
4-H ANIMAL WELFARE

During fair season, 4-H members have an opportunity to showcase our belief in the ethical and humane treatment of animals and demonstrate our guarantee of safe food production practices. While showing livestock, we are under the watchful eye of the general public. Many people attending a local fair may have no idea how livestock is raised. You are our spokesperson for the livestock industry. The proper care of animals in a public setting should receive primary attention. Practicing these guidelines should be helpful in preventing any misconceptions the public may have about the way we raise livestock.

1. Provide fresh, clean water to all animals at all times.
2. Keep your pens clean and dry with good bedding at all times.
3. Be aware of animal comfort zones i.e. temperature, space.
4. Sort and load animals safely and with concern for them.
5. Train animals to lead or be handled at a young age before the fair; this will make them more manageable at the fair.
6. Arrange for veterinary care in case of an animal emergency.
7. Handle animals in a very humane way.
8. Adhere to all antibiotic, drug, and water or feed additive withdrawal times.
9. Animals should be fed on a routine basis.
10. Avoid stressing the animal.
11. Keep animals clean; a clean animal is viewed as a healthy animal.
12. Use show sticks, whips, and canes for showing only and try to use them as gently as possible.
13. Review your 4-H project manual and follow the care recommendations. This is also a good way to answer any questions the public may have.
14. Have a plan of action if a problem should arise and who to contact to help solve it or answer questions.
15. Know who and where fair officials are and how to get in contact with them.
16. If questioned about animal care by a stranger, remain calm, be polite, answer the questions the best you can, don't argue, and refer the person to the department superintendent if a tough question or situation arises.

Animal welfare is important and highly visible during summer fairs. Following the above practices will present a positive image of our livestock industry and the 4-H program to the public as well as demonstrate the solid animal stewardship which is our 4-H tradition.

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