

Maryland 4-H Requirements and Tools for Exhibiting 4-H Sheep Projects

When preparing to show livestock in 4-H, the Maryland 4-H program rules and guidelines and those of your county, can seem overwhelming at times. If you carefully read over all of the rules and guidelines and have open communication with your 4-H Extension educator, 4-H Sheep Department superintendents and your club leader, it will be easier to ensure a positive experience.

Each County 4-H Livestock Program is Unique

It's important to ensure that you are meeting all the program requirements in order to show (breeding or market sheep) and potentially sell your market lamb.

1. Animal Ownership - In order for your market lamb or breeding sheep project to be eligible to show for the current year, it must fit within the ownership deadline of the Maryland 4-H program.

- Market lambs must be owned by June 1st of the current year.
- Breeding sheep must be owned by July 1st of the current year. If you are exhibiting a breeding sheep, the association registration papers must be signed by the breed secretary and stamped by July 1st to be eligible to exhibit the sheep in the current year.
- Commercial sheep must be owned by July 1st of the current year. Your commercial sheep will need to have the proper 4-H paperwork (Livestock Registration Form) (Figure 1) and a Maryland 4-H commercial sheep ear tag by July 1st of the current year to be eligible to show. Most commercial sheep will be tagged at the county's sheep weigh-in (check with your county Extension office for weigh-in/tagging date).

Take note of deadlines in your county 4-H program, particularly if the county has an earlier county fair. In that

case, the ownership deadlines may be set sooner than the state deadlines.

2. Livestock Registration Form – The Maryland 4-H Program requires that each 4-H market lamb or commercial sheep (non-registered sheep) complete a Livestock Registration Form (Figure 1). The form will ask for your contact information, local 4-H club and your 4-H age. If you are keeping your animals at a location other than your home, you need to include the address of the farm where your 4-H sheep project is housed.

In the box at the top of the form, check off if you are weighing a market lamb or a commercial sheep. If you are tagging a market lamb and a commercial sheep, you need to complete a separate form for each animal. You will need to complete as much information as possible, including:

- *Official U.S. tag number*: This will be a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved Scrapie tag. This tag will start with the letters of the state where the animal was born. Example: If the market lamb was born in Maryland, the tag will start with MD followed by a four-digit number assigned by USDA. There will also be a personal tag number associated with the Scrapie tag (this tag is obtained by the breeder of the sheep).
- *Personal ear tag/tattoo number*: The breeder may only have a Scrapie tag in the sheep you bred or bought. Many breeders now use Scrapie tags with a personal farm number as identification for the breeders' records.
- *Breed*: (Southdown, Dorset, Crossbred, etc.)
- *Sex*: (Male or Female)
- *Bred and owned*: Indicate if you owned the ewe who lambled out the lamb you plan on showing or if you

purchased the animal.

- *Date of birth:* When was your lamb or sheep born?
- *4-H tag number:* Leave this column blank since a 4-H ear tag number will be assigned when you attend the county weigh-in and tagging.
- *Tag day weight:* The lamb will be weighed and the information recorded at that weigh-in. This will be considered your animal's beginning weight for your market lamb project; and
- *Signatures required:* The 4-H member and parent/legal guardian must sign on the front of the form to confirm the information. Signatures are also required on the back of the form from the 4-H member and parent/legal guardian acknowledging they have read and agree to abide by the Maryland 4-H Animal Science Code of Ethics (Figure 2).

Depending on which county 4-H program you are enrolled in, there may be a charge for the number of ear tags you will need for tagging day. Contact your Extension office for the cost or charge for tags.

