

A Livestock Employee Manual for Junior Livestock Shows

A Senior Project

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to create a manual for junior livestock show staff to abide by for the duration of a county fair's show. By implementing the manual, the show process should run smoother, and should alleviate turnover problems with each new barn steward that comes into the fair. The author hopes that this manual will be of use at fairs statewide.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Across California every year, over 70 different county fairs are held for youth in the community to exhibit and sell livestock through a variety of youth organizations. Children as young as 9 and as old as 20 raise market and breeding animals of number of different species to show and sell for a profit every year. Adults from their respective group supervise youth exhibitors, whether that is 4H, FFA, Grange, or independent. Youth exhibitors compete in market, showmanship, and breeding classes put on by the county fair and its staff. Over the last several years, interest in exhibiting animals at local county fairs has grown. This newfound popularity has increased the need for an efficiently run livestock show. In response to this need, the author of this project has created a manual for staff of the livestock show to follow and abide by. This handbook has been specially designed for the success of Santa Barbara County Fair, but could be adapted to fit the needs of any county fair's Junior Large Livestock Show.

Statement of Problem

Training and proper guidelines for Junior Livestock Show staff has been seen as a necessity at several county fairs, but most particularly Santa Barbara County Fair. The current issue is that there is no specific set of rules and guidelines for individuals to follow and abide by when running livestock shows at the county fair.

The Importance of the Project

With the growing numbers of exhibitors showing livestock at county fairs, timeliness and accuracy of each individual show is increasingly important. At more competitive fairs, it is also important to leave few words open to interpretation and to make rules as solid and structured as possible. With a manual, livestock staff will be able to more successfully run their respective livestock show and manage exhibitors and their animals within their barn without leaving problems that may arise for question.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to create a manual for livestock staff to refer to and abide by for the duration of their county fair. The manual will be broken down by species and show to individualize for each barn's specific needs. Upon completion of this manual, the hopes are for more and more county fairs to adapt to the use of the book for the success of their shows.

Objectives of the Project

1. To research the Santa Barbara County Fair Jr. Livestock Show
 - a) Species exhibited
 - b) Duration of show
 - c) Show breakdown
 - d) Show rules
2. To address any current issues that the Jr. Livestock show may have
3. To create a handbook for the success of the Jr. Livestock Show

4. To breakdown the handbook individually by species and show
5. To implement the use of the handbook at the Santa Barbara County Fair

Definition of Important Terms

- Exhibitor: children aged nine to twenty years old that raise and show animals
- Exhibit: to place in show
- Junior Livestock Show: An exhibit of livestock shown by youth in the community
- County Fair: a fair that is held once a year to exhibit agricultural products from across the county
- 4H: Youth organization where children are able to gain valuable life skills, many of which are related to agriculture, animals, and leadership.
- FFA: The National FFA Organization is a youth organization in the US based on promotion of career growth, leadership, and agriculture education.

Summary

Through this project, Santa Barbara County Fair, among many other county fairs, will have the tools that it takes to run a successful and efficient livestock show. The manual created by this project will alleviate any questions and potential for problems within the livestock areas of county fairs. This material will not only help staff members to run a successful show but will also help exhibitors, parents, and advisors to fully understand the show as well.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

With a constant rate of turnover in county fair livestock show supervision, it is obvious that there is a need for a set of guidelines for all supervisors and employees to use year after year. These guidelines should include, but not be limited to: species oriented show guidelines and rules of conduct for each barn to comply by. By creating and implementing such guidelines, it will alleviate confusion and controversy in regards to county fair Junior Livestock Shows.

Components of a County Fair

Two hundred years ago, to date, the first true fair was held in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in the year 1814 (Goodwin). That being said, fairs have immensely grown, changed, and adapted over the last two hundred years. According to the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE), as of 2010, there are approximately 2,500 county fairs held each year across the country (Marsden, 2010). Typical county fairs include food, livestock, and entertainment; there is something to be enjoyed by everyone. Fairs were once treated as a celebration of harvest, and still are to some extent. Many exhibitors have a family background in agriculture, and many of their family members have exhibited livestock at the county fair themselves. This brings about a very different passion and sense of camaraderie not felt in many other places.

