

**Talking Points to Share with 4-H Youth and Families for Livestock/Food Animal Projects
During the Washington “Stay Home and Stay Healthy” Order
Washington State University Extension and Washington 4-H 3/27/2020**

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.
2. 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> .