3. Livestock Weigh-in and Tagging – All counties hold an initial weigh-in and tagging for market lambs and commercial sheep. Dates will vary around the state and are available from your local Extension offices. You will need to help with the care of your sheep at the weigh-in/tagging. Some tips to help improve your weigh-in experience:

- *Paperwork:* Complete all of your paperwork before arriving at the weigh-in/tagging. Check with your local Extension office to see if you need to pre-register for weigh-in and tagging. Most offices will request your Livestock Registration Form beforehand to ensure they have ordered enough tags.
- *Halter break your sheep project:* Work with your sheep before weigh-in to ensure it is halter broken. A properly trained animal helps get you through the weigh-in line quickly and safely and keeps volunteers working at the weigh-in safe.
- *Communication:* During weigh-in/tagging, you will be asked questions related to your project and given directions that may be as simple as moving vehicles and trailers or allowing other families behind you to move into the weigh-in/tagging line. If someone is not listening and paying attention, the weigh-in process will take longer for everyone.
- *Tagging:* Ensure that your animal has been properly tagged based on the information you provided (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Everyone who comes into weigh-in/tagging with a sheep will receive a new Maryland 4-H tag in their animal's ear



Market Lambs – Blue Maryland 4-H ear tag
Commercial Sheep – Purple Maryland 4-H ear tag

4. Animal Husbandry Quality Assurance (AHQA)

Program – Maryland 4-H members are required to participate in the AHQA online program to ensure they use best management practices in caring, grooming and showing safely and ethically. The program is designed to be completed one time per 4-H age division (junior, intermediate and senior).


- Junior members (8-10 years old as of January 1st) must complete one AHQA program, which will cover them in all livestock species they plan on showing.
- Intermediates (11-13 years old as of January 1st) and senior's (14-18 years old as of January 1st) are required to participate in the program when they age up into a new division. The program for intermediates and seniors will consist of a general program and then becomes species-specific. Therefore, these individuals will have to take a sheep-related AHQA when moving into older age divisions.

Read the Fair Requirements as Soon as They are Available

Many fairs leave their department from the previous year posted online and by spring of the current year, the new rules for your fair should be available. If you are showing for the first time, talk with your club leader, sheep superintendent or Extension educator on the major rules and guidelines you need to be following.

1. **Fair entry system** – To be eligible to exhibit at fairs, you must pre-enter your market lamb(s)/breeding sheep. Most fairs use an online entry system and your county

MARYLAND 4-H LIVESTOCK REGISTRATION FORM



Please print neatly with a pen!

Year _____ Date Due to Extension Office: _____

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____
 Club Name _____ County _____

ONE Registration Form PER CATEGORY

Check Category:

<input type="checkbox"/> Beef Steers	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Beef Heifers
<input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Steers	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Breeding Sheep
<input type="checkbox"/> Market Hogs	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Meat Goats
<input type="checkbox"/> Market Lambs	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Indicate what) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Market Goats	

IF ANIMAL IS HOUSED AT A DIFFERENT ADDRESS THAN ABOVE, PLEASE PROVIDE NAME AND LOCATION BELOW. MUST BE APPROVED BY COUNTY/CITY 4-H OFFICE.

Name _____ Phone _____ County _____
 Address _____

4-H Tag Number (Leave Blank)	Official US Tag Number / Scrapie Tag Number	Personal Tag Number/Tattoo/ Ear Notch	Breed(s)	Sex	Check One		Date of Birth	Tag Day Weight	Comments
					Bred & Owned	Purchased			

Date Weighed _____ Weigh Master Signature and Verification _____

My signature indicates that the above animal(s) are under my care, I own them, and I have correctly and honestly filled this form out to the best of my knowledge.

4-H Member Signature: _____ Parent or Legal Guardian Signature: _____

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Figure 1. You will need to complete the Maryland 4-H Livestock Registration Form prior to attending weigh-in/tagging days in your county (Maryland 4-H Animal Science Resources, <https://extension.umd.edu/4-h/4-h-program-areas/animal-science-resources>)

University of Maryland Extension (UME) 4-H Code of Animal Science Ethics

4-H members enrolled in animal science projects (e.g., beef, camelids, dairy, dog, goat, horse, poultry, rabbit, sheep, small pet, and swine) shall, at all times, conduct themselves with honesty and good sportsmanship, including while with their projects and at all 4-H animal science activities and events. Their conduct should always reflect the highest standards of honor and dignity to promote the advancement of 4-H and its animal science program. 4-H members, as well as parents, UME volunteers and others working with them, are under an affirmative responsibility to do more than avoid improper conduct or questionable acts; and their conduct and values must serve as a positive influence on others.