Livestock Shows

The true purpose of a county fair is to celebrate and exhibit agricultural successes from across the county in one localized area. Time lengths of fairs vary by county, but for the purpose of this research, exhibitors will have animals at fair for 7 days, with livestock shows accounting for 3 of the 7 days. Throughout these seven days, exhibitors and employees experience ups and downs of the show life; experiencing problems but accomplishing tasks. The original idea behind livestock shows and 4H/FFA groups was to teach farmers and ranchers updated practices through the hands and eyes of the youth in their community (Goodwin, 2001). As time has gone on, livestock shows have slightly changed directions, and are now influencing community members. 4H and FFA members act as advocates for agricultural awareness, leaving an impact on their peers as well as adults.

Community Benefits of Jr. Livestock Shows

Not only do exhibitors and employees benefit from county fair livestock shows, but members of the community do as well. Livestock shows serve as an excellent educational tool for youth and adults in the community. People are exposed to species of animals they may not otherwise be exposed to. Shows also have an economic influence in local communities. According to Dick Koltz, a board member of a Wisconsin County Fair, “the purpose of a county fair has changed from farmers comparing their harvest and livestock to that of farmers educating an urban population about farm life” (Marsden, 2010). With the ever growing population, it is vital for communities to understand and know where their food comes from, rather than just the grocery store. Through the

knowledge and expertise of employees and exhibitors of Jr. Livestock Shows, the community is able to learn, therefore keeping agriculture an established idea in many fairgoers minds.

Exhibitors Role

For many years young men and women have been exhibiting livestock at county fairs all over the nation. Their ages range from 9 years of age up to 20 years of age for all 4H, Grange, FFA, and Independent members. These young people, also known as “exhibitors”, can show and sell any variety of livestock including, but not limited to: beef, hogs, sheep, goats, chickens, turkeys, and rabbits. However, for the purpose of this research, we will focus on beef, hogs, sheep, and goats. Exhibitors raise their respective animal for several months while feeding it, caring for it, and training it, and then are able to exhibit their talents and sell their animal at the county fair. Exhibitors are currently held to a standard of excellence and code of ethics that is set individually by each fair. This includes animal welfare, respect towards peers and supervisors, and safe fitting practices. The standard of excellence is very straightforward and leaves little room for questions. For example, a section of Santa Barbara County Fair’s *Exhibitor Handbook* explains in detail the code of conduct for exhibitors which states: “Direct criticism or interference with the judge, show management, other exhibitors, breed representatives or show officials before, during, or after the competitive event is PROHIBITED (pg.92).” By holding exhibitors to such standards of excellence, barn stewards and supervisors are able to focus on the show and its success.

Skills Gained by Exhibitors

Exhibitors at county fairs gain a wealth of knowledge and skills, which will be beneficial towards their futures. Many of these skills revolve around hands-on learning, which exhibitors might not gain through any other extra-curricular activity. According to a qualitative study completed about 4H exhibitors in the state of Texas, youth 4H members that show livestock gain social relations, character, family, competition, new cultures and environments, and finance for education (Davis, 2000). For many exhibitors, showing livestock is more than just a weeklong fair; it is a way of life. Through showing livestock they are able to meet peers of similar interests and ages, expanding their social skills and helping them to adapt. One Texas 4H member described social relationships gained, along with the feeling of winning: “The interactions, the friends they made and we've made. Sure we'd take a grand champion every year, but and I think just part of it is that feeling when you win with a good animal. There's no way to describe the feeling its what keeps you going back also, but I have to say its the interactions with the people and the kids that's the most important” (Davis, 2000). Raising and exhibiting livestock teaches exhibitors strong character traits including: responsibility, sportsmanship, dedication, respect for others, and an important appreciation for the agriculture industry.

Employees' Role

Behind the madness of junior livestock shows at county fairs is a group of hard-working, patient, and dedicated individuals willing to work to accomplish one main goal:

To put on a successful show. These individuals are employees of their respective county fair, and are individuals of varying ages, experiences, personalities, and morals.

Employees are given individual jobs, the highest ranked job being Livestock Superintendent. Livestock Superintendents are responsible for the overall success of the fair, including wellness of the exhibitors and the livestock. Next, each individual species barn has a barn steward, who oversees their specific barn and tends to the needs of exhibitors within that barn. They are available to assist with situations that may surface in other barns, but their primary focus is their barn. During several days throughout the fair, it is the job of the barn steward and several ring stewards to put on and ensure the success of their market, breeding, and showmanship classes for their species. With the use of each fairs' specific exhibitor guidebook, rules are generally laid out to leave little room for questioning.

