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From the 4-H Youth Development Advisor, Steven Worker



Promote Bio-Security in Your 4-H Animal Science Projects

Animal science projects are a hallmark of the 4-H program and thousands of young people enroll in these 4-H projects annually. In these projects, a primary focus is on the rearing, caring, showing, and marketing of animals, with some projects centered on breeding. Animal science projects offer youth an array of learning experiences providing opportunities for improved scientific and agricultural literacy and contribute to positive youth development. These experiences help prepare the next generation of farmers, ranchers, foresters, veterinarians, and agricultural scientists.

While 4-H promotes agricultural education, the raising and showing of animals poses bio-security risks. 4-H youth often travel with their animals multiple times to present at club meetings fairs, shows, and exhibitions. Because backyard flocks and herds serve as potential vectors of disease, these public venues represent significant biosecurity risks, including: mixing of animals from multiple premises; lack of or insufficient quarantine procedures; and inadequate sanitation practices. Exposure of disease to animals at fairs, shows, or exhibitions, either accidentally or intentionally, could be catastrophic to U.S. agriculture, both financially and through the loss of animal life.

Youth need to cultivate an appreciation for and develop the skills necessary to help reduce the risk of disease spread to animals and humans. It is essential that 4-H youth have the opportunities to engage in educational experiences that provide them an understanding of bio-security concepts and help them develop the skills necessary to make cogent assessments of their project animal's well-being.

4-H supports proper management practices for bio-security and we are asking animal science 4-H project leaders to help! New curricula currently available include:

- Bio-Security at <http://ucanr.edu/bio>
- Pre-Harvest Food Safety in 4-H Animal Science at <http://ucanr.edu/harvest>
- Veterinary Science at <http://ucanr.edu/vet>
- Animal Welfare curriculum coming soon.

University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Cooperative Extension
Contact Steven Worker at smworker@ucanr.edu