



## **Responsibilities of a 4-H Animal Project Leader**

Lauren Bressett, Jolee Chase, Maryann Kasprzak, Andrea Sawyer  
4-H Agricultural Science Work Team

As a 4-H animal project leader, you have an interest in youth and animals and want to help members grow as they build their knowledge and skills in your project area. There are expectations of you as your members become involved in events beyond the club. This fact sheet will help clarify your role. In addition, refer to the fact sheets for parents and members so that you are aware of what their responsibilities are as well. These are available from your Extension Office.

Your first responsibility is to inform and teach your members according to the curriculum and best practices of the project you are leading. Use your leader's handbook and your project curriculum as a guide.

Read the newsletters and other information from the Extension Office carefully and encourage your members to do the same. Inform your members of the opportunities, expectations, and requirements that relate to the project and the activities that your members choose to participate in. Make it clear that deadlines and follow through are their responsibility.

Give timely reminders to your members as deadlines approach or opportunities arise. For example, remind your members when it is time to request fair entry information and again when entries are due; discuss animal approval forms and remind them of the deadlines for submitting them.

Know the rules and requirements of the activities relating to your project area and share these with members and parents as appropriate.

Teach safety skills and stress safety in your members' techniques and animal care practices. At events have back up tools and emergency kits available when possible, or even better, encourage your members to work as a team and have these materials available.

Observe your members at events and assist your members in remedying problems as they arise. Allow the members to "learn by doing" but be ready to help in an emergency.

Know your member's goals and have conversations with your members' parents to keep them informed about opportunities appropriate for their child. Inform parents if you feel their child is reaching the limit in an activity or event.

Serve as a role model, exhibiting the behavior, sportsmanship, and showmanship that you expect from your members. Show them how to resolve problems in a positive and appropriate manner and how they can influence future events by presenting their concerns and ideas to the appropriate individuals.

Let members know when you disapprove of their behavior or practices. Let parents know when they are behaving in a manner which reflects poorly on the club and other members.

Support the show officials and help the shows run smoothly by helping out where possible and by encouraging your parents to become involved.

Remember to encourage and support your members but don't do the work for them. A show is a chance for them to exhibit all they have learned and developed through your guidance and teaching.

Reward your members - acknowledge the achievements of those who have been successful in showing and find ways to recognize other strengths and encourage those members who are not as successful at showing.

Encourage members to be involved in ways beyond showing, whether it is preparing displays, doing public presentations, or serving in other roles that helps develop individuals with multiple abilities.

Finally, relax and enjoy yourself at events and show members that the camaraderie and friendships that occur are as important as the rewards in the ring.

### ***FURTHER INFORMATION***

Ask your Extension Educator if you can look at the resource notebook for your animal project which has a copy of the project manuals, fact sheets, events, and regulations pertaining to that species. Some fact sheets that you might find helpful are:

#### **Animal Management and Safety**

- How to Get Started in the... (horse, dairy)
- 4-H Animal Owner Responsibilities - Residue Avoidance

#### **Showing**

- The 4-H Horse Show - The Showperson
- The 4-H Horse Show - Show Planning
- Caring for Animals in a Public Setting
- Ethics and Sportsmanship
- Guidelines for Superintendents and Judges at 4-H Animal Shows

#### **Working with Youth**

- Working With All Youth in 4-H
- Reducing Risk for 4-H Volunteer Leaders

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