

Unit Twenty-One

Alberta 4-H Law

Learning about Animal Welfare

Roll Call

Name a concern the public may have regarding the welfare of your project animal. Depending on the projects of your members, possible answers include:

- neutering, castrating
- confined space, caging, tying, tethering
- shipping, hauling
- removal of horns, tails, beak trimming
- animal identification
- slaughtering procedures
- show sticks, canes, cattle prods
- shearing, clipping, induced molting
- training of pets
- livestock fairs
- rodeo, gymkhanas
- use of animals for recreation or work
- exposure of animals to weather, environmental control
- drug use, steroid use, implants
- use of animals in research
- veal production
- sale yard practices
- disposal of unwanted chicks, poults and pipped eggs
- disease of individual vs. herd euthanasia
- artificial insemination

Objectives

In this unit members will learn about animal welfare issues, examine their own practices with their project animals and develop a strategy for responding to animal welfare concerns. It is very important that members read and complete the activities in this unit before participating in any group discussions or activities.

Level One

- 1 Learn about animal welfare, the Five Freedoms and their responsibilities as livestock owners.
- 2 Learn proper care methods and be able to explain how 4-H members care for their project animals.
- 3 Learn what animal welfare issues are and where they come from.
- 4 Understand the difference between an animal welfare and an animal rights stand on issues of animal care.
- 5 Be prepared to talk to the public about their projects and learn to seek the help of others when challenged with uncomfortable questions.

Level Two

- 1 Better understand animal welfare and the laws that protect the animals.
- 2 Learn how to identify the agenda of various “animal interest” groups.
- 3 Develop an understanding of where animal welfare issues come from.
- 4 Examine various viewpoints of what human interactions with animals should be like.
- 5 Establish their personal viewpoint on animal welfare issues and prepare themselves to respond to the questions and concerns of the public.

Level Three

- 1 A deeper understanding of how animal welfare issues develop.
- 2 Learn facts to support the differing positions.
- 3 Plan strategies for handling animal welfare questions and dealing with the media.
- 4 Learn how to be a spokesperson and conduct positive interviews.

**Activities:****Level One****Activity # 1**

Review the Five Freedoms and the 4H Stockkeepers Creed. Match each of the five freedoms to each creed.

Activity # 2

Caring for my animals. Encourage the members to use what they checked in the “I want to improve” column to set their goals for the year on what they want to learn and do.

Activity # 3

The members will go through the Five Freedoms and check off the ones they are currently providing to their animals. They should then list how they are providing the freedoms. Take the time to review their answers and if they are not providing all Five Freedoms, ask them to set goals for the year on how they can make sure each one is provided for or how they can improve on the ones they are providing.

Activity # 4

The members are asked to list three questions they think a non-agricultural person may ask them. Choose one or more of their questions and have them answer it for the whole 4-H club. Take the time to help them with their answer and allow the whole club to provide input.

Activity # 5

Let's Review the Issue

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Cruel | 2 | animal rightist |
| 3 | animal welfare | 4 | humanely |
| 5 | well-being | 6 | health, growth |

LEVEL TWO

Activity # 1

The Codes of Practice. Obtain the Codes of Practice for you project animals and review them with the club. The Level 2 members will then review the codes on their own and establish the guidelines they need to be following in order to achieve the Five Freedoms. It is very important that all members be made aware of the Codes of Practice and what their purpose is.

Activity # 2

Start digging. In this activity members are asked to look up each of the listed organizations and answer the questions in order to establish the agenda of each one. You may then choose to have each of the Level 2 members choose one or more of the organizations and share the results with the club. Encourage the entire club to discuss the differences.

