



## **Buyer Tip Sheet for 4-H Parents with Beginner or First Year Youth**



*The goal of a 4-H Livestock project is to educate the child raising the animal as to proper care and husbandry practices for that species as well as communication and marketing skills with which to sell their animal at the annual Manistee 4-H Livestock Auction during the County Fair. These tips will help your child build effective communication and marketing skills, confidence, and self-esteem to share their knowledge with their potential buyers!*

### **Where do we start looking for buyers?**

Buyers can be friends, family, local businesses, co-workers, or other community members! Start the conversation about 4-H and livestock. Mention the animal your child chose and for what purpose (why).

### **How do we convince people to purchase a livestock animal?**

Remember you are trying to get them to purchase the PRODUCT of the animal, in other words what the animal will become after processing. For example, pigs become bacon, ham, pork chops, steers become beef and steaks, so on and so forth.

*Helpful Hints: Your 4-H youth will be keeping a Record Book which includes the feeds/care records the animal received – this is a GREAT marketing point! “If you purchase little Emma’s pig you know exactly where it was raised, what it ate, and who fed it.”*

### **What about people who don’t want animals to be processed?**

It’s true, there may be some buyers who disagree with processing animals for any number of reasons. That’s ok. There is the option for Buyers to take their livestock animal purchase home and keep it for themselves.

*Helpful Hints: Hobby Farms and Homesteaders are a great example. Chickens to lay fresh eggs and goats for dairy, clearing acreage, and converting it into free fertilizer, etc.*

### **What processing options are available to our Buyers?**

This can change year to year depending on volume and demand on the processors in our area. For 2021, we have slots reserved at Triple R Meats, Swick’s Custom Butchering, Ebel’s, and Saunders.

*Helpful Hints: Find out from your local MSU Extension Office or the Manistee 4-H Livestock Council where they have reserved spaces for processing for the current year. Research them so you can talk about the different options. All these processors have worked with 4-H in multiple counties and the pro of using USDA processors is that Buyers get what THEY want. Processors take requests!*

### **Processors take requests?**

That is correct! Processors have a thing called a “cut sheet” where buyers can select how much and what kind of finished product, they will receive from their livestock purchase. Buyers can research the processors ahead of time, or you and your child can create a Buyer Information Packet.

## **Our Buyer wants to know how much meat they will get from a 4-H Livestock animal.**

That is a fair question, and our Extension Educators created an incredibly helpful visual aid to help answer just that question! When you registered for this Clinic you were asked about which animals your child was marketing this year. They were provided a green folder in their Kit with relevant marketing information, including that visual aid. It is also in the 2021 Food Pantry Guide Book.

### **What is this 2021 Food Pantry Guide Book?**

This is a new community resource, published by Manistee 4-H Livestock Council in partnership with a network of local food pantries and human service organizations, to give our Buyers another purchase option through our auction. Buyers can have their purchase processed by one of our processors and the meat donated to a local food pantry in need.

*Helpful Hints: This Book has a FAQ page for its own questions. This book is exclusive to Manistee County 4-H, your local county may have its own list or resources for donations. Contact your local MSU Extension Office to inquire.*

### **Ok, how does this translate to my Beginner or First-Year 4-H Youth? How do they successfully market their animal(s)?**

Talk to your child about their animal(s). Let them talk to you as if you are a potential buyer, let them practice on you and get comfortable speaking. In 4-H we want our youth to develop their skills at an age appropriate level and in a positive way. With young children, transitioning from Cloverbud to Beginner and having to solicit buyers can be daunting, similarly if a youth is in their first year of 4-H.

Generally youth have selected their 4-H animal because they really want to raise and learn about that species, which usually translates to they want to talk about their project, everything they are learning, or what they want to know more about. This is a great way to guide the conversation in a positive direction towards marketing.

Using the common questions that buyers ask, and we've listed above, help start the conversation with your 4-Her. Help them practice so they can talk to potential buyers confidently.

*Helpful Hints: Ask you child conversation starters like "Who do you think you want to approach this year as a buyer?" "Are marketing a meat animal, a companion animal, or a production animal?" "What are we feeding your (animal) to raise it this year?" or "Tell me about your (animal's) diet."*

*Encourage your child to express their interest, because this will be a confidence building block to being successful!*