

Douglas County 4-H Beef Project Rules & Guidelines



DOUGLAS COUNTY
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Project Objective:

Have you ever wondered what it takes for a calf to become a Champion Heifer or Steer? The 4-H Beef project is an excellent way to learn about the different phases of the beef industry in Colorado as well as the rest of the world. Your involvement in this project allows you the opportunity to develop and use new life skills as you learn the different aspects of the beef industry, either by caring for a market animal, or building your own herd.



Douglas County Visual Model of Colorado 4-H Code of Conduct



HEAD

Conduct

Conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful manner, use appropriate language, exhibit good sportsmanship, and act as positive role models.



Abstain from abuse (physical and/or verbal) and harassment.



Adhere to program rules, curfews, dress codes, policies, and rules of the facility being used.



HANDS

Responsibility

Accept personal responsibility for behavior including any financial damage.



Be responsible for any financial damage caused by inappropriate behavior.



Fully participate in scheduled activities



HEART

Respect

Respect others property and privacy rights.



Respect the rights and authority of parents, leaders and Extension Agents.



HEALTH

Safety

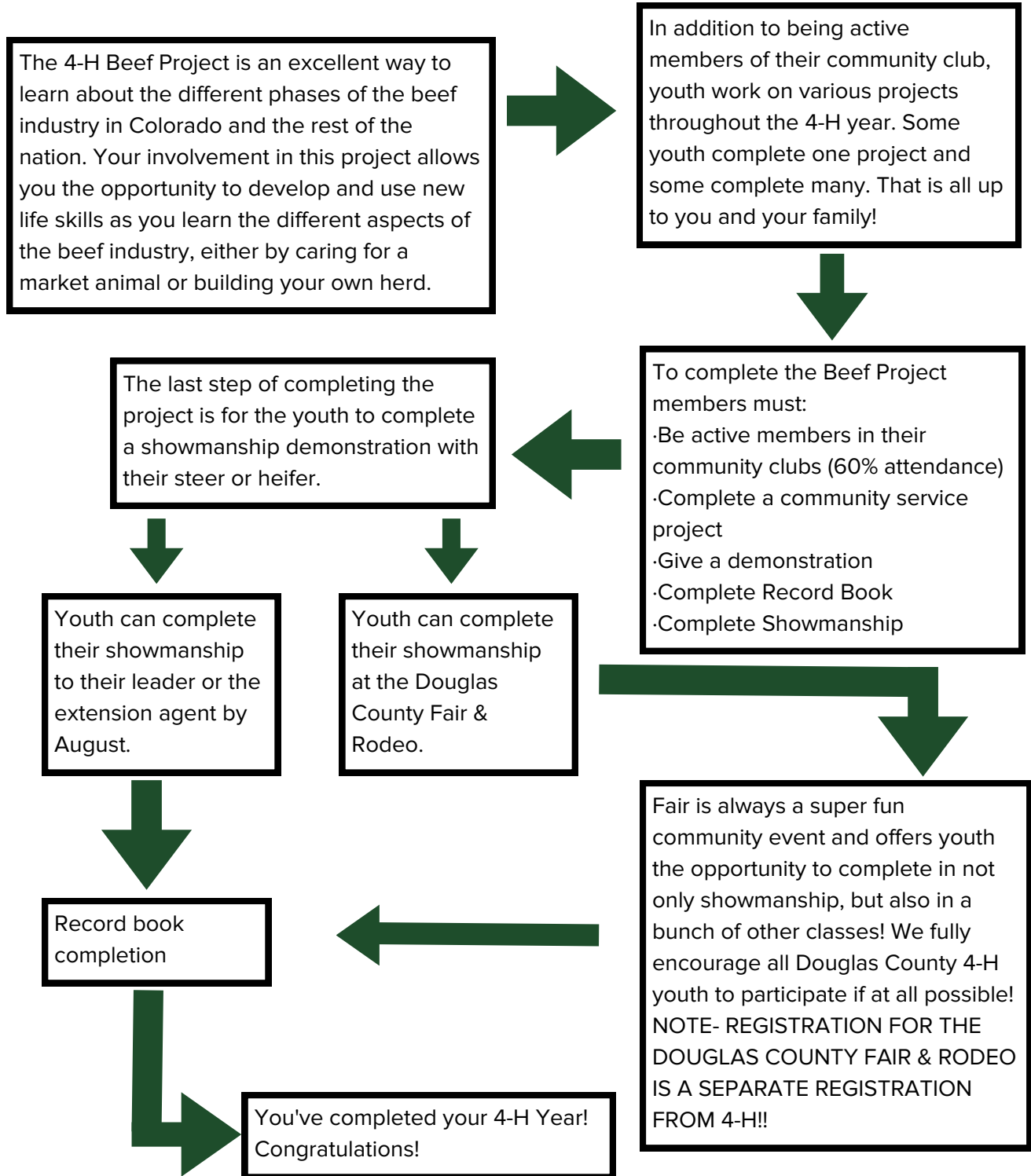
Adhere to principles and rules of safety



