

## Lincoln/East Adams County 4-H Article

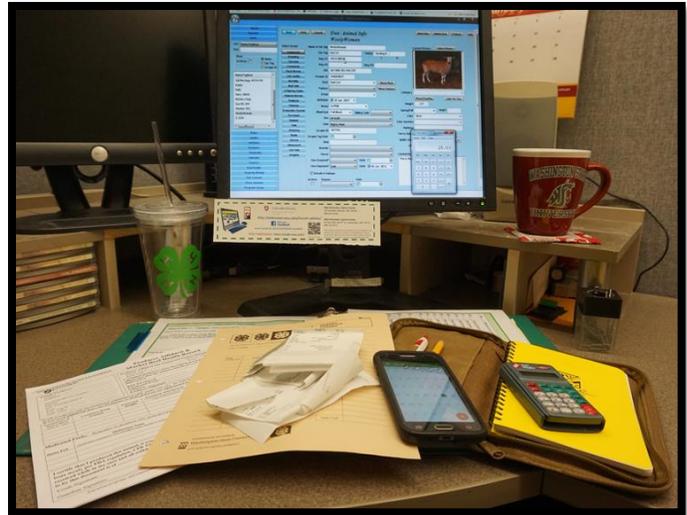
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### 4-H Record Keeping

There are many reasons why kids decide to join 4-H. One of the most popular is the love of farm animals. Having the opportunity to care, feed and manage an animal brings a lot of satisfaction to our daily lives. We realize that the well-being of our project depends upon US and for most of us that is a great feeling. Some of you enjoy showing your animals at Jackpots, County Fairs and Regional Livestock Shows. Those who take this activity real serious spend hours training, clipping and preparing. This is your MOST favorite part of raising an animal! I would be willing to bet, however, that one of your LEAST favorite responsibilities is KEEPING RECORDS!



Recordkeeping helps keep track of your expenses. It can aid in monitoring the progress of your project. Records are important to the financial health of a business or operation. Efficient and profitable operations are not guaranteed by good record keeping, but success is unlikely without them.

A lot of kids are really not sure if they have made or lost money on their animal project. Record keeping involves recording, filing, maintaining and categorizing inventory, financial and production information. Recordkeeping is important. Records tell an owner or manager where the business/operation has been and the direction in which it is going. Records show the financial strength and weaknesses of your animal operation. They provide useful insight into financial stability of your 4-H Project. There are several purposes of keeping good records:

- *Measure profit and access the financial ability of the business/operation.*
- *Provides data for business/operation analysis.*
- *Assists in obtaining loans.*
- *Measure the profitability of individual operation...did you make any money or not!*
- *Assist in analysis of new investments.*
- *Help prepare income tax returns.*

You can maintain records by using a pen and notebook/ledger OR by using technology. Since most if not all of us use our coveted smart phone, iPad or laptop every day, these devices are a great option.

Recently I checked out a new record keeping program that YOU may find useful. The following link will give you access to a free app developed by: Learning Games Lab, New Mexico State University.

<http://www.farms.com/agriculture-apps/livestock/4-h-livestock-record>

This app allows users to easily track all their livestock project animals, including animal weights, feed purchases, health, 4-H events, as well as project income and expenses.

So as you begin this year by acquiring a new steer, lamb, hog or meat goat set a goal to maintain an accurate record of your enterprise. You should find it to be useful AND rewarding.

**Additional resources related to 4-H Record Keeping:**

<https://pubs.wsu.edu/ListItems.aspx?CategoryID=276>

Search on-line for: 4-H livestock records

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