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.

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.

THE BIG PICTURE

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


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)
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.

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.

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.

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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