Activity # 3 - Everyone Doesn't Think Alike; match the viewpoints

- Everyone Doesn't Think Alike; match the viewpoints

Animal Issue Spectrum

Animal Welfare			Animal Rights		
Animal Exploitation	Animal Use <small>(Human focus)</small>	Animal Protection <small>(Societal focus)</small>	Animal Concern <small>(Animal focus)</small>	Animal Rights	Animal Liberation
4	2	6	3	5	1
“Animals are here for our use and abuse”	“Animals are here for our use, but we must be responsible with them to produce as much as possible”	“We are here to enforce the laws and regulations made by our lawmakers”	“Everybody should be required to treat each animal as kindly as possible for the good of the animal”	“Animals have rights just as humans do”	“Animals should not be forced to work or produce for our benefit in any way”

Iowa State University Extension, 1991

Activity # 4 - Where do you stand?

There are no right or wrong answers to these exercises. Encourage the members to discuss their responses. This will help them prepare themselves to face such questions with the public.

Activity #5 - What We do With Animals?

Members will match the activities and then answer the questions.

Activity #6 - Why We Do What We Do

Castration * ₁	* ₇ To enhance handling practices, for the safety of the animals and the producer, and, or to avoid complications later on.
Branding and, or tattooing * ₂	* ₅ To move animals to a fresh food supply to prevent over-grazing and soil erosion, or to deliver the animals to regulated and inspected processing plants.
Eat meat * ₃	* ₈ To learn about proper handling and training of our animals, understanding their behavior and celebrating our accomplishments.
Feed grain to livestock instead of starving people * ₄	* ₃ Domestic animals convert grasses into human nutrition that would otherwise not be available. Meat provides important proteins.
Transport animals * ₅	* ₂ Permanent identification and theft deterrent. Not currently shown to be excessively painful.
Confine animals in pens or cages * ₆	* ₆ To better provide for their individual or group environmental and physical needs. To enable close monitoring of their individual health.
Remove horns (cattle, bison) tails Sheep, pigs), or trim beaks (egg laying hens) * ₇	* ₄ The quality of most feed grains is inadequate for human consumption.
Train and show our animals * ₈	* ₁ To prevent aggressive behavior and enhance the handling of the animal. To control the breeding of the animals and to enhance the efficiency of feed animals.

Activity #7 - What would you say.

Discuss their responses in this exercise.

LEVEL THREE**Activity #1 - The Message.**

Members will read the article “Animal rights and the myth of “humane” treatment”. They are then asked to answer some questions concerning this article. It is strongly encouraged that this article and the answers to their questions are discussed as a group.

Activity #2 - Be Prepared.

In this activity members are asked to choose two of the listed statements and relate them to their project animal. They will then be asked to share their answers with members. Discuss their responses based on the “Suggested Ways to Respond” provided in this manual.

For the Entire Club

Objective

Prepare for and practice responding to animal rights groups and the media.

Introduction

Read the two articles below which illustrate the need for 4-H to become informed of issues about animal care. Ask: How do these make you feel? Is this true? Is this what 4-H is about?

All's not fair at the fair (*Author: Nicholas Read*)

...if you intend to take in the livestock show, the following might be of some help. It's a guide to what you might see - and also what you might miss - at British Columbia's premier agricultural fair.

What you'll see at the dairy exhibit: Clean straw and water buckets; carefully tended animals; hand-drawn posters of cows with names like Bluebell, Marigold and Buttercup; no bulls.

What you won't see at the dairy exhibit: Cows tethered by steel braces in stalls where the excrement and urine is piled to their knees; male calves taken from their mothers when they are only hours old to be raised and slaughtered as veal; veal crates in which the animals are held virtually motionless for four months while they are fed little else but antibiotic-laced milk; slaughterhouses where the calves are killed to provide gourmet meat to supermarkets and restaurants.

What you'll see at the pig exhibit: Clean straw; buckets filled with fresh water three times a day; a mother sow cosily nursing her newborn piglets; healthy, strong animals with coats as smooth and blemish-free as varnish.

What you won't see at the pig exhibit: Filthy, feces-laden straw; open, festering wounds never treated even when the pigs go to auction; limping animals struck with boards by auctioneers; farrowing crates in which mother pigs are separated from their young by steel bars; dirty, concrete floors; transport trucks so crowded that animals can die of suffocation over 24- or even 48-hour journeys.

