

Talking Points

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

How do you justify using practices such as tail-docking, teeth clipping, castration, and beak trimming?

- Practices such as these protect 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.

Isn't it cruel to house farm animals in crates and cages?

- 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 product.

Why do you use so many antibiotics on farms these days?

- We use all animal health products, including antibiotics, responsibly. It is important to keep farm animals healthy in order to produce high quality food products.
- We talk regularly with our veterinarian to make sure we have a solid health program in place for our animals that addresses prevention and treatment of disease.

Why do you use things like canes, cattle prods, and show sticks?

- We treat our animals humanely. Devices like these are not used to harm the animal. They enable me to move the animal more safely.
- Mistreatment of any animal should not be tolerated.



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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, or entertainment. Farmers and animal owners, such as you, are morally and legally responsible to properly 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 should 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 is not acceptable to use animals for human benefit: for food, clothing, work, research 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 Idaho

Quality assurance was developed as a result of certain factions of the public exercising their right to know that the products and/or entertainment they get from animal production are wholesome, safe, and the animals were properly cared for. Quality Assurance, Animal Welfare and Ethics sessions focus on the 10 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 the 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, no matter what species you raise. The public will develop opinions based on what they see, hear, and perceive at an animal exhibition and will relate that to the entire animal industry. You should be able to compare and/or contrast the differences and similarities between an animal for exhibition and one that is raised for commercial production (including those for raised for entertainment and/or pets). 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 animal production practices, resulting in a false impression of commercial animal production.

