Are you into it? 

Marketing My Project Animal

FOWLERVILLE FAIR
Are you into it? 🐄

This is your market animal project. Finding a buyer for your project animal is the marketing or final chapter in this project for the year. The following suggestions should help you develop your own plan to attract buyers to the sales.

Just like in showmanship marketing your animal begins at the beginning of your project not at the end. The more thought and time you put into developing a marketing plan for your auction animals the better the outcome will be.

Remember it takes two bidders to make an auction and three bidders would be to your benefit on sale night when the bidding starts on your project animal.

We have included an auction buyer timeline for you to follow, some special forms for you fill in with your own information and some sample letters and thank you notes.
Buyer Contact Timeline

May

Make a list of individuals and businesses that might come to the sale and purchase your animals. Don’t rely on the same buyers that come every year. Think about new businesses or groups that have not participated at the auction before. They do not have to be associated with agriculture but may be places where your family does business or purchases services.

For example your initial list might include:

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<td>Local Politicians</td>
<td>Gas Stations</td>
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<td>Car Dealerships</td>
<td>Party Stores</td>
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<td>Realtors</td>
<td>Banks</td>
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Don’t forget to invite the farm where you purchased your animal. Remember to also let them know the day of your show. Many farms like to follow their animals from the time of purchase, in the show ring and through the auction.

As you make your list include a contact name, address and telephone number for each person or business. This information will come in handy for future contacts and your thank you notes. Even if you plan to contact your grandparents about purchasing your animals include their names and address on your list as well.

June

Ways to contact your potential buyers are:

Letter     Good way to introduce yourself
           Be sure to include facts about the auctions and an auction brochure
           Letters can be impersonal and easy to throw and forgotten.
           Handwritten or a personal letter is better than computer form letters.

Phone Call Good way to introduce yourself
           Great reminder about the date and times of the auctions
           Phone calls can also be impersonal if you don’t talk to the right person.

Visit      Probably the best way to introduce yourself
           You can answer any questions that the potential buyer may have
           Buyer gets a chance to meet you and will recognize you on sale night
           Do not go empty handed take a flyer or something with auction date and time on it

All three of the above ways to contact buyers will work. The best scenario would probably be a combination of all three. Think about a combination that would work for you.
July

A follow up phone call or hand written note as just a reminder would probably be a great idea. Keep it simple and do not beg.

On auction night thank your buyer personally for coming to auction and purchasing your animal. Many members think of neat little things to give there buyers on auction night to show their appreciation. Many times these extra things may not be necessary but a big smile with a verbal thank you and a hand shake are certainly a must.

Personally present your buyer ribbon.

Be prompt with your thank you notes after the auction. We have included a sample thank you note with this auction promotion packet.
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A Letter of Introduction Should Include:

Why
The purpose of your letter.

What
Explain in general terms what the auction is all about.

When
Include the day, date and time of the auction.

Where
Give the location of the auction—be specific!

Other important information to include in your letter of introduction: Find out the name of the contact person so your letter is addressed to someone. Mention both auctions at some point in your letter.

Sample Letter of Introduction

Date

Business Name
Potential Buyer’s Name (Contact Person)
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear

I am writing to invite you to the Livingston County Fowlerville Family Fair 4-H Small Animal Auction to be held on (date) at (time) under the Livestock Arena on the fairgrounds.

The sale will highlight the work of 4-H members from all over the county. I will be selling a (specie) at the auction. Through 4-H I have learned about (specie) selection, feeding, fitting, showing and marketing.

I hope that you will be able to attend the sale. If you come early on sale day, the small market animals can be viewed in the 4-H Small Animal Barn.

I will be giving you a call in the next few days to set up an appointment when I can stop by to answer any questions you may have about the auction. I hope that you will be able to attend the auction and would consider bidding on my (market goat, rabbit, poultry).

I have enclosed an auction flyer with this letter which may help to answer questions about the bidding and processing of animals and the flyer also has information about the Large Animal Auction which is held on Friday afternoon.

Sincerely

Your Name
Followup phone call

Introduce yourself
Ask to speak to your contact person
Ask for a convenient time to meet with the contact person to give them additional information about the auctions.

Sample Phone Call or Message

Hello! My name is (name) and I am a 4-H member with the (club) here in Livingston County. I would like to invite you to attend the (auction) held during the Fowlerville Fair on July (date) at (time). Would it be okay to stop by in the next week and drop off information about the auction?

What time would be convenient for you? Yes-set up time and date!  No! Thank You!

Thank you for your time!

Personal Visit

Be prepared to answer the following Questions:

How Much Is Admission to the Fairgrounds?

Do I Need a Parking Pass? No

What Do I Do With Animal?
1. Personal Use
2. Business Bar-B-Q
3. Resell the animal at market price through a livestock yard.
4. Donate the animal to a favorite charity in need of food or back to 4-H.