What you'll see at the beef exhibit: Clean straw; clean water buckets; healthy, calm animals with no branding marks.

What you won't see at the beef exhibit: Castration and de-horning without anaesthetics; hot-iron branding that can leave wounds so deep and serious that they never heal; feedlots in which cattle, knee-deep in muck, are barely able to walk; animals so badly injured in transport that they can no longer stand and have to be dragged off transport trucks into slaughterhouses; ritual slaughter in which the animals' throats are cut so that they can bleed to death slowly without the "kindness" of being stunned first.

What you'll see at the poultry exhibit: Clean straw; cages big enough for one or even two birds to turn around, preen themselves and flap their wings; strong healthy birds with all their feathers intact.

What you won't see at the poultry exhibit: Battery cages into which four or five birds are stuffed so tight that they can't turn around, flap their wings, preen themselves or even stand up; birds under such unrelenting stress that half their feathers have fallen out; commercially useless young male birds thrown alive into meat grinders; debeaking of female chicks at birth and then again at adolescence; the wholesale slaughter of so-called "spent" hens - hens that can no longer meet their daily laying quotas - when they are about a year old...

...What you'll see at the PNE food animal barns: The way things should be for Canadian farm animals. *What you won't see at the PNE food animal barns:* The truth.

Article from *The Weekend Sun*, Sat. Sept. 4, 1993

Club teaches children to suppress their compassion

The Aug. 28 Vancouver Sun showed a photograph of a tearful young girl wishing farewell to her pet lamb at the 4-H auction at the PNE. The lamb was headed for the chopping block.

The accompanying article described the trauma of many children adjusting to the “realities” of animal agriculture. After a few years of raising and then killing animals, most children outgrow their childish sentimentality, it seems, and learn how much fun it is to make money in this way.

One mother recalled that when her nine-year old son sold his first lamb at auction he cried for two weeks. Until he got the cheque. “Then the tears were replaced by dollar signs.”

It seems the function of the 4-H organization is to indoctrinate children into an agricultural system which views animals as inanimate cogs in an economic machine.

The methods of indoctrination are simple: divorce children from their natural compassion for animals, help them “mature” to the point where they can view animals as commercial objects and replace reverence for life with more useful emotion: lust for money.

There is no need for meat or dairy products in the human diet - in fact our addiction to these foods has reaped a harvest of cancer, heart disease, and other illnesses. The sooner our society releases itself from this addiction, the better. When that day comes we will no longer have organizations like 4-H training our children to suppress their instincts of compassion.

(Brent Stewart)

Letter from *The Vancouver Sun*, September 13, 1993

- Have your 4-H club make up a number of questions they have either been asked or one you think might be asked by someone who does not understand livestock production. Then have each member come forward and practice answering one of these questions.
- Have a few volunteers experience an interview with the types of challenging questions provided in this manual. Interview them in front of the club as if you were a reporter. After they have responded to a few questions, ask the other members to provide some feedback and ideas on how to improve the responses given. Share some of the “Suggested Ways to Respond” provided in this manual.

Conclusion

- 4-H involves livestock projects. Animal welfare is an important component of the 4-H program. The 4-H community must ensure that project animals are treated humanely, become informed about animal care issues, and get involved by educating the public about the excellence of 4-H and livestock production. This unit is a first step in becoming informed. You, as a club, as a family farm/business and, or as an individual, have to decide where to go from here.
- Presentation, Workshop: Contact the 4-H specialist in your region to obtain a copy of the workshop module designed for leaders and, or level three members to present at the club level. It is designed as a minimum forty-five minute workshop with small group activities and discussions. It can be modified to a three or four hour workshop if desired.

Interview Questions

Refer to the questions in the Level Two and Level Three unit books for more ideas of questions to ask.

