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The opportunities for exercising character listed are not intended to be complete but to express the idea that 4-H and FFA youth livestock projects offer numerous ways for young people to build character. It is the responsibility of adults to ensure that all exercises children are practicing are building positive character traits. The list should help children, parents and advisors understand the difference between an adult doing the project and an adult helping with the project. Realizing a young child needs help in halter breaking a calf or shearing a lamb, the idea is for parents and advisors to insist the child does all he or she is capable of doing.

It should be pointed out that the task of daily feeding and watering contribute to the strengthening of at least four of the six core values. It is important also to recognize that the size of the animal does not have any effect on the value of the project for the young people to develop character. therefore, a child may learn the same things and have the same opportunity to exercise charter with a rabbit as with a steer project.

4-H is a part of the CHARACTER COUNTS Coalition that has committed to help young people learn the six pillars of character. more than 450 cities, Congress, the U.S. Dept. of Education and organizations representing 35 million people have agreed that our young people need these character traits.

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*The North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service believes these values need to be a part of any youth livestock program.*



Visit the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Youth Livestock Website:  
[http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an\\_sci/extension/animal/4hyouth/ah4h.html](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/animal/4hyouth/ah4h.html)

Adapted from: Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service Pub.2611

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# What is the real purpose of youth livestock projects?



*More information is available by contacting the Johnston County Cooperative Extension Service. (919)989-5380. Ask for the 4-H agent or the Livestock Agent*



Employment and program opportunities are offered to all people regardless of race, color, national origin sex, age, or disability. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

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*One purpose of 4-H and FFA youth livestock projects is to teach young people how to feed, fit and show their animals. the more important purpose is to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development of the young person. This statement has been used for years to justify youth livestock projects.*

The Josephson Institute of Ethics, as a part of its nationwide CHARACTER COUNTS project, has developed a curriculum called "Exercising Character." This curriculum identifies six core values of the youth livestock projects. the curriculum also presents the idea that people develop and strengthen character by practicing certain behaviors, just as muscles are built through exercise.



Therefore, the purpose of the youth livestock program is to provide opportunities for young people to develop character. The character traits identified and some practices (exercises) that may build character follow.

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## 1 Trustworthiness

Includes honesty, promise keeping and loyalty.

- \* adheres to possession deadlines (honesty)
- \* feeds and waters the animal daily (promise keeping)
- \* adheres to withdrawal time on drugs and dewormer
- \* uses only approved drugs

## 2 Respect

Includes courtesy and proper treatment of people and things.

- \* handles and treats animals humanely
- \* cares for animals properly
- \* listens to and follows advice of advisors
- \* recognizes that animal project is dependent on youth exhibitor

## 3 Responsibility

Includes the pursuit of excellence, accountability and perseverance.

- \* feeds and waters the animal daily
  - \* goes beyond providing daily care by giving extra time and attention to produce a winner
  - \* adheres to deadlines (forms show times)
  - \* never gives up in the showring (perseverance)
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## 4 Fairness

Involves consistently applying rules and standards appropriate for different age groups and ability levels.

- \* feeds only approved livestock rations
- \* uses only approved drugs
- \* accepts winning and losing with grace
- \* follows recommended procedures in the showring
- \* follows recommended procedures for fitting and grooming an animal

## 5 Caring

Promoting the well-being of people and things in a young person's world denotes action and not just feeling.

- \* feeds and waters the animal daily
- \* provides clean barn/stall for animal
- \* treats animal humanely at all times

## 6 Citizenship

Includes making the home, community and country a better place to live for themselves and others.

- \* accepting instruction
  - \* winning and losing with grace
  - \* helping other with projects
  - \* teaching younger participants
  - \* treating animals humanely
  - \* ensuring that meat is safe for consumption
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