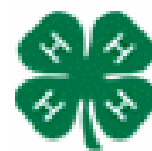




San Diego County's 4-H Tips



What is the Real Purpose of 4-H Animal Projects

The primary purpose of youth raising animals in the 4-H Youth Development Program is to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development of the young person. A secondary purpose is to teach young people how to feed and care for animals. In the process of feeding and caring for an animal, young people have the opportunity to develop many positive character traits.

The *Josephson Institute of Ethics*, as part of its nationwide CHARACTER COUNTS education program has developed a curriculum called, "Exercising Character." This curriculum identifies six core values which may help to better describe the purpose of the 4-H animal projects. The curriculum also presents the idea that people develop and strengthen character by practicing certain behaviors, just as muscles are built through exercise.

Therefore, the purpose of the 4-H animal science program is to provide opportunities for young people to develop life skills and leadership which includes positive character traits. Those character traits and some practices in 4-H animal projects that build character and life skills in 4-H members are:

1.) **TRUSTWORTHINESS** includes honesty, promise keeping and loyalty. The youth:

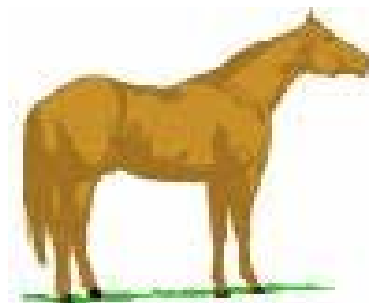
- feeds, waters and cleans the animals daily.
- adheres to deadlines regarding possession requirements, due dates for reports.
- attends meetings or informs others if not able to attend the meeting in advance.
- follows through with commitments.
- adheres to withdrawal times on drugs, feed supplements and de-wormers.
- uses only approved drugs and recommended feeds.

2.) **RESPECT** includes courtesy and proper treatment of people, animals and things. The youth:

- handles and treats animals humanely.
- cares for animals and equipment properly.
- listens to and follows advice of 4-H leaders and teen leaders.
- recognizes that the animal project is dependent on the 4-Her to provide daily feed, water and care.

3.) **RESPONSIBILITY** includes the pursuit of excellence, accountability and perseverance. The youth:

- feeds and waters the animals daily (even on the busy, difficult days)
- goes beyond providing the daily needs of the animal in giving additional time and attention to raise a healthy animal.
- adheres to deadlines for forms and reports.
- freely accepts responsibility when the youth makes a mistake.
- asks others if they need help and assists where needed.
- never gives up in completing the project at home or in the show ring (perseverance).



(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

- 4.) **FAIRNESS** involves consistently applying rules and standards appropriate for different age groups and ability levels. Does not expect preferential treatment. The youth:
- feeds only approved animal rations.
 - uses only approved drugs in the approved way.
 - accepts winning or losing with grace.
 - follows recommended and humane procedures when handling, grooming and exhibiting animals.
- 5.) **CARING** includes the well-being of people and things in a young person's world. It denotes action and not just feeling. The youth:
- feeds, waters and cleans up after animals daily.
 - provides clean barn/living space for animals.
 - treats animals humanely at all times.
 - helps other members in caring for their animals appropriately when needed.
- 6.) **CITIZENSHIP** includes making the home, club, community and country a better place to live for themselves and others. The youth:
- accepts constructive instruction.
 - accepts winning and losing with grace.
 - considers neighbors and co-members requests regarding housing or raising of animals.
 - helps others at shows, at meetings and at home.
 - is an active and responsible part of your club's team.
 - teach less experienced and younger members. Sharing your knowledge and skills.
 - treats animals humanely at all times.
 - ensures that the product you produce (meat, fiber, eggs, etc.) is safe for use.
 - strives to follow the spirit of the law not just the letter of the law.

The opportunities for exercising the positive character traits listed are not intended to be complete but to express the idea that the 4-H Animal Projects offer numerous ways for young people to build character and "Make the Best Better" which is the 4-H Motto. It is the responsibility of adults to ensure that all actions that youth are practicing are building positive character traits and life skills. The list is offered to help youth, parents and leaders recognize that if an adult does any part of the work necessary for a successful project, the youth has less opportunity to build positive life skills. While recognizing that a young person must have some help, the idea is for parents and adult leaders to insist that the child does all he or she is capable of doing. The adult also needs to help direct and advise the youth to take on those animal projects they are developmentally capable of raising or that they have the adequate resources of raising humanely.

It should be pointed out that the tasks of daily feeding and watering contribute to the strengthening of at least four of the six core values. Working cooperatively with family, neighbors, and other 4-H participants is a part of all of the core values. It is important to also recognize that the size of the animal does not have any effect on the value of the project for the young people to develop character and practice life skills. Therefore, a young person may learn the same things and have the same opportunity to develop and exercise strong character and life skills with a rabbit project as with a beef or horse project.

Adapted from a brochure produced by Louisiana State Cooperative Extension Service.

