

Connecting with the Public through a Positive Image

Brandy Kay, Extension Educator

Goal (learning objective)

Youth will:

- Learn to understand agriculture from other points of view
- Learn how to create a positive public image
- Learn how to connect with the general public

Supplies

- Items to demonstrate an extremely well-cared-for dog or cat. Keep it simple, but enough so the youth understand.
 - Soft, comfortable bed
 - Canned pet food
 - Pet clothes—sweater, rain coat, etc. (One item will work.)
 - “Nice” pet carrier
 - Personalized, very nice food/water dish, maybe with name decorations on it
 - Fancy collar with bling and tags
 - Fun pet toys
- Items to demonstrate adequately cared for pet (nice but not as fancy or over-the-top as those previously listed)
 - Shelter
 - Food and water
 - Collar with tags
 - Nice, clean regular pet carrier
 - Appropriate dishes/feeders for food and water
 - Chew toy or bone
- Blank paper
- Markers, color crayons, or colored pencils
- Large pad paper/chart for you to write on

- Items for alternative option (these will depend on the species the members are showing).
 - Feeder and feed
 - Water bucket and water
 - Halter/lead rope
 - Show stick or driving device
 - Blankets (sheep)
 - Bedding
 - Appropriate way to decorate the stall/pen area so livestock cannot eat fair decorations/signs
 - Rakes, brooms, shovels

Pre-lesson preparation

- Read “Animal Well-being” in the *Swine resource handbook for market and breeding projects*, chapter 24, page 24-2.
- Read “Caring for Animals” in the *Beef resource handbook*, chapter 12, pages 12-2 and 12-16.
- Read “Caring for Animals” in the *Goat resource handbook*, pages 159-160 and 162-163.
- Read “Showing and Selling, and Caring for Animals” in the *Sheep resource handbook for market and breeding projects*, pages 100 and 136-138.
- Familiarize yourself with the different views members of the public may have toward fairs, youth raising livestock, and the livestock industries (beef, sheep, swine, goat).
- Familiarize yourself with how the livestock industries promote a positive public image.

Lesson directions and outline

Introduction

Many people are now three or four generations removed from the farm. They do not have a concept of normal conditions for raising livestock. When it comes to raising animals, they know only what they have experienced, and for many of them, their experience is with pet cats and dogs. Pet stores provide a huge range of products providing “quality care” for pets.

Conducting the activity (DO)

1. Show an example of a very pampered dog or cat and an example of a pet that is cared for (food, water, shelter, clean living area, etc.) but not pampered.
2. Ask youth to identify the differences and discuss what is important for a healthy pet.
3. Ask youth to draw or describe pampered livestock. Discuss why this is not necessary, but why the general public may feel that it is. Write the responses or display the drawings on a board or pad so the group can see them.
4. Ask youth to draw or describe the requirements for having healthy livestock. Include animal handling. Have them give examples of what they can do at fair to provide a positive image to the public, showing that the animals are well cared for just like their pets. Write the responses or display the drawings on a board or pad so the group can see them.

Alternate activity

As an alternative to having the youth draw, you could bring in a wide variety of supplies used to care for livestock and have them pull together the items that are needed to keep their livestock healthy.

What did we learn? (REFLECT)

- Ask: Why it is not necessary or always healthy to pamper livestock? How and why may the general public feel differently?
- Ask: How do you keep your animals healthy at home?
- Ask: How can you keep your animals healthy and comfortable at fair? What can you do to make sure your care provides a positive image to the public?
- Ask: How can you educate the public about caring for livestock?

Why is that important? (APPLY)

- Ask: Why is it important to provide the public with a positive image of animal health and handling?
- Ask: What organizations or industries may you be representing to the public when at fair?
- Ask: What are examples of a positive image that is not related to livestock or the fair?
- Ask: Why is having a personal positive image important?

Resources

- American Farm Bureau Federation. The Voice of Agriculture. <http://www.fb.org>
- Ohio State University Extension. (2011). Caring for Animals. *Beef resource handbook* (pages 12-2 and 12-16).
- Ohio State University Extension. (2008). Caring for Animals. *Goat resource handbook* (pages 159-160, 162-163).
- Ohio State University Extension. (2011). Showing and Selling, and Caring for Animals. *Sheep resource handbook for market and breeding projects* (pages 100 and 136-138).
- Ohio State University Extension. (2000). Caring for Animals. *Swine resource handbook for market and breeding projects* (pages 24-1-24-2)
- Payn-Knoper, M. (2013). *No more food fights!* Indianapolis: Dog Ear Publishing.