



Introduction to the NH 4-H Working Steer Project Fact Sheet

The 4-H Working Steer Project allows youth the opportunity to train a pair of steers (castrated males) to work together as a team. Oxen are not a special breed of animal, but simply a working bovine (neutered bull). Technically, an “ox” is a mature individual age four years or more. Prior to reaching maturity they are called “working steers”. A single animal is an ox and the plural is oxen. This project is growing in popularity due to the numerous classes that a youth and their team can participate in.

Some of the classes offered at some NH Fairs include:

**Fitting and Showmanship *Cart Class *Best Matched *Best Trained Pair *Pulling Class*

The working steer project requires a long-term commitment, dedication and a strong desire to work consistently and frequently to effectively train teams of steers. Up to eight 4-H members, 12 and older, are selected with their teams to attend the New England Youth Working Steer Competition at the Eastern States Exposition (ESE or the Big E) with one alternate serving as a team assistant. This competition brings together the best young teamsters from throughout the New England area. The selection process is based on the performance by the youth and their team at two out of three qualifying shows: New Hampshire 4-H Working Steer Show, Stratham Fair and Cheshire Fair.

Youth must participate in a minimum of two qualifying shows to be eligible for ESE but may participate in all three if desired. An individual’s two highest scores of the three shows will be combined and averaged to determine their final score.

Required Participant Age: 8-18 as of January 1 of the current year (12 and older for ESE)

Required Animal Age: 4 - 6 months of age or older

Animal Vaccinations: Rabies vaccination – initial vaccination must be at least 30 days prior to shows or events and must be current (not more than 1 year). Animals must be healthy/free from signs of communicable disease prior to attending any show or event. Certificate of veterinary inspection may be required by some events and is required to bring an animal outside the state of NH.

Recommended Animal Vaccinations: Check with your veterinarian as vaccination and biosecurity recommendations change frequently.

Animal Identification: Permanent ID – Ear tag (preferred) or legible tattoo

Forms

4-H Online Animal Registration or Intent to Show Form: Must be complete with animal information and all signatures for ESE. **Due Date:** May 1st

Animal Borrowing Form (formerly Lease): Borrowing form must be complete with animal information and all signatures for ESE. **Due Date:** May 1st

Policies

NH 4-H Policy on Replacement Working Steer: If a 4-H member loses one part of the team or both animals in the team due to death, critical illness, or being deemed unsafe after the approval form deadline of May 1st it needs to be verified by a County 4-H staff member and a new Intent to Show Form needs to be submitted for the replacement animal/pair. The member has the choice to do one of the following: the member may replace the unusable half of the team with another animal or the member may choose a new team.

All replacement animals/teams must be approved by the 4-H Working Steer Advisory Committee. All members are encouraged to list possible alternate teams on their intent to show forms prior to May 1st.

If a 4-H member's animals are unable to be exhibited for any reason (illness, death, etc.) and they have other project animals listed on their approval form that are eligible, then there is never any substitution allowed.

Rabies Requirements for NH 4-H Animals: Upon the recommendation of the New Hampshire State Veterinarian, all mammals shown or exhibited at New Hampshire 4-H events *including fairs, shows, clinics, 4-H club meetings, county activities day or any other event sponsored by 4-H*, must have a current inoculation for rabies given at least 30 days prior to the event. A licensed veterinarian administered rabies vaccination is recommended.

Other health requirements vary by species and show. Individual shows and fairs may have additional vaccination and health requirements as recommended by the New Hampshire State Veterinarian's office. Always check the fair book for additional health requirements.

Resources

- UNH CE 4-H Working Steer Manual: http://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource002680_Rep3965.pdf
- Rural Heritage Ox Paddock: http://ruralheritage.com/ox_paddock/index.htm
- Selecting Oxen: http://ruralheritage.com/ox_paddock/oxselect.htm
- Tiller's International Tools and TechGuides: <http://www.tillersinternational.org/documents>
- What is an Ox?: http://ruralheritage.com/ox_paddock/ox_whatish.htm

For more information contact Mary Davis, State 4-H Animal and Agricultural Science Program Manager (603)862-2188 or Mary.Davis@unh.edu

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