This Code of Ethics applies to all 4-H members who are enrolled in animal science projects, and to others (4-Hers, parents, volunteers, owners, etc.) who participate in the animal science program; and it covers daily animal care, as well as personal and other 4-H activities and events.

4-H members and others who violate this Code of Ethics demean the integrity of 4-H and its animal science program. 4-H members who violate the code of animal science ethics are subject to sanctions including, but not limited to, forfeiture of premiums, awards, and/or auction proceeds and may be prohibited from participation in 4-H or 4-H UME events or activities; other violators may also be subject to sanction, as appropriate. Infractions may be reviewed by 4-H and/or UME (on the local or state level, as appropriate to the infraction and to the event and/or activity in question), and/or may be subject to a fair oversight committee or other entity that oversees an activity or event. In addition, some acts may also be subject to review based upon the *Maryland 4-H Youth Code of Conduct* and/or other UME policies.

The following is a list of standards and requirements for all 4-H animal science projects, at all times, whether at home, at animal exhibitions or events, or any other 4-H event or activity.

- The care of all 4-H project animals is the responsibility of the 4-H member. 4-H members must properly care for and groom their animals for the duration of their project.
- All project animals must be housed under a different location is submitted to and approved in writing by the local 4-H staff. Any change in location must be approved in writing by the local 4-H staff. However, it is not necessary to report direct transport to and from shows or other events.
- Upon request of 4-H, UME, or other program, fair, event or animal officials, 4-H members must present proof of ownership, length of ownership, identity and/or age of all 4-H project animals owned or leased. Misrepresentation of ownership, age, or identity of animal, or any facts relating thereto is prohibited. If a 4-H project animal is sold in a livestock sale, it is no longer eligible to be shown in a 4-H event in Maryland in that year.
- 4-H members must provide appropriate animal health certificates upon request of 4-H, UME, or other program, fair, event or animal officials.
- 4-H project animals must be presented to competition, activities and/or events, where they will enter the food chain, free of violable drug residues. Animals which are presented to competition, events and/or activities that do not culminate with the animal entering the food chain, shall not be administered drugs other than in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and rules. 4-H project animals shall not be exhibited if drugs administered in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and rules may affect the animal's performance or appearance at the event. At any time after an animal arrives on a fair or other 4-H activity or event premises, a licensed veterinarian must administer or, in consultation with fair, event, UME, or 4-H officials, direct the administration of any treatments involving the use of drugs and/or medications. Drenching at any time after an animal arrives on a fair or other 4-H activity or event premises is prohibited, except when performed or directed by a licensed veterinarian in consultation with fair, event, UME, or 4-H officials for the sole purpose of protecting the health of the animal.
- The act of enrolling in a 4-H animal science project, and/or entering a project animal in a 4-H competition, show, activity, or other event, gives consent for 4-H or UME or event authorities to obtain any specimens of urine, saliva, blood, hair, tissue, or other substance from the animal to be used for testing purposes including, but not limited to, drugs or identification. It is presumed that the sample of urine, saliva, blood or other substance tested by the approved laboratory to which it is sent is the one taken from the animal in question, its integrity is preserved, and all procedures of said collection and preservation, transfer to the laboratory and analysis of the sample are correct and accurate and the report received from the laboratory pertains to the sample taken from the animal in question and correctly reflects the condition of the animal at the time the sample was taken, with the burden on the 4-H owner to prove otherwise at any review in regard to the matter conducted by a fair or other event or the 4-H program. If the laboratory report on the chemical analysis of saliva, urine, blood, hair, tissue or other sample, taken from a 4-H animal science project, indicates the presence of forbidden drugs or medications, this shall be prima facie evidence such substance has been administered to the animal either internally or externally.
- Any surgical procedure or injection of any foreign substance or drug or the external application of any substance (irritant, counter irritant, or similar substance) which could affect the animal's performance or alter its natural contour, conformation, or appearance, except external applications of substances to the hoofs or horns of animals which affect appearance only and except for surgical procedures performed by a duly licensed veterinarian for the sole purpose of protecting the health of the animal, is prohibited.
- Using ice, ice packs, cold packs, or cold compresses, internally or externally, other than those prescribed to relieve heat stress or a medical condition as diagnosed by a duly licensed veterinarian for the sole purpose of protecting the health of the animal, is prohibited.
- The use of showing and/or handling practices or devices, such as striking animals to cause swelling, using electrical devices, or other similar practices, are not acceptable and are prohibited.
- All judges, fair and event officials and/or UME 4-H staff and volunteers shall be treated with courtesy, cooperation, and respect, and no person shall direct abusive or threatening conduct toward them or toward exhibitors or others participating in the activity. In addition, direct criticism or interference with a judge, fair, show or event official, exhibitor, breed representative, or UME 4-H staff or volunteer before, during, or after an event or other activity is prohibited.
- No one shall violate this Code of Animal Science Ethics or conspire with another person or persons to intentionally violate this Code of Ethics or knowingly contribute or cooperate with another person or persons either by affirmative action or inaction to violate this Code of Ethics.
- The application of this Code of Ethics provides for absolute responsibility for an animal's condition to the 4-H member whether or not he or she was actually instrumental in or had actual knowledge of the treatment of the animal in contravention of this Code of Ethics.
- By enrolling in an animal science project and/or entering an animal in a fair or other 4-H event or activity, the 4-H member, and his/her parent or guardian, consent to have disciplinary action taken by appropriate authorities (including UME, 4-H, fair, event and/or other activity officials) for violation of this Code of Animal Science Ethics and/or any other applicable rules of UME, 4-H, a fair, activity or other event, without recourse against UME, 4-H and/or other authorities. In addition, the 4-H member, and his/her parent or guardian, further understand and agree that any action which contravenes these rules, and is also in violation of federal, state, or local laws, statutes, regulations, or rules, may be referred to appropriate law enforcement authorities with jurisdiction over such infractions.

