

IMPACT



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Instrument Developed to Measure Appropriate Adult Involvement in Youth Livestock Programs

The Situation

Little League baseball, youth hockey, and even the 4-H project exhibited at the county fair can all be occasions for over-involved parents to grab the headlines in a negative manner.

Our Response

During a six-month period, February to July 2001, data were collected in California, Idaho, and New Jersey. In all, 394 people completed the evaluation instrument. Of these 166 (42%) were youth livestock show exhibitors. The youth were evenly divided between 8- to 13-year olds (55.1%) and 14- to 19-year olds (44.8%).

A six-point Likert scale was employed to measure the people in this study sample's attitude regarding appropriate adult involvement in youth livestock shows. The six items on the scale were:

1. Absolutely no adult involvement allowed
2. Adult involvement only to offer advice and information
3. Clipping and grooming by an adult for instructional purposes only
4. Youth and adults share clipping and grooming tasks equally
5. Adults do a majority of the clipping and grooming
6. Professional fitter hired to do all the clipping and grooming.

Question 1 asked respondents to choose the level of adult involvement acceptable **at home** prior to arriving at the show. Question 2 asked respondents to choose the level of adult involvement acceptable **at the livestock show**.

Program Outcomes

With an N of 394, the mean score for question 1 was 2.95 (SD = .8039). The mean for question 2 was 2.38 (SD = .7427). This would indicate that prior to the show; the people in this sample population felt that adults may conduct "Clipping and grooming for instructional purposes only" prior to the show. During the show, they should "only offer advice and information" for youth exhibitors. The researchers found it interesting that the group's definition of appropriate behavior changed depending on whether the adult involvement happened prior to or at the show. Perhaps this finding runs opposite to a popular definition of ethics being "the examination of your actions when no one is watching."

While useful as a summary, mean scores often fail to tell a complete story. Frequencies and cumulative percentages provide additional insight into the participants' levels of agreement with the six statements. The frequencies reported in Table 1 are summarized by whole number rounding down to include those participants who chose the statement and those choosing numbers between that statement and the next higher one. If for instance, a person marked 2.75, they would be coded as a 2 on this

table. The researchers believe that this coding system best reflects the number of people who would not agree with the next higher statement. They were, in the researchers opinion, unwilling to cross the threshold proposed by the next higher statement.

Table 1.
Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Regarding Acceptable Adult Involvement Before and During the Livestock Show.

Response	Before		During	
	f	%	f	%
1. Absolutely no adult involvement.	7	1.8	41	10.6
2. Only to offer advice and information	138	35.3	225	57.9
3. Clipping for instructional purposes only	169	43.3	95	24.4
4. Share clipping and grooming tasks equally	69	17.6	25	6.4
5. Do a majority of the clipping and grooming	4	1.02	1	.25
6. Professional fitter does all the clipping	3	1.0	1	.25
Missing	4		6	
Total	394		394	

The frequencies would suggest that adults should carefully consider their actions any time they touch a clipper to a youth livestock project. Over a third of our respondents think this is “too involved” before the show and two-thirds share this belief after the show begins. Clearly in the minority, both of the people selecting responses 5 and 6 “During the show” were youth livestock exhibitors and they were both 14-19 years old.

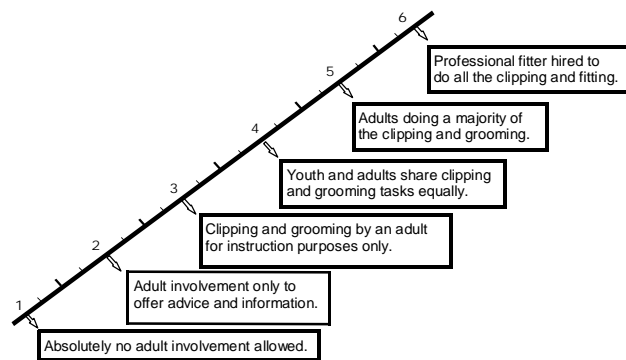
Conclusions

Advice and encouragement are acceptable and appropriate roles for adults in youth livestock shows as they are in any other competitive event for youths. Direct assistance, whether supplied or purchased,

was generally perceived as unacceptable by this study group.

The authors found the instrument used in this study to identify appropriate adult roles in youth livestock project shows (Figure 1) to be efficient and effective in assisting a wide variety of stakeholders to explore their perceptions on the subject. We therefore recommend that the instrument be used to promote dialog about this issue.

Figure 1.



For More Information

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