



BEEF PROJECT AREA



In the 4-H beef project, you can select from a breeding animal or a market animal. Breeding animals allow you to start your herd while market animals produce meat products for people.

Ideas for Project Area Learning

- Learn the basic principles of animal science by owning, caring for, and keeping records on one or more head of livestock.
- Demonstrate knowledge of sound breeding, feeding, and management practices.
- Learn the value of scientific research and its influence on animals and the meat industry.
- Know your beef breeds.
- Select your animal.
- Identify parts of the animal and cuts of meat.
- Train your calf to lead.
- Feed your animal.
- Learn to show your animal.
- Groom your animal.
- Learn about beef by-products.
- Determine the quality grades of cattle.
- Recognize a healthy animal.
- Ramp up your judging and meat-grading skills.
- Understand the digestive system.
- Identify common external parasites and other health issues.
- Understand medication uses, storage, how to administer medication, and how it relates to food safety.
- Learn the appropriate handling techniques and proper housing for beef cattle.
- Balance a beef ration and understand feed quality.
- Learn about breeding and reproduction techniques.
- Learn to identify and treat common diseases.
- Evaluate beef carcasses and market your product.

APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

Communication

- Teach someone the essential traits in selecting a breeding heifer.
- Create a poster showing the beef cuts and how to prepare them.
- Share a presentation on the importance of following drug labels.

Civic Engagement

- Volunteer to do beef promotion presentations during May beef month.
- Provide a beef taste testing at a grocery store to promote local foods.
- Volunteer to help at the county fair weigh in.

Leadership

- Arrange a tour of your farm.
- Start a beef livestock judging team with the help of an adult volunteer.
- Lead a beef grooming and showmanship clinic for other 4-H members.

Entrepreneurship

- Package and sell cuts of grass-fed beef.
- Sell beef calves to local 4-H members as fair projects.
- During the fair season, sell beef shearing services.



Goal Setting and Record Keeping

Goal setting is an ongoing process that guides your project area learning. Having goals is like having a road map to show you how to get you to where you want to go. Record keeping is also an ongoing process and another important life skill. In 4-H, you are encouraged to select from a variety of record keeping formats to meet your own personal needs and your preferred learning style. Keeping records of your learning experiences helps you determine how well you met your goals. Goal setting and record keeping improve your skills in organization, communication, planning, and evaluating.

Iowa 4-H Event Opportunities

- Participate in **county and state fair** exhibit classes.
- Check with your local county 4-H youth development staff to see if there are special events or **workshops in your county** that you want to attend to learn more about your project areas.
- Iowa 4-H members in grades 9–12 can apply for **State Project Area Awards** at State Recognition Day. Applications are open December through January.
- Meet young people from around the state who have completed grades 8–12, and share your interests at the **Iowa 4-H Youth Conference** held at Iowa State University in late June.
- Apply for an in-depth hands-on learning experience on the Iowa State University campus during the three-day **Animal Science Roundup** late June. Youth in grades 8–12 are welcome to apply.
- **Livestock Quiz Bowl** is a team event for 4th–12th graders where they test their knowledge of beef, sheep, swine and meat goats. This event takes place each Spring on the Iowa State University campus.

Share Your Learning With an Exhibit

- Participate in the 4-H beef show at your county fair or the Iowa State Fair.
- Show in breeding heifer, cow-calf, bottle bucket calf, market beef, showmanship, or rate of gain.
- Demonstrate the nutritive value of beef.
- Do an exhibit on feeding rations.
- Make a poster comparing various preventative vaccinations.
- Make a book that shows your daily routine in caring for animals.

CAREER CONNECTIONS

- **Livestock appraisers** determine market values of animals being sold or insured and document loans, audits, and insurance claims.
- **Livestock judges** provide fair evaluations of livestock and advocate for the industry.
- **Meat inspectors** work at private commercial slaughtering plants, inspecting animals before and after slaughter.
- **Animal geneticists** analyze the genetic makeup of animals to discover which genes cause them to act in certain ways or be immune to specific diseases.

EDUCATION CONNECTIONS

- Students in **animal science** focus on the management of livestock species, as well as meat science, genetics, and nutrition.
- If you enjoy microbiology, chemistry, and genetics, studying **biology** may interest you.
- Learn **veterinary technology** if you're interested in animal health, anatomy, and disease transmission.
- If you enjoy teaching others about livestock production, leading activities, and mentoring others, you may enjoy a career in **agricultural education**.

Written Iowa 4-H Youth Development 2013. Revised in 2019 by Bonnie Dalager, 4-H Product Development Specialist, and Payton Sash, 4-H Student Office Assistant, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.