

Impact

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

Evaluation of Colorado 4-H Livestock Projects

4-H livestock projects are an effective vehicle to teach young people valuable life skills such as, setting goals, keeping records, and ethical decision-making.

Issue

Often times regarded as a program that teaches young people about proper animal husbandry practices through animal science projects, today's 4-H program is much broader than exhibiting animal science projects at the county fair.

One of the most important responsibilities of 4-H members enrolled in market livestock projects is the proper handling and care of animals destined to enter the food chain. 4-H members learn their responsibility in insuring the wholesomeness of the food animals that they are producing through the 4-H program.

Extension's Response

In order to measure the value of Colorado 4-H livestock projects, in the spring of 2008 data were collected from eight counties in Colorado. A total of 455 surveys were returned for analysis.

The questions asked of the respondents to the 4-H livestock project survey were:

How much did you know about these things before and after your 4-H livestock project experience?

1. How to make ethical decisions.
2. How to care for animals.
3. How to keep records.
4. How to set goals and plan.
5. How to ask others for help.
6. My responsibility to produce safe food.

Responses to these six knowledge-related questions were limited to 1) Nothing, 2) Not very much, 3) A little bit, or 4) A lot.

Five more behavior-related questions were asked which included the following:

How often did you do these things before your involvement in 4-H livestock projects and since you have been involved in 4-H livestock projects?

7. Make ethical decisions.
8. Properly care for animals.
9. Keep records.
10. Set goals and plan.
11. Ask others for help.

Responses to these five behavior-related questions were limited to:

- 1) Almost never, 2) Not usually, 3) Usually, or 4) Almost always.



The Bottom Line

4-H members who are involved in livestock projects learn more than just animal science.

They also learn how to:

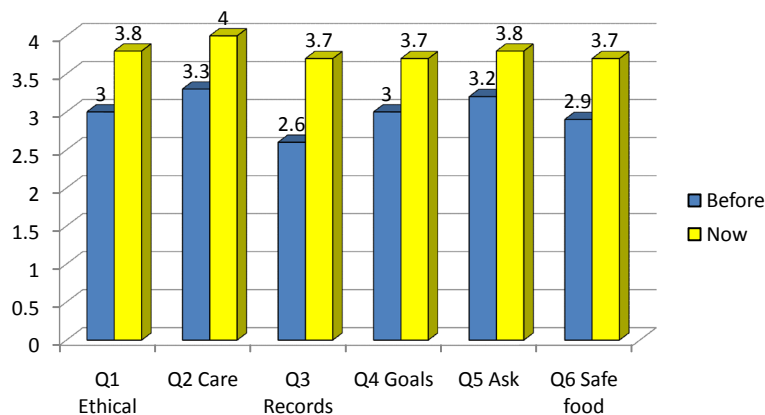
- Make good ethical decisions,
- keep records,
- set goals and plan, and
- they understand their responsibility in producing safe and wholesome food.

Exhibiting animal science projects is still one of the most popular project offerings in 4-H with the following enrollments for the 2008-09 4-H year.

- Market Beef – 1,847
- Market Goats – 996
- Market Lamb – 1,488
- Market Swine – 2,747

Responses to Knowledge Questions 1-6

Before and after their 4-H Experience

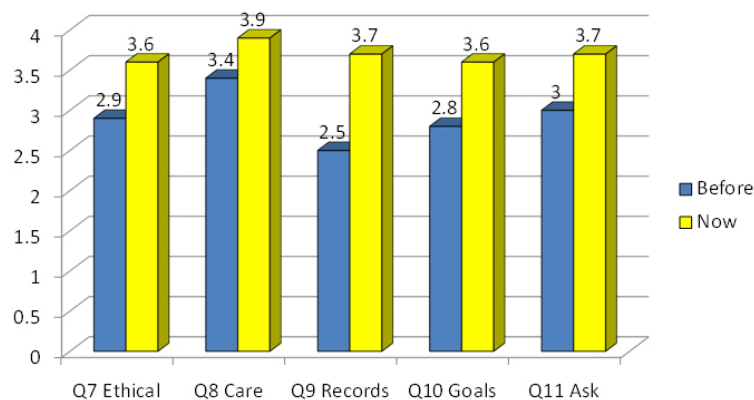


There was a significant difference between “before” and “now” responses in the six behavior-related questions:

1. How to make ethical decisions.
2. How to care for animals.
3. How to keep records.
4. How to set goals and plan.
5. How to ask others for help.
6. My responsibility to produce safe food.

Responses to Behavior Questions 7-11

Before and after their 4-H Experience



There was also a significant difference between “before” and “now” responses to the five behavior-related questions.

7. Make ethical decisions.
8. Properly care for animals.
9. Keep records.
10. Set goals and plan.
11. Ask others for help.

In both the knowledge and behavioral related questions, recordkeeping skills had the greatest increase in positive response. This is often a life skill learned in their 4-H experience that 4-H alumni say has had the greatest impact on their life.

“This is my first year at CSU Pueblo as a freshman, and time management is a big thing; 4-H has really taught me that, especially with working with animals, you really have to make sure you’re out there on time to get them fed, so I think it’s really helped balance my first year of college with the Miss USA pageant.”

-Jessica Hartman

Miss Colorado USA 2010

Pueblo County 4-H

County Partners

Data for this study were collected in the following Colorado counties:

Adams	La Plata
Archuleta	Morgan
Douglas	Weld
Fremont	Yuma

For more information contact

Jeff Goodwin
 State 4-H Program Leader
 (970) 491-1152
jeff.goodwin@colostate.edu
www.colorado4h.org