By signing this form the 4-H member and his/her parent or guardian each verify that they have read and understand the UME 4-H Code of Animal Science Ethics and the consequences of and penalties provided for violations of the Code.

4-H ANIMAL SCIENCE PROJECT ENROLLMENT STATEMENT

I have read and understand the UME 4-H Code of Animal Science Ethics, and I consent and agree to abide by the UME 4-H Code of Animal Science Ethics. I understand this Statement must be signed by both the 4-H member and his/her parent or guardian, will be kept on file in the local 4-H office, and will apply to all 4-H animal science activities and events. I understand that if I do not agree to or sign this Code, I/my 4-H youth may not be eligible to enroll in a 4-H animal science project, may not receive associated materials, and/or may not be allowed exhibit or participate in covered activities.

4-H Member Signature _____ Date _____ Printed Name of 4-H Member _____ Parent or Guardian of the 4-H Member _____ Date _____ Printed Name of Parent or Guardian _____

This Code of Ethics has been adapted from the IAFSE Code of Show Ring Ethics; LNEB; 7th S; FWL 2001; FWL 2002; FWL 2007; CWA; Retrieved by DA 9/2009; CWA 11/2009; CWA, Retrieved by CP 12/2017. Page 2 of 2

Figure 2. The 4-H member and parent/legal guardian must sign to acknowledge they read and agree to abide by the Maryland 4-H Animal Science Code of Ethics

Extension office will release the information when the entry system is open. When making your entries, you will need to complete the following steps:

- Register as a 4-H member exhibitor. The 4-H project must be registered in the member’s name;
- Enter the correct classes with your sheep projects, especially if you are exhibiting several sheep. Make sure that your market lambs/breeding sheep are entered into the correct divisions. Enter extra classes such as showmanship, bred and owned divisions (if applicable) and if offered, rate of gain (market lambs only).
- Enter the correct Maryland 4-H ear tag number (market lamb(s)/commercial sheep) for each animal;
- Market lamb classes will ask for your animal’s beginning weight and date of weigh-in. Enter the date and weight your lamb was when you attended the county weigh-in/tagging day.
- When you have finished entering all classes for your sheep project and you are ready to check out, make sure to pay any cost associated with the entry and confirm that you have entered. You should print out a confirmation number for your entry, along with receiving a confirmation email. Keep these in your records just in case there are problems with the fair entry system.