Summary

The purpose of this project was to prepare and create a Junior Livestock Show Employee Manual for county fairs across the nation to utilize to help improve the success of their shows. By explaining the basic background behind county fairs, junior livestock shows, its exhibitors, employees, and its impact on the community, the need and importance for a manual has been established. Through researching the programs of several county fairs across the nation, it has become increasingly obvious that the need exists for an Employee Manual.

Chapter Three

Materials and Methods

To create a useful and effective manual for the Santa Barbara County fair, the most obvious first step seemed to be to consult with a number of individuals in the livestock show industry. These experts consisted of the Santa Barbara County Fair Livestock Office manager, the Santa Barbara County Fair Livestock Barn Stewards, and several professors of California Polytechnic State University with experience in the livestock industry. By contacting a variety of individuals in the industry, the author was able to get the information that was necessary to create a thorough manual.

Results of Consultation

The author of this project has a variety of knowledge in the area of county fair livestock shows, but felt that consulting with individuals directly involved in the industry would create the best possible manual. It was a privilege to work with and be advised by these influential individuals. Along with industry contacts, the author was advised by a Cal Poly professor throughout the entirety of the project. One of Cal Poly's Animal Science professors, Lee Rincker, served as a tremendous resource in answering any questions that the author had during the creation of the manual. The project was then

revised and edited by another professor within the authors' own major of Agriculture Science.

Through consulting with Sue Brady, the livestock office manager of Santa Barbara County Fair, and Lane Simmons and Marissa Mankins, previous barn stewards of Santa Barbara County Fair, the author was able to focus on areas needing improvement, including show format, awards format, and clerking responsibilities. While each show is distinctly different, formats are similar which allowed for some overlap in the handbook. It was decided upon that the best format for the manual would be to split it up by species of animals exhibited, with the exception of small livestock, which would have one manual for their barn to abide by.

Manual

This manual provides the knowledge necessary to run a successful livestock show. The purpose is to alleviate any potential questions which may arise in regards to market classes, showmanship classes, and awards. The information provided gives general explanations for the entire show, but is also broken down into certain areas needing different guidance. The plan for this handbook is to implement it as the manual used by all livestock employees at the 2015 Santa Barbara County Fair. Employees should use it as a training book to review and as a manual to follow during the show. Upon completion of the fair, it will be reviewed another time for errors and edited to

utilize in years to come. Should it be successful and prove useful for the success of the shows, it will be available for county fairs across California.

