WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?
The 4-H sheep project allows young people to learn about breeds, selection, grooming, production, management, showmanship, marketing and careers.
- Learn the basic principles of animal science by owning, caring for and keeping records on one or more head of livestock.
- Gain knowledge of sound breeding, feeding and management practices.
- Identify quality in wholesale and retail cuts of meat to understand the relationship to management principles.

THE BIG PICTURE

Starting Out:
- Learn about sheep health and proper care.
- Learn what you need to show your animals.
- Produce a healthy and safe meat product.
- Identify different breeds.
- Locate and name parts of sheep.
- Learn proper feeding of sheep.
- Tell the difference between the ages of sheep.

Learning More:
- Learn about food safety management practices.
- Learn the life cycle of sheep parasites.
- Judge and present your sheep.
- Understand the use of medications for the health of your sheep.
- Communicate with the veterinarian for disease prevention.
- Learn breeding and reproduction best practices.
- Care for a newborn lamb.
- Explore sheep shelters for adequate protection.
- Research sheep meat markets.

Expanding Horizons:
- Plan and organize production records.
- Develop cost and expense records.
- Explore sheep genetics.
- Interview people in agricultural careers.
- Explore sheep industry issues.
- Market sheep products.
- Select animals for breeding.
- Identify lamb cuts at the local grocery store.
- Measure your pasture’s productivity.
- Learn about and debate animal well-being.

CURRICULA & RESOURCES

Michigan 4-H Resource
http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/livestock
- Sheep Flock Record (4H1343)

National 4-H Curricula
http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/
- Rams, Lambs & You: Level 1 (06367)
- Shear Delight: Level 2 (06368)
- Leading the Flock: Level 3 (06369)
- Sheep Helper’s Guide (06370)

Other Resources
- American Sheep Industry Association: http://www.sheepusa.org
- Michigan Sheep Breeder’s Association: http://www.misheep.org/
FOCUS ON SHEEP

Science

- Explore sheep behavior; track normal versus abnormal behavior.
- Investigate the properties of wool and compare them to other natural or synthetic fibers.
- Research genetic differences in sheep breeds.

Communication

- Design a poster on parts of the sheep and present this topic to others.
- Participate in a judging contest giving oral reasons.
- Give a shearing demonstration.

Citizenship & Leadership

- Volunteer your lamb for a community petting zoo.
- Lead a demonstration with your lamb to a local elementary class.
- Teach others how to safely handle sheep.

Life Skills

- Use critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills to help you make good decisions about project management.
- Keep records on your project expenses and income.
- Practice personal resiliency through successes and challenges in your project.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for workshops, activities and events.
- Tour a sheep farm.
- Attend a sheep show and observe the judges and their techniques.
- Attend a 4-H sheep project meeting.
- Design a business plan to market lamb meat directly to retailers, restaurants or private customers.
- Write an educational article about some aspect of sheep production for your local newspaper.
- Participate in a sheep skillathon.
- Organize a sheep showmanship contest.
- Attend a national conference.
- Job shadow a local veterinarian to learn about animal health.
- Learn about the different uses for sheep.
- Research sheep by-products.
- Attend the Michigan State 4-H Sheep Show or the Michigan State 4-H Sheep Expo.
- Show at your county fair.
- Complete a sheep project record book to track your income, expenses and experiences in your sheep project.
- 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.


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