Abstain from illegal behaviors, use of alcohol, marijuana, illegal or illicit drugs, and tobacco including e-cigarettes and vaping device during 4-H events and activities

4-H Project Vs. Douglas County Fair & Rodeo

There is a lot that goes into 4-H! Between club meetings, project meetings, 4-H activities, fairs, and other events, it's completely normal to have some confusion. Please be aware that the 4-H Extension Office is to help, there is no question to big or too small. Throughout the year, youth who participate in the Douglas County 4-H program work on different projects. The horse project is just one of the awesome projects we are proud to offer.



4-H Project Vs. Douglas County Fair & Rodeo vs. Colorado State Fair

4-H Beef Project

The beef project is just one of the many projects offered to the Douglas County 4-H Community.

County 4-H programming policies are set following Colorado 4-H recommended policies. Some deadlines may be made to best suit our County. More information [here](#).

****Showing at County or State Fair is NOT a requirement of the project. However, they are a whole lot of fun if the youth have the opportunity to participate.**

DC Fair & Rodeo

Organized and run by the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Fair Board and the Douglas County Fair Office.

Rules & policies are recommended by the Show Management Committee and voted in by the Fair Board. The Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Beef Show is not a 4-H event and therefore rules might differ from 4-H rules or State Fair rules. Please be sure to fully read the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Competition Rules prior to registration and showing.

More Information:

www.FairAndRodeoFun.com

Colorado State Fair

Organized and run by the Colorado State Fair Manager and Livestock Events Coordinator.

State Fair Livestock nominations and procedures are dictated by the Colorado State Fair and it is up to the individuals wishing to compete to look up all necessary requirements for entry and participation. Each county is allowed to establish deadlines as needed for nominations.

More Information:

<https://www.coloradostatefair.com>



4-H Beef Project Progression

Starting Out Beginner

- Learn about beef cattle
- How to identify the parts of a calf
- Identify breeds of cattle
- Different types of feeds
- Evaluating different beef animals
- Purchase, feed and care for animals
- Evaluate project with leader
- Learn about goal setting
- Learn how to keep records
- Exhibit an animal on tour, achievement day or at the fair
- Learn how to assume responsibility

Learning More Intermediate

- Learn about nutritional requirements for beef cattle
- Learn about a cow's digestive system
- Identifying common cattle diseases
- Learn about goal setting
- Gain knowledge of sound management practices
- Exhibit an animal on tour, achievement day or at the fair
- Develop sportsmanship
- Develop public speaking skills

Exploring Depth Advanced

- How to deal with current issues relating to raising beef
- Gain leadership skills by helping others learn about cattle
- Explore career opportunities in the beef industry
- Investigating technology's impact on beef production
- Exhibit an animal on tour, achievement day or at the fair
- Build lifelong friendship



