



## Working with Youth of All Abilities at a 4-H Animal Science Show

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### **Introduction**

The goal of a 4-H animal science show is to provide an opportunity for all youth to exhibit the results of their animal science project work. All youth will participate in the same/similar classes. Youth with documented disabilities may receive a reasonable accommodation upon the request of parent, guardian or 4-Her. Reasonable accommodations allow youth to compete fully and fairly with other youth.

Accommodation requests should be made at the time of entry to allow plenty of time to arrange for accommodations. It is the responsibility of the show staff to work with youth (parent or guardian) needing an accommodation to see that a reasonable accommodation is made. Safety for all participants is the number one concern when considering and making accommodations.

### **Show Information Packets and Entry Forms**

Make sure that the show entry forms provides a space to request reasonable accommodations. Use the words “Do you require an accommodation in order to participate fully in this event?” Following the question, leave a space to indicate the accommodation needed or the name and contact information to request an accommodation. Be sure that the entry, and/or the information about accommodations needed are returned at least two weeks prior to the event. You may need those two weeks to prepare for the accommodation.

Accommodations such as adaptive equipment, ring assistance, or modified testing are examples of reasonable requests. When you receive an entry that indicates that the participant will require an accommodation, contact the participant or the person making the request to determine the exact accommodation requested if clarification or additional information is needed. Often the participant, 4-H leader, parent/guardian, or riding instructor, can clearly describe the accommodation needed. Never compromise safety to make a reasonable accommodation. Look for other ways to make accommodation that do not diminish safety.

It is important that all show personnel respect the privacy of every participant. Information regarding a child’s personal situation or disability is confidential. Any information you must have in order to assist the child with full participation is used for that purpose only.

The show staff should work with the 4-H member and their family, the 4 -H leader, and their county Extension staff member to see that all participants are entered in the correct classes.

Modifications to equipment and/or medical equipment that are necessary for a child’s safe and fair participation are permitted; the accommodation must be agreed upon prior to the show. Such modifications (accommodations) might include, but are not limited to, side walkers, interpreters,

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adaptive equipment, or verbal or modified testing. Youth requiring accommodation must request this at least two weeks in advance of the show (as indicated on the entry form).

### **Participation in Quizzes/Tests and Animal Judging Classes**

Often at 4-H animal shows a general knowledge quiz is given. Some youth may have a disability which interferes with their ability to show what they know through a written test. Modified tests or test procedures are the most frequent accommodation needed.

Accommodation in the form of modified testing appropriate for youth with learning disabilities, visual difficulties, difficulty writing, etc.

Reasonable test accommodations may include

- Test readers and/or scribes. Readers and/or scribes are to read the test exactly and scribe exactly what the youth answered without giving hints or altering the answer in any way. Provide an area away from other participants to minimize distractions to all youth.
- Large print
- Extra time
- Quiet area to take the test
- Modified tests
- Administering a test that is below the member's chronological age (for example a senior
- Use of technology.
- Judging contestants may require extra time, scribe to complete judging cards or a helper to assist them in moving about the ring.

### **Show Class Procedures**

There are a variety of things that a show staff can do to make the show experience a positive one for the youth involved. Repeating directions is very helpful to many youth. Don't hesitate to repeat the command several times.

Whenever possible (for example when there is a showmanship pattern), provide directions well in advance. When giving verbal instructions to a group, don't assume every child understood what you said. You can be sure a participant understands directions if you ask the child "tell me what it is you are going to do." The child will respond with what they believe their instructions to be. This helps those with learning disabilities or who are hard of hearing a chance to clearly understand the instructions and compete equally with those who process information well or who can hear well.

Feedback is an important part of the 4-H show experience for youth of all abilities. Provide each participant the opportunity to see the correct answers to quizzes and the correct judging class placings, and judge's cards or to hear judge's comments. Judge's comments must be appropriate, and should focus on ability, not disability or accommodations.

Make sure to provide all youth with adequate "wait time" after asking a question or giving directions. Give children the opportunity to process directions or questions before they respond.

When a child in a show is participating through the use of an assistant or adaptive equipment, it is important that they are judged on their abilities, and that judges look past the adaptive equipment.

County or State Extension personnel can assist show superintendents and staff in preparing for, arranging and making reasonable accommodations.