

# Oregon 4-H Animal Science Ethical Standards





Remember, 4-H Code of Conduct and 4-H Ethical Standards are rules for everyone involved. Although the following document refers to “exhibitors,” this is intended to include parents, trainers/fitters, siblings, exhibitors, friends, owners of leased animals, and others who may be interested or affected parties.

Begin each ethical “question” as Dr. Jeff Goodwin suggests with his *Ethical Compass Questions*:

1. Does the practice violate FDA law?
2. Does the practice harm the animal?
3. Does the practice result in fraudulent misrepresentation?
4. Do you have to lie to cover it up?
5. Would the public be offended?
6. Does the practice conflict with real world agriculture practices?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, the practice is probably unethical.

If there are additional questions or areas of concern that these six questions can't answer, please review and abide by the following:

-  **All animals brought for exhibition should be deemed healthy.** Animals with potential contagious disease or illness should be left home. Exhibitors must understand and know what is normal and healthy for their animal. Animals not demonstrating “normal and healthy” traits should be left home.
  -  Exhibitors of animals shall at all times conduct themselves with honesty and good sportsmanship. Their conduct shall always reflect the highest standards of honor and dignity to promote the advancement of agricultural education. This applies to all exhibitors who participate in competition as well as all animal science projects offered in any 4-H event or competition. In addition to these standards, fairs and shows may have rules and regulations which they impose.
  -  All leaders and mentors working with youth exhibitors have a responsibility to do more than avoid improper conduct or questionable acts. Their moral values must be so certain and positive that those younger and more pliable will be positively influenced by their example. Anyone who violates these ethical standards will potentially forfeit premiums, awards and auction proceeds and may be prohibited from or suspended from future exhibition. Those who choose to violate these standards demean the integrity of all animal science exhibitors and should endure significant consequences.
  -  These standards have been adapted from the *National Code of Show Ring Ethics*; in some cases they may seem broad or not relevant for Oregon 4-H Livestock Shows and Fairs. However, our intention is to create a model that can give 4-H Agents and Show Staff a basis for establishing and enforcing local rules and guidelines. As with all rules, circumstances must be considered, common sense applied AND enforcement is critical – As often as possible we want to have enforcement procedures for rules that we put in place. Sometimes, we just know it's the right thing and proving or disproving is cost prohibitive or process prohibitive, but we must still have rules or guidelines – we
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can't assume participants and their families will know what is appropriate or not appropriate if we don't state it somewhere.

The following is a list of guidelines for all exhibitors and all livestock in competitive events:

1. Exhibitors must be prepared to present, upon request by fair or show officials, proof of ownership or copy of lease agreement, length of ownership/lease and age of all animals entered. Misrepresentation of ownership, age, or any facts relating thereto is prohibited.
2. Exhibitors must be prepared to provide, upon request by fair or show officials, animal health certificates from a licensed veterinarian on any out of state animal.
3. Exhibitors are expected to care for, groom, and fit their animals while at fairs or shows.
4. Market animals shall be free of drugs and available to immediately enter the food chain. Non-Market animals shall not be administered drugs other than in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations and rules. Animals shall not be exhibited if the drugs affect the animal's performance or appearance at the event.

Oregon 4-H supports auction and/or show management's choice to obtain any specimen of urine, saliva, blood, or other substances from the animal to be used in testing. Exhibitors/owners shall comply with all testing requirements instituted by show management for the purposes of maintaining integrity of the exhibit or auction and/or quality assurance.

At any time after an animal arrives on the fair or show premises, all treatments involving the use of drugs and/or medications shall be administered by, or under the guidance of, a licensed veterinarian.

5. Any surgical procedure or injection of any foreign substance or drug or the external application of any substance (irritant, counterirritant, 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 duly licensed veterinarian for the sole purpose of protecting the health of the animal, is prohibited.
6. The use of showing and/or handling practices or devices such as striking animals to cause swelling, using electrical contrivance, or other similar practices is not acceptable and is prohibited.
7. Direct criticism or interference with the judge, fair, or livestock show management, other exhibitors, breed representatives, or show officials before, during, or after the competitive event is prohibited. All judges, fair and livestock show management, or other show officials shall be treated with courtesy, cooperation, and respect and they shall treat all exhibitors equally with courtesy, cooperation, and respect.
8. No owner/exhibitor shall conspire or knowingly contribute or cooperate with another either by affirmative action or inaction to intentionally violate these standards.

9. The application of these standards provides for absolute responsibility for an animal's condition by an owner/exhibitor whether or not he or she was actually instrumental in or had actual knowledge of the treatment of the animal.
  
10. The act of entering an animal in a fair or show is the giving of verification by the owner/exhibitor that he or she has read the Oregon 4-H Animal Science Ethical Standards and understands the potential consequences of and penalties provided for actions prohibited here in. It is further consent that any action which contravenes these rules and is also in violation of federal or state regulations, or rules may be released to appropriate law enforcement authorities with jurisdiction over such infractions.

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1. Adapted from the National Code of Show Ring Ethics
  2. Dr. Jeff Goodwin, *Ethical Compass Questions*, Developed by Dr. Goodwin and the Idaho 4-H Livestock Show Project

*Minor Revisions February 2016*