Considerations before starting the 4-H Beef Project

- Have youth and family considered the time commitment a large animal is? Youth must properly care for the animal day-to-day needs in addition to training and preparing for exhibition. Through heat of summer and cold of winter – That animal requires proper care and attention.
- Have youth and family considered the space requirement for keeping a steer or heifer? If you are keeping the animal at home do you have a shelter, pasture, proper fencing, a safe area to train, ability to store supplies and feed? If you are keeping your animal somewhere else, have you worked out transportation twice a day and how youth will get to the animal to care for it if parents cannot drive?
- Have you discussed with your family the finances involved in livestock ownership? Daily expenses such as feed, supplies, routine vet care, possible emergency vet care, show supplies, training supplies, etc. It is not inexpensive to raise a steer properly.
- Are you comfortable working around larger livestock?
- Have you thought about who can reach out to with questions about your steer or the beef project?
- Do you have a way to transport the animal home from the breeders, to weigh-in, June show, County Fair, etc?
- Are you interested in this project for educational purposes? Or to hopefully make money at the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Livestock Sale?
- Have you discussed what happens if your steer dies during the project year or if youth does not make sale with the steer?

4-H Beef Project Example Budget

Below is a cost estimate for a market steer project. This is only intended to be used as an estimate, as costs can vary depending upon the individual animal. The estimate assumes the steer is purchased November 15 weighing 545 pounds. The average weight gain from November 15 to August (262 days) is approximately 2.5 pounds per day to reach 1200 pounds. Feed costs are based on feeding roughly 20 pounds of feed per day.

Expenses	Unit	# of Units	Cost/Unit	Total Value
Purchase Steer	Head	1	\$1,000*+	\$1,000*
Feed	Cwt.	53	\$40	\$2,120
Hay	Bales (sq)	20	\$10	\$200
Health	\$	1	\$45	\$45
Total				\$3,3365

* Purchase
Price of market steers can vary from \$900 to over \$3,000

**Purchase price of market steers can vary from \$900 to over \$3000.

***IMPORTANT: Please not that those are only the vary basic costs. There are additional costs for the project not included on the above table such as general supplies, facilities, equipment, and health events. While some equipment may be borrowed from fellow 4-Hers, it is incredibly important for youth and families to understand the cost associated with large livestock projects prior to purchasing an animal.

4-H Beef Project "Typical" Timeline

October

- Contact your 4-H leaders about showing a market steer
- Begin preparing for your steer's arrival
- Update/build facilities/purchase equipment

November

- Purchase steer to be sure to get brand paperwork complete
- Weigh your steer & record feed/health records
- Begin working with your steer on halter breaking and handling

December/January

- Continue working with your steer on halter breaking and being handled
- Wash & work steer regularly

February

- Feed steer for growth and work with on a regular basis

March

- Enroll in 4-H Market Beef Project in 4HOnline by March 1
- Attend Beef Weigh-In & Tagging
- Calculate rate of gain to calculate weight by fair.

April

- Submit State Fair Beef Nominations
- Attend 4-H Beef Clinic
- If it is your first year showing a beef animal OR you turned 14 by Jan 1 you MUST attend MQA Training.
- Wash & work steer regularly

May

- Attend a clinic to learn about showmanship
- Start planning a hoof trimming appointment around show plans

June

- Attend June Show or a Jackpot or BOTH!
- Submit fair entries & double check
- Continue working with your steer

July

- Continue to practice for showmanship
- Attend County Fair Week

Always be sure to check the most up-to-date 4-H Policies and Procedures, Douglas County Fair & Rodeo CR, and Colorado State Fair Rules.



Meat Quality Assurance (MQA)

Colorado 4-H MQA Program Requirements

4-H members enrolling in any market and/or breeding livestock projects for the first time regardless of age, must attend a Colorado 4-H Meat Quality Assurance (MQA) program. A Colorado 4-H Meat Quality Assurance (MQA) program is considered to be either a training conducted using a Colorado 4-H MQA trailer or the Colorado 4-H MQA Power Point. All Colorado 4-H MQA programs must be conducted by the County 4-H Agent or approved designee.

