



## Responsibilities as a 4-H Animal Exhibitor

As a 4-H member with an animal project, there are certain responsibilities you must accept if you wish to participate in events and activities with your animals. Here is a reminder of tasks you need to do, and responsibilities you assume as a 4-H animal project member. For further information contact your 4-H leader or Extension Educator.

### Project Expectations

Enroll as a 4-H member and keep your membership active by completing the expectations of membership of your club and county.

Register your animal as a 4-H project by the appropriate deadline. The forms for this are available at the County Extension Office and on our web site.

Check with your Extension Educator for fact sheets, manuals, and regulations that will help you learn more about your project and the expectations that go with it. Ask to see the Curriculum Notebook which has copies of all of the current materials relating to your animal project.

Learn how to work safely with your animal and follow safety guidelines both at home and at events.

### Before An Event

Make sure that your animal is in compliance with State Health Regulations and with health regulations for the particular event you are planning to participate in. Check with the Extension Office or the State Veterinarian for the current regulations.

Enroll your animal in the event. Most competitions including fairs have deadlines for registering as a participant. As a potential exhibitor you are responsible for requesting the appropriate entry materials, completing them, and submitting them to meet deadlines. Keep a copy of the class list with your classes marked.

Gather the appropriate documentation for your project animal and provide it when requested. Many fairs and other events require exhibitors to show proof of such things as identification of animals, vaccinations and health certificates, registration papers, production records, etc. Most exhibitors find a loose leaf notebook with plastic sleeves or pocket dividers helpful for keeping this information handy and yet protected. Also helpful is a copy of your medical form and signed 4-H code of conduct.

Compile and bring the appropriate aids for exhibiting your animal. Events differ in the items provided exhibitors. All exhibitors are expected to bring their own personal tools and equipment necessary for the type of event. Check in advance to see what the arrangements are for stabling, bedding, feed, water, etc. and come to the event prepared. Develop a check list of items needed when traveling with and exhibiting your animal and use it as you pack.

Know the rules and regulations governing the particular event and abide by them. Every event has an established structure for exhibitors. By signing the entry form you are agreeing to the conditions and regulations governing that particular event. If you have questions or need clarification about any of these the time to ask is before the event starts.

4-H often uses the Danish System. This means that each entry is evaluated against a standard of perfection and is given a blue, red, or white award reflecting how close to the standard the entry is at that moment. Become familiar with the standard of excellence for each event you enter and use the judge's comments to improve your performance in the future.

#### **During the Event**

Act in a responsible, ethical, sportsmanlike manner at all times while participating in a 4-H event. You are responsible for reflecting the highest standards of honor and integrity and for promoting the 4-H program and agriculture in a positive manner. In addition, older members are expected to model the high standards of positive behavior to younger members.

Make sure that the entries you are exhibiting are properly approved 4-H animals, and are prepared for exhibition by your own efforts. You should not allow any adults or other people to prepare any part of your animal for exhibit.

As the exhibitor, you are responsible for all duties relating to your entry and participation in the event, including but not limited to presentation of papers, care and preparation of animals, and any questions or clarification needed from the show management.

Be on time for your classes. Bring a copy of the schedule with you. Note changes in the schedule as they are posted or announced. Know what classes you have entered and be at the ring before the previous class is released.

Treat superintendents, judges, and other officials with respect. These people are working to make this opportunity happen for your benefit and deserve your courtesy, respect, and thanks. If an issue arises, bring it to the attention of the appropriate official and then abide by their decision. Once information has been sent out and the governing structure of an activity has been made public, the officials are bound to follow the procedure as publicized. If a procedure or event needs changing, work with the committee after the event to improve it for the future. Officials welcome suggestions for improvement when given in the right spirit.

Represent 4-H and your project to the general public in a positive way, helping to inform them about 4-H and agriculture.

Remember that by entering a show, you are asking for the judges evaluation and must accept the results, good or bad.

Work with other exhibitors, assisting when possible, helping younger members, sharing the skills you have developed and contribute to the team spirit that makes the 4-H experience more positive for all.

Set realistic goals for yourself at each event and objectively assess what you have accomplished once the activity is over. Remember, 4-H is making the best better but this can only happen when you are honest about where you are now and where you want to head.

Finally, enjoy your project and experiences. If you take the time to make sure that you and your animal are prepared then the day of the event you can concentrate on being proud of your performance, enjoying the company of the other exhibitors, sharing your common interests and having fun. Have a great 4-H year!

Adapted from "Responsibilities of the 4-H Animal Exhibitor", July 2009 and used by permission of University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

