

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

4-H youth learn to improve market projects through quality assurance

AT A GLANCE

Market animals are more than just a 4-H project; they are part of the food chain. 4-H is using Quality Assurance training to help youth improve management and production of their livestock.

The Situation

Each 4-H youth who produces a market animal beef, goat, sheep or swine, is a contributor to the food supply. For the most part youth members are very diligent about taking the best care of their animals and therefore producing a high-quality meat product. To help ensure that all members are producing a safe, wholesome meat product the Kootenai/Shoshone County livestock leaders requested a mandatory Quality Assurance training for all Kootenai/Shoshone 4-H youth who plan to sell an animal at the North Idaho State Fair in Coeur d'Alene. While youth are doing a good job in raising market animals, University of Idaho Extension staff and leaders wanted to make sure that youth are applying current; research based best management practices and understand the implications of poor management decisions.

Our Response

During the summer of 2017, 4-H Youth Development in Kootenai County provided seven face-to-face trainings for 224 youth. In addition to the face-to-face option, youth also had the opportunity to go online and complete the new Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (yqca.org) training and certificate program. In total, 284 youth received quality assurance training



4-H youth participating in hands on Quality Assurance activities.

prior to exhibiting and selling their market animals at the 2017 North Idaho State Fair.

The face-to-face trainings covered the Quality Assurance topics of record keeping, veterinary client patient relationships, production practices, care and handling, feeding, biosecurity and ethics. To keep youth engaged, all topics were taught using hands on and interactive learning experiences. Activities included things like identifying unmarked oranges, tracing disease spread using candies, matching games and more.

Program Outcomes

In order to establish an initial knowledge base and growth during the training, all face-to-face training participants took a pre and posttest. The results of

these tests will help to direct content for future trainings, ensuring that areas of lower competence can be addressed. Data from the 2017 pre and post testing showed that on average the participants increased their knowledge score by 7.8 percent (average pretest was 62.7 percent and average posttest was 70.5 percent) as a result of the training. In addition to testing, teaching evaluations and participant feedback were collected. Quality assurance elements that participants plan to put into practice include:

- Making a biosecurity plan
- Have an emergency plan
- Better feeding schedule
- Cleaning my animal's pen more frequently
- Work with animal more
- Better records keeping
- To correctly administer vaccinations
- Get to know my vet
- Exercise my animal more

These are all elements youth should adopt or improve upon to support the quality production of animals intended for consumption.

The Future

Moving forward all market animal 4-H members will be required to participate in some form of quality assurance training or assessment. Topic areas where there is a lack of knowledge demonstrated by posttest assessment will be a focus for new trainings. New educational opportunities will also be developed and offered when additional research based information becomes available. As many youth participate in market projects for multiple years, the possibility of providing a rigorous test for each 4-H age division is being explored. This would allow youth to be exempt from annual training in that specific age division.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sharla Wilson, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Kootenai County • 208-446-1680 • swilson@uidaho.edu

20-18-swilson-quality-assurance • 8/18