



Making the Character Connection with...

## Production Livestock

Beef  
Dairy  
Goats (Dairy/Meats)  
Livestock Judging  
Poultry  
Rabbits  
Sheep  
Swine

Being a person of good character means you follow the Six Pillars of Character<sup>SM</sup> every day. Taking care of animals requires a lot of patience and responsibility. While you are completing your livestock project think of all the ways you can demonstrate good character. You may not see how your project can demonstrate character, but take a moment to think of a way it might relate. You may have the opportunity to exhibit your livestock in a competitive show. Following the rules and being willing to learn from the experience rather than focusing on winning shows a people you are working on bettering yourself. Any time you show you have to understand and follow a set of rules (Fairness and Responsibility) and you need to be willing to show your animal love and care no matter the outcome. All of these are opportunities to demonstrate qualities of good character; it's up to you to make sure you are living and showing your animals by the Six Pillars of Character.

Projects in this Connection have been grouped because they have related information. There may not be an activity for every project listed however at least one of the activities can be adapted for each project. Be creative; let this be a stepping stone for many ways of teaching character.

### **This Character Connection contains:**

- **Explanation of how the Six Pillars of Character relate to the Production Livestock projects.**
- **Activities suggesting how to demonstrate good character while enhancing your knowledge of Livestock.**
- **Questions to help you think of other ways to demonstrate good character in everyday life.**

# Character Connection: Production Livestock

Trustworthiness	Responsibility	Caring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Show only animals you have raised and trained</li> <li>✓ Follow the rules of the competition</li> <li>✓ Only use approved products for show</li> <li>✓ Always enter and show the same animals and in the correct classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Meet all obligations to sales centers and buyers</li> <li>✓ Set a good example for other showmen</li> <li>✓ Work hard and don't quit if results don't turn out the way you want</li> <li>✓ Get your entries in on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Show consideration for other's livestock</li> <li>✓ Help less experienced showmen practice before competitions</li> <li>✓ Thank people who help you care for your livestock</li> </ul>
Respect	Fairness	Citizenship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Judge other participants on their character not on the quality of their livestock</li> <li>✓ Be understanding of other's viewpoints</li> <li>✓ Always be courteous in show rings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use only stall space paid for and assigned to you</li> <li>✓ Follow the rules set by the organization running the show</li> <li>✓ Don't question consequences if they are a result of your choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Learn the rules and make sure you and others follow them</li> <li>✓ Do what's best for everyone</li> <li>✓ Protect the environment by disposing of waste according to law</li> <li>✓ Be open to learning from others</li> </ul>

# Character Connection: Production Livestock

**Activity:** Know the Rules

## **DO:**

One of the main reasons you probably chose to enroll in a Livestock project is the opportunity to show your animal at local and state competitions. Every show you enter has different rules and regulations and you can help your fellow 4-H members keep track of all the different rules. Make a list of the competitions members of your 4-H club usually enter; your county fair, the state fair, and breed association shows. Once you have your list start finding the rules and regulations for the contests. You can find your information about your county fair from your county extension office, state fair regulations in the state fair rule book and rules for associations on their websites. Go through the rules and make note of the rules that are specific to that show, or different from other shows. There may be different weight, age, gender, breed qualifications to enter. There may also be different rules about when you can arrive to a show and what you are allowed to bring with you.

For each competition make a list of "Important Facts". Create a book of rules for your club and county members to use. Make sure to include the registration forms for each, contact information so participants can get answers to questions and your list of rules and regulations for each contest. Share your book with club members so everyone will know how they can participate too.

## **REFLECT:**

1. What was the biggest difficulty for you when putting together the rule book?
2. Why do you think each competition has a different set of rules?
3. How do you think you can impact other's experiences just by making sure they know all the rules first?
4. How does it make you feel to know your club members will be starting off knowing the rules? How do you feel knowing you may have made it possible for other's to participate in shows they didn't know about?

