

## Talking Points

Assist your 4-H or FFA members in practicing to tell their story of why they are involved in 4-H or FFA, why they take livestock projects and how they care for their animals. Make sure that members feel comfortable addressing basic questions about their animal and how they care for it. (Examples are breed, age, what they feed and basic production practices.)

*\* See the youth guide for more specific talking points as a resource on animal welfare.*

## For More Information

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# Leaders' Guide on Animal Welfare for Fairs and Exhibitions



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## Leaders' Guide on Animal Welfare for Fairs and Exhibitions

Incidents of undercover activities, violence and vandalism to agriculture and other animal use institutions in the name of animal rights have increased in the past few years.

The following information will provide a general overview of practices to help manage attacks on the agricultural community at fairs and exhibitions. Security protocols **MUST** be in place, and 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors need to be advised as to how to handle animal agriculture issues and activists.

### Practices to Assist Your 4-H and FFA Livestock Exhibitors

- Review animal welfare policies for your club and/or county. As an example, the policies of the American Veterinary Medical Association are listed below.
  - The responsible use of animals for human purpose, such as companionship, food, fiber, recreation, work, education, exhibition, and research conducted for the benefit of both humans and animals, is consistent with the Veterinarian's Oath.
  - Decisions regarding animal care, use and welfare shall be made by balancing scientific knowledge and professional judgment with consideration of ethical and societal values.
  - Animals must be provided water, food, proper handling, health care,

and an environment appropriate to their care and use, with thoughtful consideration for their species-typical biology and behavior.

- Animals should be cared for in ways that minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering.
  - Procedures related to animal housing, management, care and use should be continuously evaluated, and when indicated, refined or replaced.
  - Conservation and management of animal populations should be humane, socially responsible, and scientifically prudent.
  - Animals shall be treated with respect and dignity throughout their lives and, when necessary, provided a humane death.
  - The veterinary profession shall continually strive to improve animal health and welfare through scientific research, education, collaboration, advocacy, and the development of legislation and regulations.
- Inform and educate every club member about the proper care and handling of animals.
  - Enforce animal welfare policies.
  - Designate a spokesperson for each species in each club if possible.
    - Inform exhibitors and committee members that all possible inquiries be handled by the designated spokesperson.
    - Create a positive message plan for spokespeople to follow.

- Contact barn superintendents and law enforcement officers that will be present at the fair/exhibition to inform them of potential problems by activists.
- Establish a protocol to follow in the event of confrontation or direct action (i.e. letting animals loose, property destruction, verbal confrontation).
  - Advise members to not handle any confrontational event alone. Find a club spokesperson, fair superintendent or law enforcement officer.
- Advise your participants to ignore activists and any protests.
  - They seek media attention and confrontation will only aid them further in their goal.
- Encourage members to stay positive and tell their story.
  - DO NOT entertain the activists' questions if they are confrontational; concentrate on your story about why you are involved in 4-H or FFA, how you take care of your animals and how farmers in general care for their animals.
  - If the activist does not stop, find the designated spokesperson for the club, a barn superintendent or law enforcement officer.
  - Advise older members to assist younger exhibitors if they are confronted or asked difficult questions by the general public.