

4-H livestock participants learn the importance of quality assurance

AT A GLANCE

Quality assurance is a promise youth make to provide a safe, wholesome food product for a consumer. Youth learn the important role they play as a producer of livestock in food production.

The Situation

Youth raised market animal projects continue to be popular in the University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development program. Once a youth purchases an animal for a livestock project, they become a livestock industry member. That project animal becomes food for someone. These youth are responsible for ensuring the product they sell will be a safe, wholesome quality product on a dinner plate. Many do not understand the role they play in end-product quality because when they sell the animal at the market animal sale that is the end of their 4-H year.

Our Response

To provide youth with an understanding of the importance of their role in raising an animal has on consumer satisfaction, quality assurance education opportunities were provided. Youth were taught that quality assurance is a promise that they make by being involved in the livestock industry to raise the animal to be a safe, wholesome product for the consumer. Youth learned that when a consumer considers a product to be high quality, they will choose to buy that product over another. If the consumer purchases do meet the



These 4-H youth are gaining hands-on quality assurance experience. Photo taken by Terrell Sorensen, University of Idaho.

standards they expected, they will buy a different product from someone else.

Youth were taught proper quality assurance as a producer means the following:

- To provide proper nutrition to enable the animal to grow and develop properly.
- To provide proper housing and pen size to permit the animal to grow in a safe environment.
- To use approved health practices which include correct injection techniques, drug usage and dosage, residues and withdrawal times, to keep the animal healthy.

- To make sure the animal is managed to have their needs met, be comfortable and market-ready at fair time.

Youth were able to participate in a cupcake eating activity. Some of the cupcakes had the flavor altered to depict that an improper practice had taken place to affect the eating experience quality. The youth were able to sample a cupcake prepared following a recipe and one that had mustard added to the middle. Youth were able to understand the importance of quality assurance first-hand.

Program Outcomes

Before delivering the information and participation in the activity, youth were given a multiple-choice pre-test and asked to choose the best answer to determine how much the participants already knew about quality assurance. Following the quality assurance discussion and activity, the identical post-test was readministered to determine knowledge gain.

- The youth had the highest score increase when asked, “Who is responsible for providing safe and wholesome products to consumers?”
- Youth greatly improved when asked to describe “What Quality Assurance in 4-H Livestock Program is?”

All the scores show an increase in knowledge gained for each test question.

Increase in test scores from pre-test to post-test. N=45

Question	Pre-test	Post-test
1. Quality Assurance in 4-H Livestock Program means:	41	43
2. Who is responsible for providing a safe, wholesome product to consumers? (Answer was all the above)	9	30
3. Quality Assurance in 4-H Livestock Programs is:	16	29
4. Which answer is correct when you think about feeding your 4-H animal?	35	45
5. Which of the following has an impact on the product quality of your 4-H animal? (Answer was all the above)	12	19

The Future

Idaho’s 4-H youth will continue to participate in livestock quality assurance training to help them understand their role in the meat production chain. Each year youth enroll in market animal projects for the first time. That brings about the need to continually offer quality assurance training on a regular basis.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Oneida County 4-H

University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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