The opportunities for developing character listed within this pamphlet are not intended to be complete, but rather to express the idea that youth livestock projects offer numerous ways for young people to build character----which is the ultimate goal of the 4-H livestock program.

Parents, leaders and other adults have the responsibility to ensure that all activities youth participate in help them build character and other life skills. This list is offered to help youth and parents understand that when an adult does a youth's project work for them, this diminishes the young person's educational experience and their opportunities for growth and development.
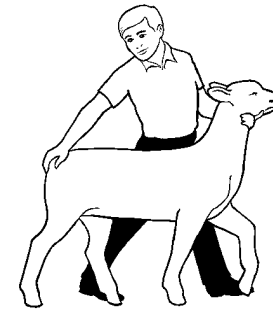
A very young child may not be able to do all the tasks necessary to prepare an animal for a show. However, parents and leaders should expect each youth to perform all the tasks within his/her ability.

The daily tasks of caring for an animal contribute to the development of the core values of character. The size or species of animal does not have any effect on the value of the project. Youth learn the same things and have the same opportunities to exercise character with a rabbit as with a steer.

4-H is part of the CHARACTER COUNTS![SM] Coalition that is committed to helping youth develop the Six Pillars of Character.[SM] More than 450 cities, the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Education and many other organizations have banned together and have agreed that these character traits are needed by today's youth.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

4-H Youth Development Program

What is the real purpose of

4-H LIVESTOCK PROJECTS?

What is the real purpose of 4-H LIVESTOCK PROJECTS?

Youth livestock programs have long been considered as model programs for youth development and for public understanding of American agriculture. The obvious purpose of 4-H animal projects is to teach young people how to feed, fit and exhibit their animals. The more important purpose is to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development.

The ultimate purpose or major goal of the 4-H Livestock Program is to provide opportunities for young people to develop the character and life skills they will need to become successful and contributing members of society.

The Josephson Institute of Ethics has identified Six Pillars of Character in its nationwide **CHARACTER COUNTS!** program. These six core values help to better describe and understand the value of 4-H livestock projects. Through practicing certain behaviors, people develop and strengthen their character. In the following examples, character-building livestock practices are identified for each Pillar of Character.

CHARACTER COUNTS! and the Six Pillars of Character are service marks of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. References used with permission. www.charactercounts.org.
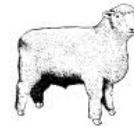
1. Trustworthiness - *includes honesty, promise keeping and loyalty.*
• provide feed and water to animals daily
• adhere to 4-H program ownership rules
• adhere to all withdrawal times for feed, medication, dewormers, etc.
• use only approved medications or others only on the advice of a licensed veterinarian
• support the ethical decisions of fellow members, leaders, judges and other officials
• keep and complete accurate records
• participate in herdsmanship duties

2. Respect - *includes proper treatment of and courtesy to all people, animals and things.*
• provide proper handling and humane treatment of all animals
• give proper care to all animals
• listen to and follow the advice of parents, leaders and advisors
• accept the points of view of others
• recognize that 4-H project animals depend upon 4-H members for their care

3. Responsibility - *includes the pursuit of excellence, accountability and perseverance.*
• feed and water daily, even on difficult and busy days
• go the extra mile—give additional time and attention to produce a high-quality project
• adhere to deadlines for stock shows
• never give up
• set goals
• take pride in the personal efforts
• participate in herdsmanship duties
• set a good example for other youth

4. Fairness - *includes consistently applying all rules and standards appropriately for different age groups and ability levels.*
• keep an open mind toward new ideas
• look at and listen to both sides of an issue
• feed only approved livestock rations
• use only approved medications or others only on the advice of a licensed veterinarian
• win and lose with the same grace and dignity
• follow recommended behavior and conduct procedures and practices in the show ring
• follow recommended fitting and grooming practices when preparing an animal for the show ring

5. Caring - *includes promoting the well being of people. Caring denotes action, not just feelings.*
• help younger and less experienced youth
• feed and water animals on a daily basis
• provide clean facilities for all animals
• always treat all animals humanely
• treat others like you want to be treated

6. Citizenship - *includes making one's home, community and country a better place for everyone to live.*
• accept and follow instructions
• win and lose with grace and dignity
• help younger and less experienced youth
• be a team player
• treat animals humanely
• ensure all animals are safe to consume
• participate in herdsmanship duties

Remember, having animals is not a right – it is a privilege!