

IMPACT



University of Idaho
Cooperative
Extension System

Livestock Judges and Show Manager School Improves the Skills of Participants

Situation

Youth livestock shows can be an effective teaching tool for youth development as well as for agriculturists of the future. However, if these programs focus on exhibition of the visually most perfect animal on the final day of the project, unethical fitting and showing practices can become pervasive.

Educational methods employed by FFA and 4-H can either be responsive to future needs and technological advancements or risk becoming obsolete.

Response

There were a total of 108 participants, representing seven states and one Canadian province, in attendance at the 2000 Pacific Northwest Livestock Judges and Show Management School. The training was a cooperative effort of the University of Idaho, Washington State University, and Oregon State University. Eighty participants were involved in the judge's track and 28 in the show management track.

These 108 participants influence an estimated 50,000 individuals through youth livestock programs each year through their roles as livestock judges, show managers, and Extension/Vocational Agricultural Educators. The primary goal of the training was to ensure that these critical "point people" for agriculture are knowledgeable about issues such as food animal quality assurance and forward-thinking methods of animal evaluation that support the mission of youth development.

Quality assurance education was integrated into this training to promote practice changes in youth with livestock projects and inform volunteer leaders, parents and project supervisors about components and foundation concepts of quality assurance and animal care. Management practices that can influence meat safety, such as chemical residue prevention, proper injection techniques, and feeding and sanitation practices were also a part of the training.

Results

One of the goals of the training was to impart information regarding the importance of quality assurance and residue avoidance in food animals that are marketed through the food chain. The preliminary evaluation indicates that 75% of the participants demonstrated an increased knowledge level regarding the issue of food animal quality assurance related to youth livestock project animals.

The measurement of attitudes regarding use of ultrasound technology demonstrates that participants were more receptive to the technology as a result of this training. Specific findings include:

- 34% of the participants shifted from a negative attitude about the use of ultrasound in livestock evaluation to a positive attitude.
- 45% of the participants came to the training with a positive attitude toward ultrasound and maintained or increased that positive attitude.



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- 79% of participants had a positive attitude toward the reliability of ultrasound technology at the conclusion of the training.
- 66% had a more favorable attitude toward the reliability of ultrasound technology as a result of the training.
- 20% of the participants left the training with a negative attitude about the use of ultrasound. Half of these participant's attitudes remained unchanged as a result of the training and half showed an improved attitude while remaining on the negative side of the scale.

Other general measures of success of the training include:

- 97% of the attendees demonstrated an increased understanding of the Systems Approach of Livestock Evaluation.
- 100% of the show managers and 100% of the livestock judges stated that they were better qualified to do their jobs as a result of the training.

For More Information

Jeff Goodwin, 4-H / Youth Development Specialist
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83844-3015
Phone (208) 885-6965 Fax (208) 885-4637
e-mail: jgoodwin@uidaho.edu