4-H members will be required to attend a Colorado 4-H MQA program a minimum of twice during the course of their 4-H career – once as a junior and once again within one year after becoming a senior 4-H member. Members are encouraged to review the information and best practices found in the Colorado 4-H Meat Quality Assurance program annually.

It is highly recommended that Colorado 4-H MQA training be completed at least 45 days prior to exhibition of project animals.

4-H members enrolled in market and/or breeding livestock projects will sign the Animal Care & Housing form, indicating their understanding of and compliance with the good production practices taught in the Colorado 4-H Meat Quality Assurance program. Consequences for failing to comply with the Animal Care & Housing standards/Rules of Competition/4-H Code of Conduct/Colorado 4-H Youth Development Policies may result in removal from all 4-H livestock projects for the member/family. The Animal Care & Housing form must be filed every time the member signs up for any market and/or breeding livestock project. The Colorado 4-H MQA program suggests that records be kept on file for twelve months following the sale of any project livestock.

The above-mentioned guidelines are minimum standards, and 4-H Agents or 4-H livestock committees may require more Colorado 4-H MQA trainings as needed. Additional quality assurance certifications may be required by fairs, shows and sales. It is the sole responsibility of each individual exhibitor to review fair, show and sale rules for events they plan to participate in or attend, and to comply with any additional certifications at their own expense. For Example: Certifications such as the Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) may be required by fairs, shows or sales. In such a situation, The Colorado 4-H MQA certification is not a substitute for any fair, show or sale's additional certification requirement.

Douglas County 4-H MQA

Douglas County 4-H has traditionally held their MQA training towards the end of April. If you are interested in training in another county please be sure to reach out to the agent to see if they are allowing out-of-county participants.

4-H Beef Project Resources

Halter Breaking **

Halter breaking is the first step toward getting your steer ready for the show ring. Before you begin halter breaking, allow your steer to become acclimated to his new surroundings and to build trust in you. Once your steer is acclimated to his new home, place a rope halter on him and allow him to drag it around every other day for a week.

After a week of dragging the halter every other day, begin tying your steer up with a quick-release knot. Tie your steer at the appropriate level and with enough slack so that if he were to fall down, he could get back up without entangling himself. Almost all steers fight the rope at first, but eventually stop. NEVER leave your steer alone when tied. In the event that he becomes entangled, falls, or flips over, quickly release and re-tie him. Repeat this each day until he is comfortable with you being nearby and no longer fights the rope.

Begin to comb, brush, and eventually walk your steer. Walking may take some encouragement from both ends, but more importantly, it will take patience and persistence. Then begin introducing him to other things that he will need to be accustomed to, such as washing and blow-drying, as well as working with a show stick.

Facilities

Facilities used to house your steer can be as elaborate or simple as you desire, however there are few essentials. Your steer will need shelter from temperature extremes (hot or cold) and precipitation, but should be kept cool, dry, and well-ventilated. Steers need room to exercise, so a turn-out lot is also important. Facilities should be well-bedded and cleaned daily.

Veterinary Care

Be sure to work with a knowledgeable veterinary for routine or emergency medical treatments. Remember to include routine treatments into your budget for the project. Additionally, work with your vet for a deworming program that is right for you and your animal. You want to be sure you are feeding your animal and not your animals' parasites!

*** There are many different methods for halter breaking and training – Learn about a few different methods and choose one that you think will work best for you and your animal.**



4-H Beef Project Resources

Selecting & Feeding

Most market steers weigh between 1,000-1,200 pounds and are 14-18 months old by the county fair. For first-time members, the most important factor in selecting a steer is handling ability. A bad first-time experience may also be their last experience.

To figure out what size steer you should select, you need to determine the expected gain for your steer. Typically, steers gain 2.5-3.5 pounds per day. The gain per day and the pounds of feed per day go up as the steer gets bigger.

