

NH 4-H Livestock Auction Committee Meeting

January 30, 2016 9:30 am, NH Farm Bureau Office, Concord NH

Attendance:

Will DeWitte
Todd Hammond
Jennifer Winslow
Luke Winslow
Kerri Johnson
Caleb Johnson
Corie Bliss
Lauren Gardner
Sarah Gardner
Dot Perkins
Austin Grace
Lexy Grace
Dan Chute
Jamie Towne
Kelly Wright
Guy LaRochelle
Iris LaRochelle
Mary Davis
Jolee Chase
Michelle Bersaw

The meeting began with introductions of all present.

The date is confirmed for Sunday September 11th at the Hillsborough County Agricultural Fair in New Boston NH. Many flyers were handed out at Farm and Forest. The youth present were great at passing out the flyers and explaining the auction to the attendees.

Michelle asked what the group felt are the goals of the auction. The goals discussed were: 4-Hers learning to market themselves and their animals, to make a business plan, to budget, to better understand the local food movement, to understand the pre-sale feeding and care of the animal, to keep records and understand the risks and benefits of raising a market animal.

Processing of animals: Rick Lemay and Russ Atherton will hold slots for animals to be processed after.

Kelly is willing to work with a committee of advisors and youth to work on marketing. For example marketing grass fed vs. grain fed animals.

The Sheep Field Days on May 22nd will be changed to a Livestock Field Day. There will be weigh in of animals, workshops that will help the youth be prepared as well as trying to get a vet to talk about medications, body condition and education about marketing, nutrition and showing.

Multiple weigh in days for animals to get starting weight to determine rate of gain. Animals will be tagged at the time of weigh in.

- Guy LaRochelle's on April 9th (animals will need to stay outside gate for weighing/tagging and be returned to trucks/trailers during clinic)
- For sheep only at the Sheep and Wool Festival on May 14-15
- At Livestock Field Day May 22
- Weigh in at New Boston on May 29.
- There may be additional county-based weigh in opportunities

Swine will not be required to weigh in. All other species will. Youth will be required to attend a workshop in addition to weighing in.

The group asked for an explanation of the process so that everyone understands.

How the Auction Process Will Work

- Animals must be weighed and tagged with an ear tag. (Swine do not have to be weighed at time of tagging.) All tagging must be done by June 1st beef, goat, swine and sheep intent to show deadline
- 4-Hers who express an interest and attend a weighing/educational session will receive a booklet that contains educational information about how to care for and feed their animal and a section for record keeping.
- A leader will follow-up with each youth to ensure their questions are asked and they are using good practices.
- Youth keep record of weights (official starting weight, interim monthly weights [may be done with a weight tape]), expenses of animal, feed, bedding, vet care, etc.; other costs (shearing, transportation, etc.)
- Each 4-Her will market the program, asking prospective buyers to attend the auction, and asking for donations to the program. Donors would be able to hang a banner and/or have their name on the T-shirts.
- All male animals to be auctioned must be castrated.
- No garbage fed pigs.
- Goats with horns are acceptable.
- Animals will be required to meet health regulations, including rabies vaccination.
- Animals must be vaccinated, dewormed, handled, halter broke and healthy. (Exception: swine do not need to be halter broke)
- Each youth may sell 1 animal of each species (but can tag 3 of each species)
- Animals must receive a blue ribbon in the market class in order to go through the auction. Anyone receiving a red ribbon would be allowed to privately sell their animal; often the processors present would purchase them. Historically the judge is very helpful in educating the member why they did not receive a blue ribbon and changes to make in future years.
- Sometimes a buyer will donate an animal back. In that case the first amount goes to the 4-H member; the animal is put through the auction again and the money goes to the 4-H organization running the auction.
- Awards are given for records and rate of gain

- Other species will be considered for 2017. Some rabbit project members were interested, but they were unable to be at this meeting.
- It is possible there will not be enough 4-H animals, especially beef animals. A goal would be at least 5 feeder beef calves. Possibly invite FFA members or see if a lease arrangement could be worked out with a beef producer (or other species) and 4-Hers.
- Auction day logistics
 - Youth arrives with animal in morning (about 8 am)
 - Youth stay near animal/barn and greet prospective buyers
 - Youth/animals show in classes that day (must get a blue in market class). Need judge for lamb/goats and one each for beef and swine (or could have combined judge)
 - Brings a card introducing self and project (this is read at the auction)
 - Animals are auctioned in order of placing at the show
 - The youth will be introduced on the auction stand before his/her animal is sold.
 - Prior auctions have lasted about 45 minutes but can vary greatly based on number of animals and how much the auctioneer stretches it out.

Approximate numbers of animals:

5 calves

22- 24 lambs

8 pigs

8 goats

Total of 40-45 animals

Will explained the system in Michigan where he participated. The youth met with business owners face to face, bringing a letter about the program. The businesses were invited to the auction. They cultivated repeat business. There was PR to thank the supporters and buyers. After the auction, they held a pot luck/pig roast. They also had arrangements with processors so that the buyer did not have to house or transport the animal.

Todd asked who the target audience for the auction is. The consensus is that everyone is a potential buyer – businesses, individuals, families, etc. Even vegetarians often have friends who are interested in locally raised meat.

Next Steps:

- Create an auction application for each species
- Make sure the rules/requirements are listed on the application and/or booklets
- Revise the market lamb booklet and create similar booklets for other species
- Have a core group of youth and advisors work on marketing and advertising. Luke and Lauren are interested in this.
- Have tables at farmer's markets to promote the auction.
- Subcommittee chairpersons:
 - Sheep – Kelly

- Beef – Guy
- Goat – Sarah
- Swine – Will
- Resource people – Jamie, Dot, Kelly and Guy

Dot said that the focus with NH 4-H livestock projects is often showing. In order to produce the best quality meat, the focus needs to change to production of high quality meat animals vs. show animals. Pictures on flyers and all promotional materials should be of high quality animals. Participating in livestock judging would be a helpful component in selecting the best animals.

On April 9th Guy is offering a judging clinic at his farm including selection and reasons practice. All members interested in the auction are welcome to attend.

Cost to hold the auction:

- Marketing
- Judges
- Cost of admission for buyers
- Insurance
- Rental of certified scale
- Bookkeeper
- Awards
- There is no charge for facility rental

We could charge an entry fee (per animal) to offset some of the costs. Youth and volunteers are interested in requesting donations to help offset costs, especially for awards.

Guy asked if FFA members could be involved. The consensus was that they could if we needed additional animals to auction, but most FFA members with animals are also 4-H members.

The option of applying for a grant was discussed. The 4-H Foundation of NH grant deadline has passed for this year.

Goal date for completion of each species guide book is February 14th.

A letter will be written and available for the March meeting that youth can use to introduce the program to potential donors.

Mary will create a website where all resources will be available.

Mary passed out the flyers for AgDiscovery 2016 and encouraged youth to apply for the program and the transportation reimbursement grant from the 4-H Foundation of New Hampshire.

Next meeting will be held on March 6th, at 9:30 am at the NH Farm Bureau office in Concord.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Davis