

Incorporating Instruction into the Huasna Valley 4-H Beef Group

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Huasna Valley 4-H Steer Project Manual

Introduction

4-H is an educational, volunteer-based organization that teaches children leadership skills, self-confidence, and responsibility. The junior livestock program is a great opportunity for 4-H members to gain experience and allows members to develop an appreciation for the livestock industry. In order to guide individuals through the process of raising livestock, the author created a steer manual that will help newer members and leaders become successful.

The goal of a steer project manual is to guide a new 4-H leader and the members of the club through the process of purchasing, managing, showing, and selling of a steer. This manual will serve as a reference for the leader during club meetings in order for him/her to provide the 4-H members with knowledge about how to manage their steer properly. The Huasna Valley 4-H manual will also serve as a guide for the 4-H members to reference when they are having problems with halter breaking, feed amounts, health concerns, and certain dates to meet. All together, this manual will provide the Huasna Valley 4-H club with an additional educational opportunity and provide alternative ideas.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this project was to design a manual to be used by 4-H leaders and members. The author wants to develop an interesting and intriguing manual that will demonstrate how to raise a market steer. This manual will contain step by step instructions on how fit a steer for show and how to halter break. These illustrations will help guide a 4-H member through the process of handling their steer. The Huasna Valley 4-H Steer Manual will provide beneficial information, to the leader and member, from the moment the project is purchased to sale. More importantly, the manual will get the 4-H members excited about their new project!

The 4-H steer manual will lead to a more insightful and qualified leader while creating a less stressful experience for a beginning 4-H member. 4-H is a beneficial opportunity for youth interested in animal agriculture and provides a basis for them to gain confidence and responsibility. By educating these members with facts and new information, these 4-H members will be better able to care for their projects; therefore, leading to an increased rate of returning members. By creating an experience that is enjoyable and stress free, members and leaders will be able to have a successful project.

Methodology

In order to complete the Huasna Valley 4-H Steer Manual, the author attended one of the monthly 4-H meetings and discussed the manual with the new leader. The author was able to compile a list of important dates, paperwork, and information incorporated with the beef group. The author was able to formulate potential topics to discuss in the manual based on what the leader was already familiar with.

In order to gather information to incorporate in the manual, the author talked with experienced 4-H members. These 4-H members were able to provide advice on how they have raised their steers in the past as well as what worked best for them. The process of halter breaking seemed to be uniform throughout the club, however, the author was able to gain insight on how time consuming and frustrating halter breaking can be. On this note, the author researched multiple different ways to overcome difficulties when halter breaking with the goal of making a smoother halter breaking process for new members. Secondly, the members were asked about what feeds they use for their beef animal. The feeds seemed to fluctuate depending on the member's goals with their project; however, the author was able to decide which feeds to discuss in the manual and how important it is to monitor the type and amount of feed.

The manual was created using Microsoft Word and consisted of chapters labeled: Why Show?, Important Fair Dates, Getting Started, Facilities, Equipment Needed, Halter Breaking, Feed and Nutrition, Health, Showmanship/Market, Record Keeping, and Quality Assurance. Each of these chapters will serve as a reference to better inform the members about their market animal.

Conclusions

The Huasna Valley 4-H Market Steer Manual was displayed to the leader and it was said to be very informative. He will utilize the information when constructing the monthly meetings and when members have questions about their market steer. The manual will also be available for the members to use if they want to be more informed about their project.

Recommendations

The author wanted to make this manual available on the Huasna Valley 4-H website in order for everyone in the club to have the ability to view it. This will be beneficial because it will provide an opportunity for members who are not in the steer group to learn more about raising a market steer. In turn, this could increase the number of individuals joining the beef group. The author also recommends that this manual be a living document; therefore, the document can be added to and edited when the 4-H leader finds it necessary to do so.