

Writing Stock Sale Buyer Thank You Notes

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By this time, you have undoubtedly reviewed “Marketing: Writing Stock Sale Buyer Invitations and so Much More.” Hopefully, that provided you with valuable tips in developing a 4-H livestock marketing plan, including developing potential customers. Granted, some years may be more prosperous than others – *welcome to the real world within the livestock industry*. Fortunately for most youth members, if they followed the principles in the previous “Marketing” document, they usually will realize at least a modest profit.

Before we move into the details of writing buyer thank you notes, there is one critical topic that must be addressed:

On rare occasion, a careless and misguided member, parent or leader is heard complaining about the sale price received. Such actions are very damaging to buyer relations and youth livestock auctions in general. These individuals have forgotten that any amount received over the base/market price is a “gift”; their complaints not only disrespect the buyer but the entire 4-H program. Collectively, we need to respectfully ask such individuals to immediately cease such childish comments and either develop a level of class that 4-H programs stand for – or encourage them to find another youth program where that level of mentality is welcomed. Each of us has a responsibility to speak out against such inappropriate behavior. Enough said.

Now that you have actually concluded the sale of your 4-H market animal(s), it is vitally important to prepare a thank you note to those individuals or businesses that supported you through this year’s 4-H experience. But what should I include? The following list may help provide some ideas:

- Sincerely thank buyer for purchase of your animal
- You might share specific plans you have for use of the sale proceeds
 - o *Purchase of next year’s project animal*
 - o *Saving for education after high school*
 - o *Enrolling in and exploring other 4-H project offerings*
- Share one or two interesting things you learned about this year
- Invite them to participate in future Stock Sales
 - o *Even if you are graduating, other members could benefit from their support.*

Below are two examples of buyer thank you notes. Carefully compare the content and place yourself in the buyer’s position. Which note would you prefer receiving? Which individual (Jason or Jeffrey) would you be more likely to support in the future? Why?

August 28, 2013

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for buying my animal. While I didn’t get as much as some of the other members, I appreciate your support. I plan to take a market hog again next year.

Jason Clover

August 28, 2013

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you very much for buying my market hog at the 4-H Stock Sale. I know that economic times are difficult and appreciate you generously bidding \$1.30/pound which was well above the floor price.

As a result, I have been able to reimburse my parents for the animal purchase and feed costs. I placed the remaining money into savings to help with purchasing next year's project animal, and to help towards my college education.

This year I learned a great deal about responsibility from the daily care and management of my project animal. I really enjoyed learning more about the different amino acids related to swine nutrition.

Thanks again for your wonderful support. I hope to see you again at the 2014 North Idaho Fair. Your ongoing support of our local 4-H members and programs is truly appreciated.

**Sincerely
Jeffrey Clover**

The level of detail within buyer thank you notes will differ based on the age of the 4-H member (certainly there should be more depth as youth get older); it is important to remember that your buyer has provided you with a substantial financial gift. While a brief thank you note may be sufficient, if you are looking to retain a potential buyer for future years, providing greater detail is often beneficial in helping to build long-term buyer relationships.

Best wishes as you continue to develop a successful 4-H marketing strategy, and strive to maintain a high quality standard when communicating with current or prospective buyers. Remember, your actions reflect on the entire 4-H program.