

4-H Animal Evaluation Project



SNAPSHOT 4H1626

CURRICULA & RESOURCES

Michigan 4-H Curricula

<http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/livestock>
» Michigan 4-H Judging Cards (4-H1293-96)

Curricula — Other States

- » Beef, Sheep and Swine Selection and Evaluation (4-H 103R) (The Ohio State University Extension)
<http://estore.osu-extension.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=2277>
- » From the Ground Up: The Basics of Livestock Judging (Iowa State University)
<http://www.ans.iastate.edu/clubs/judging/livestock/Basicsppt.pdf>
- » Livestock Judging Guide for 4-H Club Members (4-H S92) (Kansas State University Extension) <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/S92.pdf>

National 4-H Curricula

- <http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/>
- » Beef
 - Here's the Beef – Beef 2 (08144)
 - » Sheep
 - Leading the Flock – Sheep 3 (06369)
 - » Swine
 - The Incredible Pig – Swine 1 (08065)
 - Putting the Oink in Pig – Swine 2 (08066)
 - Going Whole Hog – Swine 3 (08067)

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The 4-H animal evaluation project areas allow you the opportunity to learn about animal selection, evaluation, breed character, production factors, marketing and careers in the livestock industry.

- » Learn principles of animal science and gain life skills, such as decision-making, by evaluating and communicating differences on one or more head of livestock.
- » Gain knowledge of animal differences and be able to evaluate and select animals based on a desired set of characteristics.
- » Increase public speaking skills by learning to prepare a logical, coherent set of notes that allow you to present an effective set of oral reasons.

THE BIG PICTURE

Starting Out:

- » Learn about the ideal beef, sheep and swine animal.
- » Accurately describe an animal and compare the animal to others.
- » Locate and name specific parts of beef, sheep and swine.
- » Practice judging classes at the local level.
- » Identify different beef, sheep and swine breeds.
- » Learn terminology associated with beef, sheep and swine.
- » Answer questions based on the four animals being evaluated in the class.
- » Learn how to organize notes on animals.
- » Participate in a judging contest.
- » Go to a county fair and watch livestock shows. Judge each class from the stands and see how closely your placings match those of the official judge.

Learning More:

- » Prepare and give reasons defending a class placing.
- » Recognize significant differences in muscle, fat and structure between animals.
- » Differentiate terms used for breeding and market animals.
- » Explore additional terminology to compare rather than describe an animal.
- » Increase accuracy of questions asked about a class through taking more descriptive notes.
- » Explore the difference between yield grade and quality grade.
- » Interpret individual performance data and Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) for selected animals.
- » Analyze and make decisions based on which four animals would be kept in a keep/cull class of eight animals.

Expanding Horizons:

- » Help younger 4-H members explore an animal evaluation project.
- » Present articulate, structured oral reasons.
- » Organize a livestock judging clinic for surrounding counties.
- » Evaluate livestock carcasses.
- » Serve as a county fair sweepstakes judge.
- » Plan a local judging contest.
- » Organize a fundraising event to be able to travel to additional livestock judging events.
- » Serve as an official judge or as an apprentice judge.
- » Use performance records to select ewes, gilts and heifers.
- » Interview livestock producers about current livestock trends.

4-H Animal Evaluation Project



FOCUS ON ANIMAL EVALUATION

Science

- » Critically evaluate animals based on structure, muscle, fat, soundness, balance and volume.
- » Learn about beef, sheep and swine anatomy and physiology.
- » Use data scenarios to select animals based on the given situation.
- » Understand differences in EPDs to predict future offspring success.

Life Skills

- » Use critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills to make good decisions about animal selection.
- » Recall information and descriptions of animals to use later in a set of reasons.
- » Increase public speaking ability through oral reasons.
- » Practice personal resiliency through successes and challenges in animal evaluation.

Citizenship & Leadership

- » Volunteer to do animal selection presentation during a county 4-H meeting.
- » Provide animals for other 4-H members to judge to help reinforce livestock evaluation skills.
- » Lead other 4-H members in participating in local livestock judging events.
- » Arrange a practice for 4-H members by traveling to different farms in the area.

Communication

- » Participate in a judging contest giving oral reasons to an adult.
- » Read through terminology to enhance vocabulary used in describing livestock.
- » Instruct 4-H members on how to defend their placings of a class of stuffed animals.



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- » Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for workshops, activities and events.
- » Attend a show and listen to a judge give oral reasons, and witness the differences they discuss.
- » Participate in the livestock judging contest at the county fair or fairs in the area.
- » Work with a local 4-H volunteer or FFA advisor to start a county livestock judging program.
- » Visit with local producers and evaluate livestock in the area.
- » Visit a local meat locker or local grocery meat case to observe carcasses.
- » Participate in the MSU Block and Bridle Livestock Judging Contest in April at the MSU Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education.
- » Participate in the State 4-H/FFA Livestock Judging Contest in July at the MSU Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education.
- » If you are interested in a college education in animal science or veterinary medicine, visit MSU's website at www.msu.edu to explore those majors.
- » Attend regional livestock judging practices offered in the fall by MSU Extension.
- » Exhibit or attend local, regional or national shows and conferences to learn more about judging.
- » If you are interested in livestock judging at MSU, contact the MSU Department of Animal Science, <http://www.ans.msu.edu> to explore course offerings and opportunities.

The 4-H snapshots are adapted with permission from the Iowa 4-H Project Hot Sheets by Iowa State University Extension, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/page/4-h-project-hot-sheets>.

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