Do I Have to Be Present At the Auction to Bid?
No, if you are unable to attend there are people who will bid on your behalf.

Can I share my purchase?
Sure, two or more firms or families can go together to purchase an animal.

Are my purchases tax deductible?
If you keep the meat you can claim the difference between market price and what you paid.

If you resell the animal you may deduct the difference between the amount you paid and the check sent from the livestock yard.

If you donate the entire animal back to 4-H or a local charity you may deduct the entire amount as a donation.
If I buy an animal, what happens then? How do I get it processed?
The member selling the animal is responsible for the animal’s care until it is trucked to
the processor or livestock yard. On sale night the buyer must indicate where the animal
is to be processed. The auction committee will make sure the animal goes to the
destination of your choice.

What does the buyer get out of all this?
Advertising, publicity, good will, supporting the youth of the future, and great tasting
meat.

What if the person I contact is not interested in spending a lot of money at the large
animal auction? 4-H is about cooperation. It is important that we all work together for
the good of the program. Encourage the buyer to attend the small animal auction instead.
Information you send to a buyer should include the dates and times for both auctions
whether you are selling in both or not.

When you visit your potential buyers be sure to take something with you that will be a
reminder of the date and time of the auctions.

A flyer with your picture and auction information on it.

Ask them to put an auction flyer in their window or put extra brochures on their
counter.

Candy Bar, Microwave popcorn wrapped with an auction flyer might be a good
reminder.

A table topper with the dates and times of the auction that could set on their
counter or desk would be a great reminder.

Your picture from last year with the dates and times of the auction attached with a
label would help them remember you and also the auction.

Be creative, I’m sure you can think of other fun and useful things to take. It doesn’t need
to be elaborate—keep it simple but informative.

Preparing for the Auction

1. Animals need to be super, super clean. No dirty breasts on chickens, no manure
hanging from feathers, rear ends clean and free of manure. Find out from other members
how you accomplish this. While at fair, look around and see who has clean birds and talk
to them about how they accomplish this.

2. You need to be dressed as you would on show day. Clean smiling faces, shirts tucked
in, belts in pants with sparkly, clean animal make a great package deal that few bidders
could resist.
Thank You’s Are Very Important

All right, so you did your job before the sale, got a buyer to the sale and sold your animal. Your job is not done yet! You still need to thank your buyer so he/she will attend the auction again next year!

1. The night of the sale, find out who bought your animal and thank them right then. Everyone who purchased an animal should be thanked sale night. Make sure your buyer thank you is stapled above your animal as soon as possible.

2. Within two weeks after the sale, a thank you letter should be sent to each buyer. If two or more people went together to buy your animal, you will need to send a thank you letter to each one.

3. In the thank you letter tell the buyer what you learned in the project, what you intend to do with the money and what other experiences you may have had in the project area.

4. In addition to single thank you notes, your club may want to take out a small ad in the local newspaper thanking all the buyers who bought from club members. These ads don’t cost much and help get the extra publicity we promised the buyers.

5. Remember that every person that you contacted will not have purchased an animal. If they bid on your animals that is also very important, so you may want to send a thank you for coming.

Sample Thank You Note/Letter

Dear ........

Thank you for purchasing my (specie) at the (auction) during the Fowlerville Family Fair. I really appreciated your bid of ($) per pound.

In 4-H this year, I have learned (what). The money I earned from the sale of my (specie) will be (saved/used for - tell your buyer your plans).

I hope you enjoyed seeing all the 4-H exhibits at the fair and attending the auction.

Again let me say “Thank You” for purchasing my animal.

Sincerely

Your name

(Handwritten or individually written thank you notes are much more effective than mass produced computer generated mailings.)
Other things you may want to think about ..............

Try to be helpful and friendly to anyone who walks through the barns during the week and especially on sale night. Anyone could be a potential buyer if you are courteous and helpful; they will remember.

We are all working together and that means we wish the best for others as well as for ourselves. That is true for the entire week of fair in and out of the show ring and on auction night.

Be sure you understand the auction brochure so you can answer questions about the auction, bidding and processing.

Do not write your buyer thank you at fair. Your thank you notes are a very important part of your marketing plan. They need to be neat, clean and well thought out. I’m not sure that can happen at fair.

Remember! Every person that you contact will not be able to purchase an animal. The company office may tell a local branch manager. “You can spend $200.00 and no more,” and the person attends the sale, bids on your animal, but the bidding goes to high. That person still deserves a thank you! Have mom or dad, or your 4-H leader watch who bids on your animal and try to thank those who bid but didn’t buy after the sale.

Sometimes we don’t get the price that we want for our animals. Don’t walk out of the sale ring with a long face. If you get a price for your animal that is higher than the current market price, you have received a gift. Hide your disappointment (if that is how you feel) so the person who bought your animal doesn’t feel cheap or unappreciated. The buyers don’t have to be there supporting you.

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