



### University of California 4-H (UC 4-H) Policy:

The following excerpt describes the UC 4-H Youth Development Program (YDP) position on the purpose of and participation in a fair.

Chapter 7 - Experiential Learning, Section IV - Fairs, Expositions and Other Sponsored Shows ([UC 4-H Policy](#))

***Purpose of Fair:*** Fairs provide opportunities for members to exhibit the best of their project work from the past year and see how their skills have grown. Fairs also share with the community what 4-H YDP activities are taking place in their area. Each fair is governed by a set of rules that should be carefully reviewed by 4-H YDP staff.

***Value of Participation in a Fair:*** The 4-H YDP recognizes the value of participation at fairs as a means to showcase, exhibit, and otherwise demonstrate an individual member's accomplishments and skill development. Fair participation, however, is not a requirement for 4-H involvement, nor should fairs be considered as a validation of the learning experience.

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### 4-H Projects in Animal Science:

Animal science projects provide 4-H youth members an opportunity for experiential learning while preserving the core value of respect for the health and well-being of both themselves and their project animals. During these projects 4-H youth learn the fundamental husbandry practices that are necessary to raise animals for their defined purpose while maintaining optimum animal welfare. The focus should always be on positive outcomes and the educational value of the project. As 4-H leaders it is essential that we support 4-H youth and families to develop project expectations that align with their individual educational needs. In the 4-H animal science program, this can be achieved with both market and non-market animal projects.

The following are recommendations for preparing 4-H youth in livestock projects for the fair with a special focus on first-year livestock project members.

### BEFORE THE FAIR

- **Review your local fair's exhibitor handbook (fair book)**
  - Each fair will define their rules which can be more restrictive than the state rules.
  - Confirm requirements specific to the auction (i.e., terminal vs. non-terminal sale, rules for declaring intent to sell, requirement for presence of exhibitor, etc.)
  - Explain the fair rules and terminology for market animals to 4-H youth and their parent(s)/guardian(s)





- For additional information refer to *2023 State Rules for California Fairs* ([State Rules for California Fairs](#)). Information related specifically to market animals is summarized below.

### **State Rules for California Fairs - Official Definitions:**

**Market Animal:** *Any beef, sheep, swine, goat (for large animals) and poultry, quail meat pen, rabbit meat pen, single fryer rabbit and turkeys (for small animals), or as categorized by the fair, that are raised for the purpose of becoming food products for consumers.*

**Market Ready:** *A term that defines the amount of fat cover a market animal has and determines if an animal is ready to be harvested.*

**Terminal Sale:** *A sale in which the market ready animals exhibited at the Fair are to be sent to a processing facility and harvested following the conclusion of the auction/fair. Transportation to the processing facility is organized by the Fair.*

**Non-Terminal Sale:** *A sale in which the market ready and/or breeding animals may be picked up alive by the buyer following the conclusion of the auction.*

### **State Rules for California Fairs - auction guidelines and recommendations:**

*“Market animals intended to be sold through the Fair’s Junior Livestock Auction must be entered into a market judging class and be market ready at the time of judging to sell. It is recommended that an official “Intent to Sell” list be available in the Livestock Office for each exhibitor and/or parent to sign a declaration of their intent to sell after the market animals have been judged, especially if the Junior Livestock Auction is a terminal sale.*

*If the Fair’s Junior Livestock Auction is terminal, the market animals will be sold for resale or custom processing only. Once the market animal has been sold through the Junior Livestock Auction, ownership is then transferred to the buyer with the highest bid. If the Fair’s Junior Livestock Auction is terminal, no live animal pick up is allowed, except by the transportation provided by the Fair to the processing facility.”*

- **Project leaders should plan a pre-fair meeting.**
  - Explain the fair exhibition process for market animals (i.e., entry to fair, official weight of animal, preparation for the show, showing the animal, declaration of intent to sell, auction, load out)
  - Review terms like market animal, market-ready, terminal sale, etc.
  - During the meeting encourage project members to discuss
    - The purpose of raising livestock animals and their importance in production agriculture.
    - The quality of care the youth members have provided to their project animals.
    - What they have learned while preparing their animals for fair.
    - Differences in public opinion about raising market animals for fair.



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- Plan activities to help them practice explaining about their project to someone outside of 4-H.
- Make sure first-year members understand the process for a market animal that will be sold in a terminal sale.
- Encourage 4-H youth to consider preparing educational displays to showcase the quality of care of project animal.
- **To ensure the animal science program aligns with 4-H core values we recommend the following:**
  - 4-H Staff and adult volunteers are responsible for preparing 4-H youth for the fair.
  - Ensure that all youth understand the fair rules and know all options for their market animals.
  - Explain that livestock project members have the choice to not sell their market animal.
  - Make clear how they would choose the option of not selling their market animal with a focus on understanding the fair rules for exhibition.

### **DURING THE FAIR**

During the fair is an important time to interact with the public and demonstrate the quality of care that has been provided to the project animal. Therefore, we recommend the following.

- **Have a meeting at the fair to remind youth members to:**
  - Clean their animal's pen each morning so bedding is fresh.
  - Make sure clean water is always available for their animals.
  - Check on their animals throughout the day to ensure they have water, can move around pen freely (if not in tie-out barn) and is not experiencing any distress (e.g., blanket caught on leg, water bucket tipped over, etc.).
  - Secure animal pens with gate latches during day and overnight.
- **Fairs provide an excellent opportunity to educate about 4-H and animal agriculture.**
  - Display or provide educational material(s) about quality animal care and husbandry practices used during the 4-H project.
  - Encourage youth to engage with fairgoers asking respectful, curious, and genuine questions about their project.
- **Clubs should always plan adult supervision of youth and animals in pen area.**
- **Advise youth to report any person(s) that are making them uncomfortable to an adult or fair management** especially if they are doing the following: asking very direct or aggressive questions, taking video or excessive pictures of them without permission, etc.
- **Do not confront or engage with any person(s) that demonstrate activist behavior.** Report any observed efforts to interfere with management of market animals to fair management.





**Resources:**

Kerr, S. (2015) *Preparing youth for the sale of their market livestock project*. Washington State University Extension. FS112E. Pages 1-5. <https://extension.wsu.edu/animalag/content/preparing-youth-for-the-sale-of-their-market-livestock-project/>

Judge, J. (2019, August 15) *Being Emotional about selling livestock is OK*. AGDAILY. <https://www.agdaily.com/livestock/emotional-selling-livestock/>

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