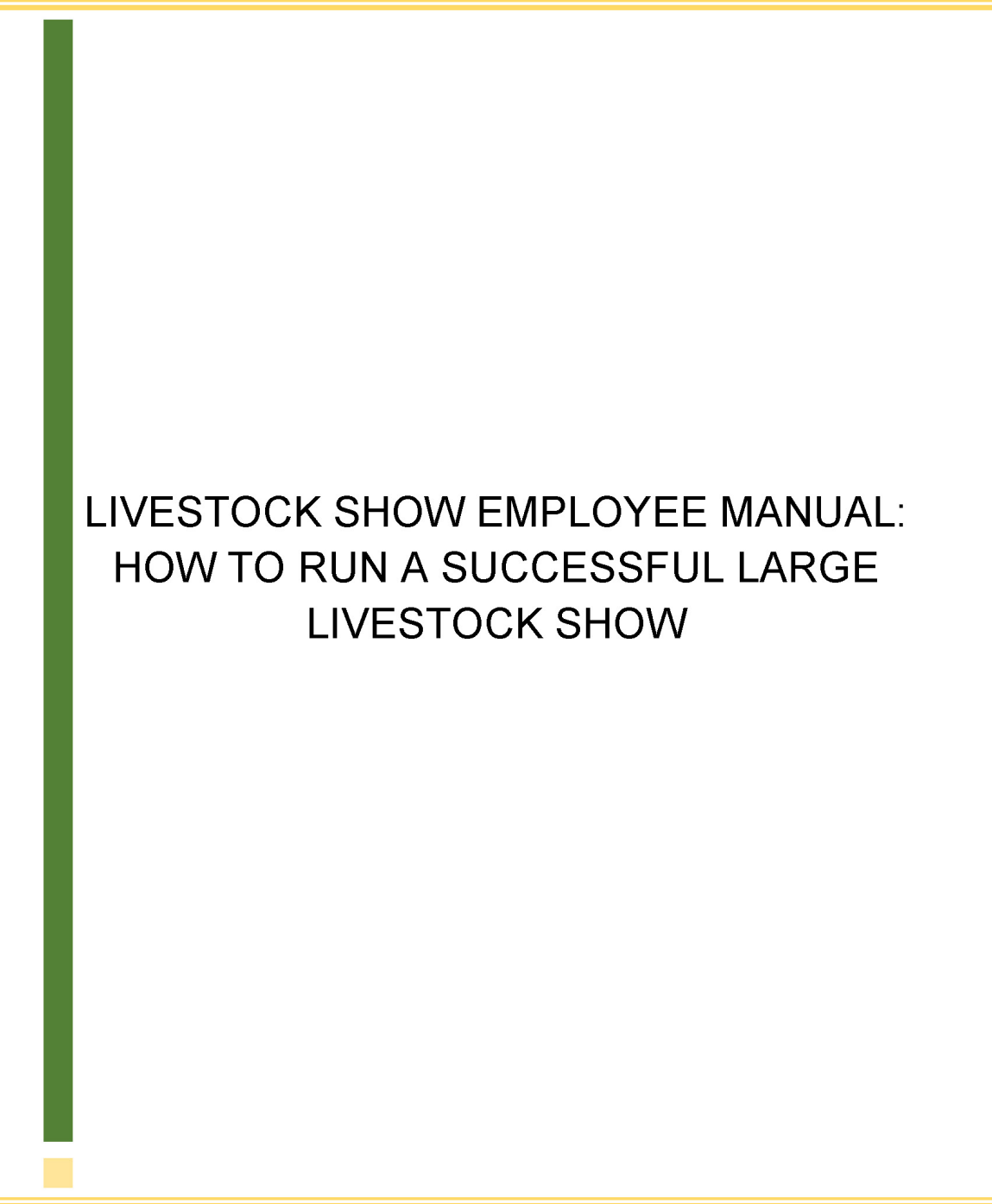
Summary

With the manual being available to all county fairs and employees, it can be utilized for the benefit of anyone wanting to use it. By consulting with individuals in the industry, the author was able to create a manual that can be adapted and utilized for many years to come.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

In the pages to follow, one will find the material created for this project, a manual created for the organization and success of Junior Livestock Shows. This manual includes a section for each show at the fair: Sheep and Goat, Beef, and Swine. By separating the book into three sections, the author was able to individualize each set of guidelines for each specific show. The manual also includes a showmanship section, designed to help showmanship run smoothly for each show.



LIVESTOCK SHOW EMPLOYEE MANUAL: HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL LARGE LIVESTOCK SHOW

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A Note from the Author

This manual was designed to assist Junior Livestock Show Staff in creating and running a successful Large Livestock Show. The large livestock species described in this manual are beef, sheep and market goats, and swine. The contents of this manual should serve as guidelines for managing each species' barn, move-in, weigh-in, show prep, and show.

The author would like to acknowledge their appreciation towards those that helped her in the completion of this manual. By receiving input from experts in the industry, the author was able to produce a thorough manual.

Beef Show Guidelines:

General Overview:

The beef show is unique in the sense that within the beef barn there are two shows, one for market and breeding beef, and one for replacement heifers. The breeding and market beef show takes place on one day and the replacement heifer show occurs on another day with an additional day for showmanship. Both market steers and replacement heifers will also have a local bred show (please see guidebook for more information). All beef exhibitors will show in showmanship classes (IE heifers with steers) but broken down by age group and expertise.

Barn Management:

Barn steward will be responsible for patrolling the beef barn intermittently throughout the week to watch for hazards or illegal activities that may occur. These hazards and illegal activities vary by fair, and should be discussed with the Livestock Superintendent. Communication is KEY in order to prevent problems in a barn. Work with exhibitors, parents, and advisors to get to know their wants and needs. No two exhibitors or animals are alike, and it is important to understand that. Some heifers are very close to their due date and that should be something to watch out for in case of emergency. If you are having problems, immediately contact the Livestock Superintendent, they are the ones who will likely be able to get through to the parents.

Move-in:

On the day that animals move in, it is imperative that the barn steward is available to watch cattle unload. It is here that they are able to see firsthand which animals that might potentially cause problems. If they are noticeably difficult to unload from the trailer or are not behaving well for the exhibitor, barn steward should take note of ear tags and descriptions to keep on hand during weigh-in. It is also important to check for heifers close to calving when cattle are unloading.

