

Showmanship

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Goal (learning objective)

Youth will:

- Learn about showmanship
- Learn about showring etiquette and sportsmanship
- Learn exhibiting tips to help them handle their animal and be successful in the showring
- Swine members as they need to practice moving and directing their hog to demonstrate control while positioning themselves appropriately (animal always between them and the judge).
- Beef members as they need to practice leading, spacing, stopping, and setting up with the halter.

Supplies

- 5' piece of string (bailing twine) for each team of two members (beef, sheep, and goat)
- Swine members will use their hand and arm or pig show stick
- Swine driving devices (optional)
- Area large enough to represent the showring full of animals and showmen.

Pre-lesson preparation

- Conduct Showmanship Equipment Activity prior to this activity (see Equipment lesson plan).
- Review Livestock Showmanship DVD for each species to become familiar with showing of livestock
- This activity can be done with:
 - Goat members as they need to practice leading, stopping, and setting up with the collar.
 - Sheep members as they need to practice leading, turning, stopping, and setting up without a halter.

Lesson directions and outline

Introduction

Showmanship contests are a fun way to demonstrate skills and knowledge. It is important to realize that showmanship is used every time an exhibitor enters a quality class. The object is to present your animal to the judge using methods that will make your animal look its' best. This will require a personal evaluation of the animal being shown prior to entry into its class.

Showmanship success begins at home. It takes time to halter break or train an animal so that it is responsive to an exhibitor's commands. The methods used are not difficult to learn, but it does take effort, patience and animal cooperation.

A show animal should be trained to walk, stop, set up quickly or drive in the show ring when asked. When preparing for a show, it is important to practice using several short periods of time rather than a few long, drawn-out sessions. It is also wise to know information about the project and animal should a judge decide to use questions as a tie breaker.

Conducting the activity (DO)

1. Explain to youth that they will be participating in a mock show, ask the group to pair off so they have a partner.
2. Give each team a piece of string or pig stick. One teammate will be the showman and one will be the project animal.
3. Have the “animal” hold the string as if it was a halter. Holding the string in their left hand. Do not tie the string on the member.
4. Have the showman stand next to the animal (facing the same direction) hold the string in one hand next to the “animals” head and the other hand as if holding the lead strap of a show halter. (Goat members as if holding the collar, sheep members as if holding their sheep and swine members should direct their animal with their hands or stick).
5. Have all the teams practice circling, stopping and setting up, as if in a mock show.
6. Have the beef members hold their animal’s heads “very close” on the string (next to their cheek) and “far away” on the string (2 ft. gap between them).
7. Once they have practiced then have the members switch roles and practice the mock show again.
8. Teach members the following showing tips:
 - The importance of making a first impression as soon as they step into the arena (don’t stop showing).
 - Keeping an animal set up with its’ head up
 - Keeping their eyes on the judge and their animal at all times (it is important exhibitors are aware of where the judge is in the arena and what their animal is doing).
 - The importance of keeping the animal between them and the judge at all times (Beef members do not stand on the opposite side).
 - Spacing animals while working in the arena and in line up.
 - Show ring etiquette and sportsmanship.

What did we learn? (REFLECT)

- Ask: Why is showmanship important?
- Ask: How can showmanship be practiced at home?
- Ask: How does it feel to be the animal? How can that help you be a better showman?
- Ask: What can you do differently in handling your animal?

Why is that important? (APPLY)

- Ask: Why is having knowledge about your live-stock project important?
- Ask: Why is good sportsmanship important in showmanship?
- Ask: What do showman reflect to the community about the industry? 4-H?

Resources

- Ohio State University Extension. (2011). Getting Ready for the Show. *Beef resource handbook*. (pages 9-13 through 9-18).
- Ohio State University Extension. (2008). Preparing Your Animal for Show. *Goat resource handbook* (pages 175-176).
- Ohio State University Extension. (2011). Showing and Selling. *Sheep resource handbook for market and breeding projects* (pages 97-98).
- Ohio State University Extension. (2000). Showing your 4-H Market Hog. *Swine resource handbook for market and breeding projects* (pages 12-4 and 12-5)
- University of Idaho Extension Beef Showmanship video (#72999) available at: <https://youtu.be/E-7UF-qiSjS4>
- University of Idaho Extension Sheep Showmanship video (#72898) available at: <https://youtu.be/2B-VEegUchds>
- University of Idaho Extension Swine Showmanship video (#72998) available at: <https://youtu.be/22e-p02oH08>