When your steer goes on feed, calculate the days till the show. Weigh your steer as well as determine your final goal weight. Divide the days till show by the pounds of gain needed and this will determine your gain per day average.

A sound, consistent nutrition program is crucial for your steer to be productive and look the best he possibly can on show day. Although everyone feeds their steers differently, there are a few rules of thumb to follow. Make sure your steer has continual access to as much clean drinking water as he wants, as water is the most important nutrient. Clean water troughs regularly. Feed grain to your steer at least once daily, ideally twice daily: at the same time each morning and evening.

A good rule of thumb is to feed a steer 2.5%-3.5% of its body weight in grain and .5%-1% in quality hay. Remember to weigh the grain before and whatever is left over. This gives you an idea what the animal is actually eating. Feed by weight, not volume. Younger steers may need 18% crude protein, but animals near the finish date may only require 12%. Any adjustments to feed should be made gradually (weeks not days). Finally, weigh your steer often as this is the only way to see if your animal is on track for your goals.

Show Preparation

Success in the show ring is often determined long before you step foot in the ring. It begins at home with daily practice and preparation, treating every day like show day.

Practice leading and setting up your steer daily as if you are in the show ring. Rinsing your steer with water and conditioner daily, as well as washing with shampoo weekly will help to keep him clean and encourage a healthy coat. Steers should always be dried with a blow-dryer or bush and fan after being rinsed or washed. These daily preparations will help to ensure that your steer is accustomed and ready for the ring on show-day.

Avoid major changes to daily practices when traveling and on the day of the show. Consider adapting your steer to some sort of powdered flavoring or electrolyte supplement in his water at home so that it can be used to encourage him to drink at the show.

Take time to exercise your steer at least twice daily while at the show, and before entering the show ring. Steers are typically cleaned, dried, clipped and fitted* for the show, and doing so will help to make him look as good as you possibly can for the judge.

4-H Beef Project - Breeding Beef

Deadlines

Because the breeding heifers do NOT attend the beef tag-in in March, we expect youth to complete the animal ID for their breeding animals in 4HOnline by May 1. Younger animals need to be ID'd no later than June 1.

Resources

- Animal ID information [here](#)
- Introduction to the 4-H Beef Heifer Project* [here](#)
- Breeding Heifer Project Help List* [here](#)

*Note that some resources are from other states and programs, please use them for their valuable information but know some rules, deadlines, and restrictions might be different than in Douglas County, Colorado.

HELP!

There is no shame in asking for help, clarification, explanations, tips, and suggestions! In fact, we would rather you ask for help early and often than feel like you're going at this alone!

Who should you reach out to?

- **Your Club Organizational Leader**
- **A project leader**
- **Your 4-H Agent or Extension Office**
- **Other amazing leaders in Douglas County 4-H**
 - **If you need help connecting with someone, just let the extension office know!**
- **Other youth in your club with experience in the project**
- **The Fair Superintendent for your department**
- **The Fair Office**

Extension Office (720)733-6940
<https://douglas.extension.colostate.edu>
4-H Livestock Agent: Mercedes Glenn
Mercedes.Glenn@colostate.edu
4-H Admin Assistant: Sylvia Worcester
Sylvia.Worcester@colostate.edu

Fair Office (720)733-6900
<https://www.douglascountyfairandrodeo.com/>
Fair Coordinator: Michelle Mannes
mmannes@douglas.co.us



Douglas County 4-H Beef Project

Resources

Be sure to ask us about signing up for the weekly Douglas County 4-H newsletter!

Douglas County 4-H Website Calendar:

<https://douglas.extension.colostate.edu/4-h/resources/>

Douglas County 4-H Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/183640871675571/>

Douglas County 4-H Beef Project Website:

<https://douglas.extension.colostate.edu/4-h/programs-2/livestock>

Beef Record Book:

<http://co4h.colostate.edu/program-areas/animals/>

Douglas County 4-H Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/183640871675571/>

For more questions, or resources, please contact Mercedes Glenn at Mercedes.Glenn@colostate.edu

