



Maryland 4-H Requirements and Tools for Exhibiting 4-H Beef 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 the rules and guidelines and have open communication with your 4-H Extension educator, 4-H Beef 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 beef) and potentially sell your market steer.

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

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





4-H member participating in a Veterinary Science Workshop learning how to safely work with a beef project.

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 the owners of each 4-H market steer or commercial heifer (non-registered heifer) complete a Livestock Registration Form (Figure 1). The form will ask

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 4-H members who are enrolled in animal science projects, and to others (4-Hern, parents, volunteers, owners, etc.) who participate in the animal science program; and it covers daily animal care, as well as participation in competition and other 4-H animal 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 at the 4-H member's residence unless 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 volatile 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 stalling 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 used 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 medication, 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 violation 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 and my 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 4-H Code of Show Ring Ethics: LNR, 7/93; 7/91, 2001; 7/91, 2002; 7/91, 2007; CWA, Revised by DA 3/2009; CWA 11/2009; CWA, Revised 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

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 beef project animal is housed.

In the box at the top of the form, check off if you are weighing a market steer or a commercial heifer. If you are tagging a market steer and a commercial heifer, 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:* The Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag has a 16-digit number. The breeder of the steer or heifer will obtain the tag.
- *Personal ear tag/tattoo number*
- *Breed:* (Angus, Hereford, Crossbred, etc.)
- *Sex:* (male or female)
- *Bred and owned:* Indicate if you owned the cow/heifer who calved out your steer/heifer or if you purchased the animal.
- *Date of birth:* When was your steer or heifer 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 steer will be weighed and the information recorded at weigh-in. This will be considered your animal's beginning weight for your steer project.
- *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. The cost of the tags is minimal. The Extension office will have information regarding any charges by the county.

3. Livestock weigh-in and tagging – All counties hold an initial weigh-in and tagging for market steers and commercial heifers. Dates will vary around the state and are available from your local Extension office. You will need to help with the care of your steer/heifer 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.
- *Registration papers:* If you are showing a purebred market steer, bring a copy of the breed association registration papers.
- *Halter-break your beef project:* Work with your steer/heifer(s) 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

Figure 3. Everyone who comes into weigh-in/tagging with a steer/heifer will receive a new Maryland 4-H tag in their animal's ear. Market steers use an orange tag (left) and commercial heifers used a green tag (right).



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).

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 AHQA program when they age up into a new division. The program for intermediates and seniors will consist of a general program which then becomes species-specific. Therefore, these individuals will have to take a beef-related AHQA when moving into older age divisions.

Read the Fair Requirements as Soon as They are Available

Many fairs leave their department rules 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, beef superintendent or Extension educator about the rules and guidelines you need to follow.

1. Fair entry system – To be eligible to exhibit at fairs, you must pre-enter your steer/heifer(s). Most fairs use an online entry system and your county 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 beef projects, especially if you are exhibiting several beef animals. Make sure that your steer/heifer(s) are entered into the correct divisions (breed divisions or crossbred). Enter extra classes such as showmanship, bred and owned divisions (if applicable) and if offered, rate of gain

(market steers only);

- Enter the correct Maryland 4-H ear tag number (market steer/commercial heifer(s)) for each animal;
- Market steer classes will ask for your animal's beginning weight and date of weigh-in. Make sure to enter the date and weight your steer was when you attended the county weigh-in/tagging day;
- When you have finished entering all classes for your beef project and you are ready to check out, make sure to pay any costs 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 the 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; and
- Information on the livestock being inspected (ear tag numbers (4-H and farm numbers if applicable), RFID 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 beef 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 cattle before entering the fair. This will be verified by filling out the back of your health papers (self-certification) prior to each fair or show.

If you are planning to exhibit your beef 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 steers only) – Maryland 4-H has a set ROG that your steer must achieve 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 2.0 lbs. 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 steer.**

EXAMPLE

Initial weigh-in: January 4th, the market steer weighed 783 lbs.

Final weigh-in: July 30th, the market steer weighs 1,422 lbs.

Number of days between weigh-ins = 208 days

Market steer gained = 639 lbs. (End weight – beginning weight = pounds gained)

Final ROG = 639 lbs./208 days = 3.07 lbs./per day

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

5. Project records – Accurate record keeping is an important part of raising your 4-H beef 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 beef project:

- **Goals** – At the beginning of raising your steer/heifer(s),

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 beef 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 relate to your beef project, such as beef workshops, livestock judging, spring 4-H show, county fair, etc.?
- **Project communication** – Most counties require 4-H member to have some sort of communication about their project. This could be a speech about “Why I chose to show Shorthorn steers” or a demonstration on “What equipment I need to show my heifers?” Most of the time you can give your speech or demonstration at a club meeting, a county demonstration or public speaking event.
- **Exhibits** – Where did you exhibit your steer/heifer? Write down all the shows you went to and each class you entered.
- **Information on project animals**- Keeping records on each steer/heifer(s) 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 beef 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.
- **Income** -

Figure 4. Front pages of Livestock Market Project Record and Large Animal Breeding Project forms, which are requirements of 4-H beef projects^{1/}

The image shows two forms side-by-side. The top form is titled 'Maryland 4-H Animal Science – Livestock Market Project Record'. It features the University of Maryland Extension logo and illustrations of a cow, sheep, goat, and pig. The form includes fields for Name, 4-H Age, Primary Club Name, and Years in 4-H/Project. It has a signature section for the member and parent, and a section to indicate the project area (Beef/Dairy Steer, Market Goat, Market Sheep, Market Swine). Below are three reflective questions with numbered lines for answers.

The bottom form is titled 'Maryland 4-H Animal Science – Large Animal Breeding Project Record'. It has the same header and logo. The signature section includes fields for Member's Signature, Date, Parent's Signature, and Date. The project area section includes checkboxes for Beef (Breeding), Goat (Meat Breeding), Goat (Dairy Breeding), Horse (Breeding), Sheep (Breeding), and Swine (Breeding). It also contains the same three reflective questions as the top form.

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

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

Enhancing Your 4-H Educational Beef Experience

- 1. Livestock workshops** – Your 4-H county Extension office or the fair may hold beef workshops or field day opportunities. These events offer a variety of educational topics, including grooming, washing, showing, and animal health and nutrition. Guest speakers may 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 (Figure 5).
- 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 steer/heifer(s). By participating in regional shows, 4-H members learn how to prepare their equipment and steer/heifer(s) for their county and state fairs.

^{1/} These records can be found on your individual county extension websites on the Maryland 4-H website (<https://extension.umd.edu/4-h/4-h-program-areas/animal-science-resources>).



Figure 5. 4-H member showing steer at a 4-H Beef Field Day

3. Livestock skillathon – It’s important to consider other options to enhance your experience in the 4-H beef 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 understanding of the different parts of your beef project.

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

Source:

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

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