

**Talking Points for Extension Professionals and Ag Educators to Share with Fairs/Exhibitions
Regarding Youth Livestock/Food Animal Projects
During Washington's "Stay Home and Stay Healthy" Order
Washington State University Extension and Washington 4-H 3/27/2020**

Information for Fair/Exhibitions offering guidance for the 2020 Fair/Exhibition Season:

1. County Weigh-Ins
 - a. WSU Extension recommends that all who are affiliated with Youth livestock shows, exhibitions and/or sale committees that offer livestock weigh-ins at the start of the project **to postpone or cancel** these activities effective immediately. This is a recommendation that is a result of Washington's "Stay Home and Stay Healthy" order and reducing the effect of people-to-people interaction.
 - i. These events have resulted with large gatherings.
 - ii. Possibility of animal-to-animal disease transmission is always of concern at these events, particularly with swine.
 - iii. Certified scales used for pre-weighs typically are either on site at fairgrounds and livestock markets/sale yards and under the current recommendations from CDC are most likely closed. Many livestock markets/sale yards that remain open have made alternative modifications for producers in dropping off livestock with no interaction of workers with producers.
 - iv. Forgoing at fair contests and competitions that evaluate "rate of gain" for 2020 maybe a necessary evil as we navigate the existing ban.
 - v. Weigh-in's can occur after gathering bans have been lifted. When this occurs data can be recorded and rate-of-gain can be assessed for a shorter duration if this is still desired. Comparison of the current years data with pervious years, as a result of duration differences is not recommended.
2. Fair animal tags
 - a. Many fairs and exhibitions, tag animals during the weigh-in for ownership purposes, animal management (for recording) and animal health (scrapie, bangs, etc.,).
 - i. If counties, fairs, and exhibitions need to get tags to exhibitors, they should do so with minimal to no human-to-human interaction.
 - ii. Have exhibitors communicate how many tags are needed for their families and what species they will be used for.
 - iii. Tags can either be sent via mail to the exhibitors or have someone package these tags for distribution site pick up. Identify packets and leave at an unmanned distribution area. Communicate with families where the tags are located and please utilize a staggered schedule for pickup (Ie: Last name - A-F at 10 a.m., G-P at 11 a.m. and so on).
 1. In either case COVID-19 has been reported to last on plastic surfaces for up to 72 hours and cardboard surfaces for 24 hours.
 2. Wear gloves when packing and distributing and suggest that families or those that transport back to families tagging animals they should wash hands thoroughly after any contact with tags and packing materials.
 - b. An alternative to tagging is to have exhibitors send in photograph of animals and identification of animal:
 - i. Take a snapshot of a front view and side view of the animal
 - ii. As well as a clear view of the form of identification the animal has in its ear. Note the number on the identification should be clearly visible.
 - iii. This can be sent and filed electronically and can be used at the scale to verify ownership and animal identification for each animal identified.
 - iv. Clear guidelines must be put in writing if it is determined that the color pattern and or Identification do not match.

