INTRODUCTION
The main goals of the University of Missouri Animal Sciences Youth Leadership Academy are to develop young leaders within the livestock industry and broaden their horizons to the far-reaching spectrum of careers offered in the animal sciences. The activities included are commodity tours, meeting with industry professionals, and leadership building activities. The participants are shown many different career paths in their four days at the academy including veterinary medicine, food processing, and even production agriculture. Students attending the academy receive the college-life experience; they stay in the residence halls at the University of Missouri where they are immersed in the culture of the university and the city of Columbia surrounding it.

HOW IT WORKS
• Twenty high school students are selected annually through an application process
• Post-camp participant survey administered face-to-face
  • Agree or disagree statements assessing career plans and perceived leadership
  • Open-ended questions seeking ideas for program improvement
  • 5-point Likert scale items assessing perceived values of trips and speakers

"I really enjoyed the leadership opportunities, meeting leaders in the livestock industry and the job outlook possibilities."

WHY IT WORKS
With a decline in young people pursuing a career in agriculture and an expected rise of earth’s population, raised levels in food production are required as well as pursuance in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. Leadership, communication, problem solving, and interpersonal skills are all necessary to be successful in the workplace; these skills can be more generally referred to as life skills (Cochran, Arnett, Ferrari, 2008). Academies and after school type programs have been very successful at promoting these life skills (Schwartz & Stolow, 2006). With this in mind, this academy learning experiences that focus on animal science while providing opportunities for building communication and interpersonal skills.

RESULTS/ IMPLICATIONS
To assess the effectiveness of this camp, we looked at student surveys which were given at the end of the academy to receive feedback on the camp experience. Overall the results were very promising; 73 of 75 participants surveyed over the past four years believed the academy helped them grow as a leader. 100 percent reported that they expanded their interest in animal science. This data suggests that the academy had a positive impact on participants, promoting life skills and career readiness. The data suggests that youth benefited from seeing new opportunities and career possibilities at MU Animal Sciences Youth Leadership Academy. Additionally, they grew their networks of similar age peers who are interested in agriculture and connected with industry leaders.

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