

Maryland 4-H Animal Science Program Guidebook

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EXTENSION

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Purpose and Goals of the 4-H Animal Science Program

Overview:

Youth in Animal Sciences projects learn and practice life skills with an emphasis on decision making, acquiring knowledge and taking personal responsibility through participation in 4-H animal science opportunities such as project animal care, judging and bowl events. They develop competencies in animal science, including an understanding of animal sciences and animal management as well as an awareness of agricultural issues in society (e.g. a concern for animal well being and increasing public agricultural literacy.) Youth have the opportunity to learn about the parts of an animal, breeds, costs to raise animals, how to care for animals and much more.

Animal Science in Maryland 4-H:

Maryland 4-H Youth enroll in more than 8,000 Animal Science Projects each year. With thousands of youth participating in animal science projects, Maryland 4-H has an important role to help youth learn about the importance of protecting the welfare of the animals involved in these projects, the importance of providing a safe and wholesome food supply and the importance of protecting the image and credibility of the animal industries of which they are a part.

Participation in 4-H Animal Science events offers experiential learning opportunities for youth to become more engaged in their animal projects, develop valuable life skills, and interact with youth from across the state. Each year, more than 1,300 youth participate in statewide Judging Contests, Quiz Bowls, Skillathons, Hippology Contests and animal-related communication events. In addition to these competitive events, there are many other opportunities for youth to learn and grow through their animal projects including clinics, workshops, judging practices and overnight experiences.

Volunteers are critical to extending 4-H program outreach to youth across Maryland. Targeted training opportunities for youth and adult leaders include events such as the Animal Science Leaders Forum, Horsemanship Standards Examiners Training and sessions at the Maryland 4-H Teen and Volunteer Forum. These are conducted to help volunteers build skills specific to their work with youth in animal science program area.

Goals of the Maryland 4-H Animal Science Program:

- Teach youth and adults best animal husbandry management practices.
- Develop leadership skills in youth and adults through animal science experiences.
- Develop life skills in youth and adults through animal science project work.
- Develop citizenship skills in youth and adults through animal science experiences.
- Capitalize on people's attraction to and interest in animals to recruit un-served and under-served audiences into 4-H through participation in animal science activities.