

# TEXAS 4-H LIVESTOCK MENTOR PROGRAM

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Texas 4-H Livestock Mentor Program is to provide additional help and support through individual consultation with 4-H members/families and group learning opportunities. Mentors will provide assistance under the direction and supervision of the county Extension agent and may conduct project visits, clinics, workshops, and assistance at local and major livestock shows. All mentor activities/assignments will be clearly presented in a "County 4-H Livestock Mentor Plan."

### *The goals for the program are to:*

- Increase learning opportunities for the new and inexperienced 4-H members/families.
- Increase the number of youth participating in the 4-H livestock program.
- Increase retention of new and inexperienced 4-H members in the 4-H livestock program.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

A 4-H Livestock Mentor should have adequate experience and expertise to assist new and inexperienced 4-Hers in the livestock program to help them meet their goals.

## RECRUITMENT

County Extension Agents should work one-on-one with volunteers to recruit them to attend the Livestock Mentor Training. It is not the intention of the training program that volunteers are recruited through mass media efforts. Personal recruitment will help ensure the volunteer is qualified and committed to attend the training and fulfill the role and carry out the purpose of the 4-H Livestock Mentor Program.

## COST

It is important that the volunteer makes a commitment to the training program by personally contributing to some of the cost of the training. However, counties are encouraged to explore various avenues of garnering support to assist volunteers with the costs associated with attending the training (i.e. registration, lodging, mileage).

Regional planning groups for the 4-H Livestock Mentor trainings may secure sponsorships to help offset a portion of the training cost. The registration fees will be determined by the regional planning groups. Consideration will be given to cost of training and funds received from sponsorships. There is not a standard fee for all mentor trainings.

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating



## TRAINING

4-H Livestock Mentor trainings for beef, swine, sheep, goats, and small animals will be conducted every other year (2012, 2014, 2016) in all regions in the state. A 4-H Horse Mentor training will be conducted every year and will rotate within the regions.

## COACHING ROLE

One of the items that will be more heavily emphasized in 4-H Livestock Mentor trainings is the role of the adult volunteer as a "mentor" or "coach" to youth. Becoming a successful coach takes practice and patience from adult leaders. Adults who are successful coaches:

- have a defined coaching philosophy and objectives,
- understand the importance of effective communication,
- provide positive reinforcement, and
- motivate youth.

## SUCCESS STORIES

Since 2001, over 300 4-H volunteers have participated in Livestock Volunteer Trainings.

*"Texas AgriLife Extension's Master Sheep and Goat Volunteer Program is one of the best tools that County Extension Agents can use to positively affect the lives of Texans. As Extension Agents, we rely on volunteers to assist in making program efforts successful. The Master Volunteer Program trains people to teach the correct way with research-based information. Upon completion of the in-depth program, volunteers are equipped with the most current information that will allow them to successfully assist young people and their families with livestock projects. For example, the Sterling County Master Goat Volunteer spends one-on-one time with beginning families on all aspects of the meat goat project ranging from selection to feeding to showmanship. As an agent, I cannot devote the personal time to beginning feeders like he can. He has been a tremendous help to me, and as a result, we will be able to keep these type of clientele in the program."*

Chad Coburn  
County Extension Agent

*Volunteers have stated the following:*

*"That the "kid" is the project. The show animal is their project."*

*"I was very happy to see that, with all the information and resources given, the focus of the program was on helping make our 4-H programs enrich the youth involved."*

