

# Junior Livestock Shows, Sales — The Youth, Adults, General Public

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animals. We must base these programs on a foundation of ethics and honesty, and continue to give our youth of today and tomorrow the same opportunities to develop a strong moral basis for their future.

**Public Perceptions of Animal Products:** We are fortunate that neither the isolated abuse of animals nor the infrequent illegal use of compounds has affected which animal products the public will purchase. Newspapers, magazines, and other media have, surprisingly, not attempted to associate these rare abuses with the animal-derived products that most of the public uses everyday. Since the abuses observed in junior shows are perpetrated by a few individuals and are not representative of the vast majority of youth project or commercially produced animal-derived products, this association should not be made. However, with the tendency for the media to report sensational and controversial information, and often misinformation, the animal

industries have been fortunate.

Being a good animal exhibitor: Junior exhibitors need to be aware that they have a long-standing tradition to follow in terms of integrity, guarantees and ethics in presenting animals for show or sale. Livestock purchase or sale agreements are often made through just verbal agreement "sealed with a handshake." Although not the best basis for a business transaction, it shows the integrity that is expected and exists throughout agriculture. Integrity and ethics are expected when we make purchases and customers have the right to expect the same. In animals used for breeding, the birth dates, breeding soundness guarantees, performance or production histories, and other traits that reflect an animal's value are expected to be honestly stated by the seller. Any known imperfections that are not apparent to the observed or to the purchaser should also be stated. This kind of traditional farming ethic must be instilled in youth involved with junior livestock

activities, and also in those who advise, teach, and supervise youth. This includes parents, club leaders and those who sell project animals to youth.

Simple economics of proper animal care and treatment: Practically all of the guidelines for care, handling, nutrition, and facilities that lead to proper animal care and use have been shown to improve the economics of production. Distress to the animal can decrease rate of gain, feed efficiency and even result in a lower-quality carcass. One of the most important aspects of the educational phase of junior animal projects is to teach proper animal care and management and respect for animals including the use of practices that result in high-quality carcasses and consumer products without bruises, off-color lean, blemishes from injection sites, or chemical residues. If residues are detected through random sampling by the Food Safety and Inspection Service, the carcass is condemned with the total loss of the carcass

value. A more important consideration is the use of drugs which are illegal for use in any food-producing animal. These types of non-ethical, careless, and selfish actions permanently damage the credibility of the livestock producer and the industry's reputation for proper animal care and production of safe/wholesome animal-derived products. These actions are totally unacceptable in youth livestock programs as well.

**Fitting and showing guides:** There are many guides available for fitting and showing of livestock—from rabbits to sheep to beef cattle to horses. Naturally, the knowledge and skills associated with the presentation of animals to the judge, the public, and to prospective buyers is important and must continue to be emphasized. This is an important part of good animal care, handling, responsibility, and sales/showmanship. However, adherence to ethical production and marketing practices must be given more attention. The following

practices are not to be condoned in any situation:

- Feeding or use of illegal compounds
- Feeding or use of extra-label compounds without a prior examination of the animal and a written prescription by a veterinarian
- Not providing acceptable levels of feed, water, bedding and housing to animals at all times, including the time just prior to shows and sales
- Abuse, misuse or inhumane manipulation of animals
- Injection of any fluids or air to change to the shape of an animal or misrepresent its natural characteristics (e.g., muscling in meat animals, dairy cow udders)
- Disregarding purchase and/or possession dates required for junior livestock projects or individual show animals
- Use of professional fitter where prohibited
- Overlooking educational and skill development or placing too much emphasis on awards (either money or trophies and ribbons)

• Unsportsmanlike conduct or abusive behavior while exhibiting animals

• Adult leader not scheduling periodic farm visits throughout the project season to observe and advise on the nutrition and care of project animals.

Education and training materials: A wide variety of different educational, training, and skill development materials are available to junior livestock club members, parents, advisors, county extension agents, and club leaders. Historically these materials have dealt mostly with fitting and showing skills to a lesser extent with proper nutrition and handling. Within the past two years, because of the discovery of unethical feeding, fitting, and showing practices by youth and adults involved in club work, a number of visual aids and written materials about the ethics of junior livestock activities have been developed. Several states require juniors to complete educational materials pertaining to ethics as an initial step in their program.

The skills involved in selecting, caring for, fitting and showing animals are a necessary part of the educational process. But everything possible must be done to concentrate on all goals of junior livestock programs. This includes teaching the husbandry subject matter, the business aspects of animal production, ethical values, and professionalism. So many people have gained important life skills and benefited so much from junior programs based on animals that we can ill-afford a weakening or discontinuation of these opportunities.

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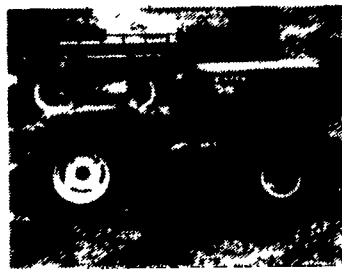
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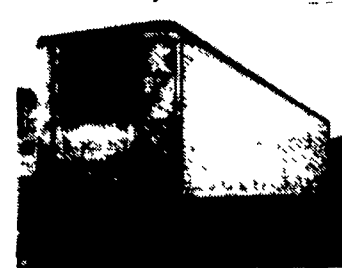
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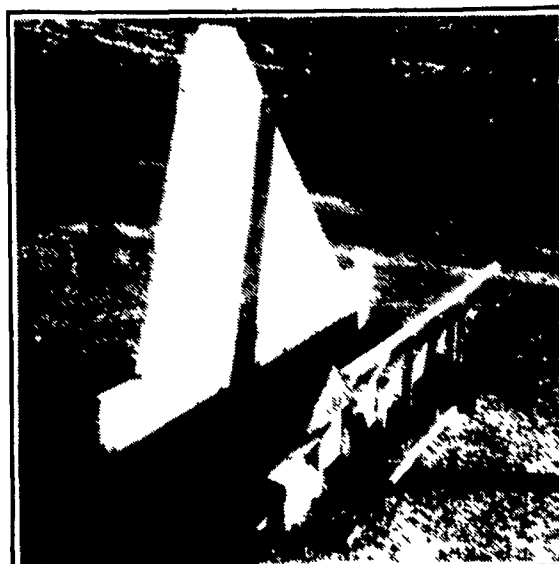


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