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- v. A hair sample can also be sent in for identification. When the animal arrives at the fair and is in question the sample can be sent in for confirmation.
 - c. Photos, tagging, hair samples, or any combination will reduce the concern for animals being purchased after the ownership date. If there is a question then having two points of reference to evaluate give you more ground to stand on if action needs to be taken.
3. Fairs/Exhibition/Sale Committee Auctions
- a. If a fair is cancelled and youth face significant loss it is unfortunate, however here are things that might mitigate that loss:
 - i. Premium sales or top off bids: In an online environment. The youth would not give up on possession and ownership of the animal but would receive money to make up a loss from the fair sale. When the people-to-people and social distance ban is lifted, then arrange for a buy day when the livestock buyer, who normally works with the sale committee or fair to set the floor price for all animals, comes to purchase animals direct from the youth and sale, payment and possession transfer will occur at one time.
 - ii. Other fund raising opportunities to provide support for the youth on top of the floor price that they will receive can be established locally. Again much like the premium auction establishing a buy day with the livestock buyer will be necessary or work with a local market to sell animals on the commercial market.
 - iii. Online Auctions: In meeting the CDC guidelines as well as the Packers and Stockers purchase, payment and possession at time of sale rule we recommend that online auctions in the traditional sense, NOT be implemented. During an auction there is transfer of ownership and market animals are sold on a weight basis across a certified scale.
 - 1. The risk is as follows:
 - a. In order to meet the immediate transfer of ownership and possession, as inferred from packers and stockers administration,
 - i. Livestock/food animals would have to be weighed on a certified scale prior to auction so that you have an accurate weight within a reasonable amount of time and this would result in people-to-people interaction.
 - ii. As a result to CDC guidelines People-to-people interaction should be minimized.
 - iii. If the time to transfer possession is delayed because of CDC's recommendations, who is responsible for the animal? The seller who maintains possession until transfer or the owner who does not have possession within a reasonable time after purchase?
 - iv. Although the thought is to reduce financial risk for the youth it may create other risks for families, youth and buyers.
4. YQCA (Youth for the Quality Care of Animals)
- a. YQCA instructor led meetings (ILT) are **postponed** until the ban on large gatherings and the social distancing is lifted. Youth can still register and certify through the Web-based training at <https://YQCA.org>.

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Information share with youth and families navigating this fair/exhibition season:

These are recommendations and talking points for those youth livestock/food animal exhibitors and families that are choosing to purchase animals for market shows that are scheduled to occur in the Washington during the 2020 exhibition season. As a result of Washington's "Stay Home and Stay Healthy" order there is potential (some already occurred) that alterations in schedules or cancelations of fairs/exhibitions may occur. The following are some ideas and suggestions to give thought to and share with clientele if questions arise...

1. Purchasing of animals
 - a. There is much uncertainty; Ultimately youth exhibitors and their families need to understand the risk of purchase. Livestock/Food animals purchased, intended for a fair or exhibition, are done so assuming the animal will be sold during the fair/exhibition auction commanding a potentially higher price than that of the commercial market. Exhibitors should be prepared that if a fair/exhibition is cancelled or delayed they have explored alternatives to marketing their animal:
 - i. Understanding that if you choose to purchase a show animal without knowing the full extent and duration of the ban(s) that are in place, you may have to look at alternative markets,
 - ii. Alternative markets do exist but you may not re-coop the cost of an exhibition animal if the fair/exhibition is cancelled.
 - iii. If the exhibition is postponed to a later date then more expense will go into feed costs. As well animals maybe over weight, excessively fat, above their prime target for market.
 - iv. Pay attention to the restrictions that are in place at the time of purchase and talk with your fair/exhibition management and barn superintendents to know what type of emergency action plan is in place for exhibitors if the event is cancelled.
 - b. Many livestock auctions or sales for feeder animals and breeding animals are now online. As a result, arrangements need to be made for care of those animals after purchase prior to the point of acquisition as this might be delayed as a result of the ban. Protect yourself from the risk:
 - i. Many reputable auction companies have guidelines for care and transport between sale and possession of animal. If this is not clearly stated in the contract wording from the sale management, ask for it in writing prior to purchase to assure there is a clear line of responsibility. This will protect the purchaser (YOU) if something happens to the animal when not in your care after you have purchased.
 - ii. Purchasing a gilt, ewe or doe as a market animal could be an alternative as that animal could be resold as a breeding animal and/or retained in the breeding herd.
 - iii. Some fairs/exhibitions may offer market heifer classes again offering an additional marketing option for breeding.
 - iv. Lastly, purchasing livestock/food animals intended for breeding purposes maybe the direction that some youth and families choose as this will keep youth engaged in a livestock/food animal project. Be mindful that a breeding project is a 24 hour/365 day/year commitment. Time and costs will need to be factored into this consideration. If the fair is not impacted in most cases youth will be able to compete in showmanship and breeding classes and not have the worry of selling the animal during the scheduled livestock/food animal auction. Expenses will be recouped over time as the breeding project grows.
 - c. Again restrictions set by the CDC and the State of Washington may change daily. Likewise if the ban is lifted confirm that this will not affect your fair/exhibition.
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