Weigh-in:

During weigh-in, the barn steward and other individuals helping/working weigh-in should be looking out for problems with animals. These problems could be behavioral or medical. If an animal that was previously placed on the watch list during move-in is continuing to act up, it is likely necessary to talk with the exhibitor, their parents, and the livestock manager. Problems pertaining to behavior should be taken care of in a professional manner, but should not be overlooked. Animals considered wild or unruly can cause turmoil within the barn and are a huge hazard to exhibitors and visitors to the fair.

Show Prep:

Exhibitors should be the ONLY individuals fitting or feeding the animals. Advisors and parents should have as little contact with animals as possible, unless for reasons pertaining to safety. There is NO permitted use of drenchers, or un-prescribed drugs. Things to look out for include added hair and other artificial parts. A good judge can tell the difference, but it is important to keep the show fair.

Show Ring Management:

First thing in the morning prior to show, the ring should be wet down and raked to prevent dust from picking up throughout the day. This may need to be done intermittently during the show day (during a lunch break usually works well). From here you should make sure that you have ALL of your awards for the given show day, or that they are at very least organized in the livestock office. From here you should divide and go over your jobs to be clear who will be fulfilling which task.

These are the tasks to be completed within the beef show: Clerk, ring lead/check in, and awards. The clerk's job is to take all final placings and record them into the book given to them for the show. They should also be responsible for announcing classes in the ring and placings. The ring lead will work the gate, check exhibitors in, and lead exhibitors at the head of the class. They are also responsible for verifying that all exhibitors are in compliance of the dress code for show. Any exhibitor not abiding by the dress code is automatically disqualified from the class. It is important that the ring lead speak with the judge to find out how he likes to set his

classes. The awards person will give out awards to each respective individual, and the clerk should follow them to get their placings as they go.

The beef show ring can be stressful, but is also easy at the same time. Class sizes are small and faces become familiar, but it is easy to get too comfortable. As with any large animal, they can be unpredictable and it is important to treat them as so. If an animal starts to spook, just be aware and step in to alleviate the situation if necessary.

Sheep and Goat Show Guidelines

General Overview:

The sheep and goat barn is a highly competitive barn, with the majority of exhibitors being very dedicated to their animals. Sheep and goats will show on two days with one day given for market and breeding and one day for showmanship. All 4-H and FFA members will compete in market to be eligible for auction.

Barn Management:

Barn steward should patrol the sheep/goat barn intermittently throughout the week to watch for health issues or illegal activities that may occur. These problems will be brought to attention prior to the show and during move-in; it is vital to communicate with the Livestock Superintendent on potential issues. It is important to keep an eye on animals that appear to be ill or of health that may need special care from a vet.

Move-in:

When animals are moving in, it is important to keep an eye on them as they are getting placed into their pens. If an animal appears to be sick, injured, or show signs of ringworm, it is important to take note so that you can watch for problems that may arise during weigh-in.

Weigh-in:

During weigh-in it is important to check back up on the animals that you made note of during move-in. Any animals that don't make

weight will be asked to leave the grounds ASAP. There will be a vet on hand to assess every animal to verify their health. Should an animal be ill or exhibit symptoms of a spreadable virus, they will also be disqualified. While this is unfortunate, it is part of the industry and maintaining as high of standards as possible.

Show Prep:

It is important to watch out for foul play within the sheep and goat barns. As this barn is highly competitive, it is important to be aware of all exhibitors, parents and advisors. Many advisors and parents will provide you with information and concerns, and it is important to take that very seriously. To best understand what issues you may run into, it is important to talk with your Livestock Manager and get to know them and the barn you are working in.

Show Ring Management:

First thing in the morning prior to show, the ring should be wet down and raked to prevent dust from picking up throughout the day. This may need to be done intermittently during the show day (during a lunch break usually works well). From here you should make sure that you have ALL of your awards for the given show day and that you know when to give which awards. Each individual ribbon should be accounted for. At this point, you should divide and go over your jobs to be clear who will be fulfilling which task. It is important that the staff in the ring communicate and understand the judge's needs and how he expects the ring to run.

During the show, typically four individuals should be in the ring. One person will be checking exhibitors in and leading the ring, the ring clerk will be taking placings and handing out ribbons, show clerk will be writing the official placings into the book. It is important that the gate person checking exhibitors in checks for the correct ear tag as well as checking the official uniform. Anyone not following dress code cannot exhibit an animal (please see the guidebook for official uniform code). The ring clerk should be an excellent communicator and should be able to tell exhibitors when they will be needing to return for a final show. Barn steward should be in the ring at all times and monitoring the barn to alleviate any issues that may arise.

