

Conclusion

What a responsibility! While these lessons will not answer all the questions you will face, they should give you a framework to build on.

The 4-H livestock project is one of the most rewarding projects any young person and family can do together. It takes total commitment from the 4-H member, parents, county Extension agents, volunteers, and many others who support each other.

Remember, livestock showing is about a lot more than showing. It also helps young people learn about the livestock industry and enhances life skills such as accepting responsibility, setting goals, developing self-discipline and self-motivation, building self-esteem, and making good decisions. As the leader of these projects, you should constantly remind young people and their families of the importance of these life skills, and also demonstrate them in your teaching.

Whether a project is a market or breeding project, whether it lasts all year or just 40 days, adult leaders should promote the development of life skills. It is our job to make sure we concentrate on developing “blue ribbon kids” vs. “blue ribbon animals” and to “keep our focus on the right end of the halter.”

Remember, you are not alone. The most important contact you have is your county Extension agent or agricultural science teacher, who can keep you going and moving your group forward. Communication is the key. Most issues or problems that may present themselves can be resolved by communicating with your county Extension agent or ag. science teacher. You should think of that person as your team manager and advisor. With their help, the sky is the limit.

Good luck, and remember: “What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us” (Ralph Waldo Emerson).