

Talking Points

As a junior fair exhibitor, you may be asked questions about animal welfare. These talking points should help prepare you.

Q. Why do you dock tails, clip teeth, castrate and trim beaks?

- Practices such as these protect the animals from each other, prevent disease and help us produce safe and nutritious food.
- When we perform these tasks we make sure to use proper techniques and equipment and only experienced or properly trained personnel should perform them.

Q. Why are some farm animals confined?

- Sows in stalls and hens in cages receive individual care and are protected from the weather and wild animals.
- Raising farm animals indoors allows me to provide a safe, clean, environment in order to produce high quality food products and minimize environmental risks.

Q. Why are antibiotics used on farms?

- It is important to keep farm animals healthy in order to produce high quality food products.
- Our veterinarian has created a solid health program for our animals that address prevention and treatment of disease.

Q. Why do you use canes and show sticks? (Cattle prods are not used in conjunction with 4-H or FFA.)

- They enable me to move animals more safely and to comfort them.
- Mistreatment of any animal is not tolerated.

For More Information

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Youth Guide on Animal Welfare for Fairs and Exhibitions



A Resource for 4-H and FFA Members

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Learning About Animal Welfare

People primarily raise animals for human use or benefit such as food, clothing, work, research, companionship or entertainment. Farmers and animal owners, such as you, are morally and legally responsible to care for their/your animals. You provide them with appropriate food and shelter while ensuring the animals are not subjected to unnecessary pain, suffering and excessive stress. You are responsible for the well-being of animals in your care and must not tolerate animal neglect or abuse. As an animal caretaker, you should take pride in the fact that you believe in animal welfare as the right thing to do and you choose to properly care for your animals.

Animal Welfare or Animal Rights

It's important to understand the difference between animal welfare and animal rights. **Animal welfare** is what most people support — that humans may use animals for their benefit, and as a result have a responsibility to care for them. Animal welfare supporters agree that animals should be treated with respect.

Animal rights is a philosophy in which followers believe it not acceptable to use animals for human benefit: for food, clothing, work, research, companionship or entertainment. People who support animal rights want animals to have the same rights as people. Many people support animal rights groups, assuming the money that they send will be used directly for animal welfare causes. Yet, these organizations use this funding in ways that may not provide direct

funding for the cause they seem to support. If you would like to support a group to help animals, be sure to investigate that your money really goes to help animals (such as your local animal shelter). Lastly, ask what percentage of the donation is going to the mentioned cause, as you may be surprised.

Quality Assurance, Animal Welfare and Ethics Education in Nebraska

Quality assurance was developed as a result of consumers exercising their right to know that the products from animal production that they consume are wholesome, safe, and the animals which produced the product were cared for properly. Quality Assurance, Animal Welfare and Ethics sessions focus on the ten good production practices:

1. Identify and track all animals
2. Maintain medication and treatment records
3. Properly store, label, and account for all animal health products and medicated feeds
4. Use a valid veterinarian/client/patient relationship as the basis for medication decision making
5. Educate all employees and family members on proper administration techniques
6. Use drug residue tests when appropriate
7. Establish an efficient and effective animal health management plan
8. Provide proper animal handling and care
9. Follow appropriate feed processor procedures and feed tag recommendations

10. Review and update your quality assurance program annually

As a result of Quality Assurance, Animal Welfare and Ethics training you should, as an animal producer, understand the importance of:

1. Producing a wholesome, safe and palatable food product for the consumer
2. Producing a high quality, visually appealing product for consumer
3. Understanding that as animal care takers your responsibility is to care for the animals' basic needs

You are an exhibitor and considered a producer. The public will develop opinions based on what they see, hear and perceive at a livestock exhibition and will relate that to the entire livestock industry. You should be able to compare and/or contrast the differences and similarities between an animal for exhibition or one that is raised for commercial production. Animals that are at fairs for exhibition account for a small percentage of all animals in production; however, animals at the exhibition are in the public eye. Remember your animal is on display and the practices you use to prepare them for the show are sometimes viewed as typical food animal production practices, resulting in a false impression of commercial animal production.