## **APPLY:**

A major part of exhibiting livestock is knowing the rules and being willing to follow them. By putting together a rule book for other participants in livestock projects you ensure that everyone has the same information. A major part of playing fair is making sure everyone starts on the same page. This means that by helping everyone know and understand the rules before entering a competition, you showed that you care about making competitions as fair as possible. Next time you have a new member join your club or project area help them understand how 4-H and other competitions work so they too will know what to expect when entering a show.



# Character Connection: Production Livestock

**Activity:** Know Your Beef/Pork/Lamb

## **DO:**

It's time for you to show others that you know more about your animals than just how to care for them. Because you raise livestock, you probably know about the process of getting animals from farm to kitchen. With the members of other livestock projects in your club (Swine, Sheep, Beef, Dairy, Goats) plan a matching game to educate members of your 4-H club about how animals make it to their dinner plates. With the members of your project area, create a list of the process your animal has to go through from show-ring to food products. Make sure to include every step in the process. Then, with the members of the other livestock projects facilitate your matching game at your next club meeting. To play the game, first write the steps out on individual pieces of paper. Then, mix up the steps for each animal type. Make sure you have all of the project groups mixed in together. Have your club members figure out the order for each animal. As they go through the game give them more information about each step. Most importantly, help them gain a respect for the process of getting their food and help them to see how many people are involved in the process. Also stress the importance of being grateful for what we have, and not judging people on what they choose to eat.

## **REFLECT:**

1. How does it make you feel to be a leader in your club?
2. How else can you help others understand how much work it takes for them to go to the grocery store and buy meats and dairy products?
3. Do you think you have changed anyone's minds or attitudes about livestock projects?
4. What would you say to someone wanting to raise livestock? What would they need to know about showing and selling animals?
5. How do you use the money you earn from showing and selling livestock? How else might someone use this money?

## **APPLY:**

People who raise livestock often have a difficult task, showing an animal one day and selling it the next. Educating people on why you do this is a way to help them see how their food makes it to their homes. Helping people to be grateful for what they have shows that you want others to respect what others do to make this possible for them.

Educating your club members also means that you understand the importance of helping people make their own decisions, but making sure they have all the information they need to do so.

Now, every time you sit down to eat an animal product, consider learning more about the people who do so much to make that moment possible. Showing respect for these people is an important character trait, particularly when you yourself want acknowledgment for your work in raising livestock.



# Character Connection: Production Livestock

**Activity:** Therapy Animals

## **DO:**

Cats, dogs and horses all make great therapy animals. Use your companion animal for good by training your pet to be a therapy animal. Therapy animals are trained to be relaxed around groups of people and to obey their owners in new situations. Any animal used for therapy can be used in nursing homes, hospitals, schools and retirement homes to brighten the day of the residents. Contact your local therapy animal organization to find out what you need to train your animal to work in therapy. As you train your animal, keep in mind that it will be responsible for making others happy and showing them that people in the community care for them.

After you train your pet, find a local nursing home, day care, school, or hospital that will allow you and your pet to visit. As you share your animal with others, talk to them about why you chose to train your animal for use in therapy. Listen to their stories about why they appreciate your gesture, and what your visits mean to them. Set up a schedule with the organization of when you can bring your animal back and share more with the residents and students.

## **REFLECT:**

1. How does sharing your animals with others, particularly those who are sick and elderly make you feel?
2. What did you notice about your pet when it was volunteering?
3. Can you think of other ways you and your pet can make a difference in your community?

## **APPLY:**

Therapy animals have been proven to help people who are sick feel better and recover faster. Everyone enjoys having animals around and being around new environments and people is good for your pet. Now that your pet is a therapy animal, what are some other ways you and your pet can do good in your community. Pets are also used for search and rescue and to catch people breaking the law. Next time you have the opportunity to try something new with your animal, remember that sharing your animal with others shows them you care about both them and your pet.