2. Health papers – The Maryland Department of Agriculture requires that all livestock entering fairgrounds in the state have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI or health papers). You will need to have a veterinarian come to the farm where your animals are kept to inspect them for good health.

Make sure to have the following information written down for the veterinarian:

- Name, address and phone number of 4-H member
- Name, address of fairgrounds and date of first fair
- Information on the livestock being inspected (ear tag numbers (4-H and farm numbers, if applicable), USDA Scrapie tag number, breed, sex, date of birth).

When the veterinarian completes the health papers, you will receive a pink copy. Keep the papers with your records and they must accompany your sheep project to all shows. If you are showing in Maryland, the health papers are valid for 120 days and you must complete a health check on your sheep before entering the fair. This will be verified by filling out

the back (self-certification) of your health papers prior to each fair or show.

If you are planning to exhibit your sheep project outside of Maryland, you will be required to have a new set of health papers for interstate exhibits. You will follow the same procedures as above, but these health papers are only valid for 30 days and are for the specific fair/show at which you are exhibiting.

3. Rate of Gain (ROG) (Market lambs only) – Maryland 4-H has a set ROG that your market lamb must gain in order to be eligible for most of the fairs and livestock sales throughout the state. Rate of gain for Maryland 4-H is set at .35lbs daily. To calculate ROG, use the following formula:

1. **Calculate number of days from initial weigh-in through the final weigh-in at the county or state fair** (when calculating your days include day of both weigh-ins);
2. **Subtract initial weigh-in weight from final weigh-in weight;**
3. **Divide the total weight gained by number of days between weigh-ins to get the daily ROG for the market lamb.**

EXAMPLE

Initial weigh-in: May 8th, the market lamb weighed 82 lbs.

Final weigh-in: July 30th, the market lamb weighs 142 lbs.

Number of days between weigh-ins = 83 days

Market lamb gained = 60 lbs. (End weight – beginning weight = pounds gained)

Final ROG = 60 lbs./83 days = .72 lbs. per day

4. Minimum/maximum weights – Check with your local county or state fairs on the weight requirements for market lamb projects. Each county may have a requirement for what your market lamb needs to weigh when it arrives at the fair. Weight requirements are often used to determine if your market lamb is eligible for the local 4-H livestock sale.

Figure 4. Front pages of Livestock Market Project Record and Large Animal Breeding Project forms, which are requirements of 4-H sheep projects¹

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Maryland 4-H Animal Science – Livestock Market Project Record

Name _____ 4-H Age _____
 Primary Club Name _____
 Years in 4-H _____ Years in this Project _____

I have completed this record and believe all information to be complete and accurate.

Member's Signature _____ Date _____ Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Please indicate your Animal Science Project Area
 Beef/Dairy Steer Market Goat Market Sheep Market Swine

What goals did you set for your project this year and did you achieve them?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

What were two things you learned from completing this project this year?
 1. _____
 2. _____

What is one thing you would like to improve or do differently with your project next year?

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Solutions in your community

Maryland 4-H Animal Science – Large Animal Breeding Project Record

Name _____ 4-H Age _____
 Primary Club Name _____
 Years in 4-H _____ Years in this Project _____

I have completed this record and believe all information to be complete and accurate.

Member's Signature _____ Date _____ Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Please indicate your Animal Science Project Area
 Beef (Breeding) Goat (Meat Breeding) Goat (Dairy Breeding) Horse (Breeding)
 Sheep (Breeding) Swine (Breeding)

What goals did you set for your project this year and did you achieve them?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

What were two things you learned from completing this project this year?
 1. _____
 2. _____

What is one thing you would like to improve or do differently with your project next year?