Swine Show Guidelines

General Overview:

To date, the swine show is the largest show, with around 600 head of animals. While the show is highly competitive, there are also less competitive exhibitors that are raising hogs for the learning experience. It is important to recognize all exhibitors as important and treat all of them equally. Swine will show on two days with one day given for market and breeding and one day for showmanship. All 4-H and FFA members will compete in market to be eligible for auction.

Barn Management:

Barn steward will patrol the North and South Swine barns intermittently to watch for illegal activities that may occur. Pigs are sensitive animals and that should be accounted for. A watch list of ill animals is an excellent way to keep track of your hogs that could need special care or attention. The matter of the fact is that hogs are fragile animals that are prone to illness and do not take well to stress and high temperatures. However, if you do notice that an animal seems sick and needs to go home, take care of it as swiftly and quietly as possible. At the end of the day, you are doing a service to the industry by only letting the highest quality animals exhibit and sell at your show.

Move-in:

During move-in, you should be aware of animals that seem sick or injured when they are unloading out of the trailer. If you should

recognize an issue, make note of their ear tag so that you can watch them during weigh-in.

Weigh-in:

Again, it is important to watch out for animals that you had initially placed on a watch list as well as keeping an eye out for any others. There will be animals that are overweight or underweight, they should be moved off of the grounds ASAP.

Show Prep:

This barn is one of the easiest to watch in terms of illegal drugs and artificial parts added to the animal. Since hogs are all clipped, the only thing to watch out for is problems with other exhibitors. Create a relationship with your barn security guards and let them know which animals to keep an eye on.

Show Ring Management:

First thing in the morning prior to show, the ring should be wet down and raked to prevent dust from picking up throughout the day. This may need to be done intermittently during the show day (during a lunch break usually works well). From here you should make sure that you have ALL of your awards for the given show day and that you know when to give which awards. Each individual ribbon should be accounted for. At this point, you should divide and go over your jobs to be clear who will be fulfilling which task.

The swine show is typically a well-oiled machine. Volunteers that work gates of holding pens and work boards are seasoned veterans and

will not require much guidance, if any. However, your ring staff will need to know where they belong during the show. Communication between your judge, your volunteers, and your staff is vital to know how to keep the show running smoothly.

Your staff will typically consist of several individuals. First, you will have someone at the gate checking exhibitors in. It is important that the gate person checking exhibitors in checks for the correct ear tag as well as checking the official uniform. Anyone not following dress code cannot exhibit an animal (please see the guidebook for official uniform code). One person will be ring clerk, and in charge of taking placings for the show. They should also be doing barn calls and announcing class results. This person will also hand out ribbons to exhibitors with the help of another staff. The ring clerk should be an excellent communicator and should be able to tell exhibitors when they will be needing to return for a final show. There should be one additional person on hand to help where help is needed. The barn steward should be available at the ring at all times throughout the day.

Chapter Five

Summary, Recommendations, Conclusions

The intent of this project is to alleviate any confusion that could potentially arise during Junior Livestock Shows at county fairs. Through creating a Junior Livestock Show Employee Manual, the authors hope to implement its use at many fairs throughout the state. By consulting with Barn Stewards from the Santa Barbara County Fair and working with an Animal Science professor at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, the author was able to define the needs for the manual to be successful. By publishing this senior project, it is easily accessible to fair managers that are interested, free of cost.

Recommendations

The following recommendations should be made if one is completing a similar project:

1. Observation of each species show for an entire fair prior to completing the project.
 - a. The author had experience in all areas of livestock, but sought advice from previous barn stewards on show species that she had not run. By observing each species, it would allow for a more thorough understanding of each process.
2. Implementation of manual for the calendar year's fair and revisions prior to submission of the project.

- a. While the author is happy with the project, they feel that the manual would be more thorough if they implemented for a year prior to publishing to work out any kinks in the system that could potentially occur.

Conclusions

The author feels that the creation of this manual was a success based on the standards that were established in chapter one of the project. The manual that was created will benefit livestock employees and ultimately livestock exhibitors in future years to come. It was discovered during the completion of the project that each species truly has specific need, which is also likely the case for each fair, making the implementation of this somewhat challenging. However, this could be used as a base to build one's own manual off of for their own fair's benefit. Aside from that negative point, however, the author feels as though this project was successful and will serve its purpose in the industry.

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Appendix 1:

Livestock Show Employee Manual: How to Run a Successful Junior Livestock

Show