-H, all contact between 4-H and groups concerned with the treatment of animals.
16. Meet with 4-H'ers, the youth committee, fair board members, and county livestock superintendents to evaluate the exhibit experience. Use the evaluation session to plan future exhibit experiences that make a significant contribution to youth development.

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