5. Project records – Accurate recordkeeping is an important part of raising your 4-H sheep project. Using the Maryland 4-H Market Livestock Project Records or the Maryland 4-H Breeding Livestock Project Records (Figure 4) will help you keep appropriate records and give thought to what you are learning throughout the year. You will be asked to complete the following areas for your sheep project:

- **Goals:** – At the beginning of raising your market lamb (s)/breeding sheep, what goals did you set for yourself for the year and did you achieve them?
- **Learning:** What did you learn throughout the year about your sheep project?
- **Improve or do differently?** - What is something you would like to improve on next year or something you learned you need to do differently for your project in the future?
- **Life skills** – Using the life skill wheel provided on the project record, what skills did you learn and how did you learn that skill?
- **Project activities** – What activities did you attend that relates to your sheep project, such as sheep workshops, livestock judging, Spring 4-H show, county fair, etc.?
- **Project communication** – Most counties require 4-H members to have some sort of communication about their project. This could be a speech about “Why I chose to show market lambs” or a demonstration on “What equipment I need to show my breeding sheep.” Most of the time you can give your speech or demonstration at a club meeting, a county demonstration or a public speaking event.
- **Exhibits** – Where did you exhibit your market lamb(s)/breeding sheep? Write down all the shows you went to and each class you entered.
- **Information on project animals** -- Keeping records on each sheep you raise is important so you know where you started and where you will end with the project.
- **Expenses** --
 - **Feed** – A daily expense during your project year.
 - **Other expenses** – There are many other expenses to think about with your sheep project from equipment to entry fees for shows.
- **Health records** – You should keep records of every veterinarian visit and exactly what was needed, even if it’s a vet visit for health papers.

¹ <https://extension.umd.edu/4-h/4-h-program-areas/animal-science-resources>

- *Income* --
 - **Sale income** – At the end of your market lamb project, you will have income from either a county/state livestock sale to selling your lamb at the stockyards or privately.
 - **Other** – This includes premium money you received from exhibiting at fairs.

6. Livestock sales (market lambs) – Each county livestock sale is handled differently and will have different requirements. Most sales will have similar rules that market lambs need to reach a minimum weight and not exceed a maximum weight. Market lambs may need to make the State rate of gain requirement of .35lbs./day). Your market lamb will also need to be finished, which means the lamb will be evaluated for fat cover by a professional. Some sales will also stipulate that you need to complete the project record forms for the current year to be eligible for the next year’s livestock sale. Always read over the livestock sale rules to ensure you are meeting the requirements to sell your 4-H market lamb project.

Enhancing Your 4-H Educational Sheep Experience

1. Livestock Workshops – In your 4-H county, the Extension office or the fair may hold sheep workshops or field day opportunities for you to attend. These events offer a variety of educational topics, including grooming, washing, showing, animal health and nutrition. Guest speakers are often used to enhance the experience of attending the workshops. If your county offers a field day,

there will be a small show where 4-H members can focus on their skills in and out of the show ring

2. Spring 4-H shows – Throughout the state, regional shows are held for 4-H members. These shows offer 4-H members of all ages and experience levels a chance to bring their sheep (Figure 5). By participating in regional shows, 4-H members learn how to prepare their equipment and sheep for their county and state fairs.

3. Livestock skillathon – It’s important to consider other options to enhance your experience in the 4-H sheep project. One way to expand the learning process is through the livestock skillathon program, which emphasizes the variety of items needed to raise livestock. The skillathon program gives you a chance to learn about livestock breeds, equipment, meat cuts, feed (grains and hay), animal quality assurance and opportunities to learn about judging. The program expands your familiarity with the different parts of your sheep project.

4. Livestock judging – Participating in livestock judging helps you learn more about the qualities that make good quality cattle, sheep, swine and goats. Through judging, you will not only learn how to place classes of livestock but you will gain important public speaking skills through oral reasons.

Sources: *Animal Science Guidebook*. February 2011.
<https://www.extension.umd.edu/4-h/4-h-program-areas/animal-science-resources>

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