- I understand you're a member of a 4-H club. What kind of animal do you have?
- Do you dehorn; castrate; debeak; cut off tails; and so on, as applicable to the member's project animal? Isn't it cruel? Why do you do these things?
- Do you train your animal? Do you whip it? Do you use a cane; whip; crop; prod; and so on?
- I don't think people should eat animal products. Isn't it gross, how you produce food from animals?
- Agriculture is just big business. Farmers are more concerned with making money than caring for their animals properly. They cram many animals in a small area. Animals are restricted in the facilities they are housed in. How can you justify that?
- If 4-H teaches young people to respect animals and value their companionship with their pet, how do kids feel when they know their "friend" is going to the slaughterhouse? Aren't you teaching conflicting values?
- I (the reporter) heard that a 4-H'er here at the show has been allowing friends to ride her steer and has been using a cattle prod repeatedly to get it to go faster. Isn't that animal abuse?

Suggested Responses

Animal handling practices such as castration, dehorning, beak trimming, tail docking, and so on.

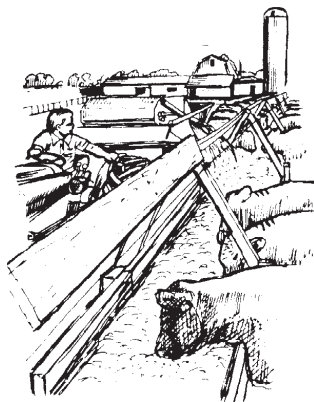
- These procedures reduce animal aggressiveness, prevent physical dangers to other animals and producers, enhance reproductive control and, or satisfy preferences regarding taste and odor of meat. If performed on animals at a young age, provides the long-term benefit of the animals.
- In sheep, docking of tails prevents fly and parasite infestation. If male swine are not castrated at a young age, fighting in herds may become common. In about 10 percent of the males, a hormonal secretion called "boar taint" causes the carcass to be inedible. Ear notching provides an inexpensive, easy means for identification. Docking keeps pigs from chewing on each other's tails (a sign of stress in pigs), a situation that creates potential for illness and spread of disease among animals. Trimming the beaks on layers and turkeys is done to lessen the chances of fighting. A possible analogy of these practices is the short-term pain of providing immunization shots to young children.

Pain and discomfort felt by animals

- Animals experience pain. The difference between humans and animals is the level at which they visibly express feelings of pain. Pain is hard to detect in animals because they are prey animals and are conditioned not to show pain as it will leave them vulnerable to predators.
- Animals act out of instinct. The best way to better understand their behavior and recognize when they are experiencing discomfort is to work with them. 4-H project animals allow for learning about animal behavior and responding to the needs of animals.

Confining animals in pens, stalls, or cages

- Critics may see confinement as depriving an animal. Livestock and poultry producers see it as security and safety for their animals. Just as buildings have fire code regulations, farmers use codes of practice for the size of pens or cages and density of animals. Facilities in which animals are kept are designed to be well ventilated, warm, and sanitary. Penning and caging animals provides shelter from predators, bad weather, and extreme climates. Health management is easier and attention can be given quickly to animals in need. It is economical for feeding and cleaning costs.
- A roof that prevents chickens from seeing the sky also protects them from heat and rain. Hens produce more efficiently and the eggs are cleaner. Stalls for sows provide better control of feed, reduce aggression, and improve sanitation. The sow is allowed to stand and lie down and the tether reduces death and injury to baby pigs due to crushing.

**Factory farming**

- The family farm remains the backbone of Canadian agriculture. While the number of farms is declining, farms are still overwhelmingly controlled and maintained by families.

Feeding grain to livestock

- Feed grains fed to livestock are of poorer quality and not fit for human consumption.

Use of antibiotics and hormones

- Antibiotics are used to promote growth and prevent and treat diseases. Growth implants are made from naturally occurring estrogen, like those found in many plant products. They are used to increase feed efficiency and to improve the ratio of meat to fat. The result is a higher quality product at a lower cost for producers and consumers. There is absolutely no evidence there are any adverse effects in humans from eating meat from animals treated with such growth enhancers.

Training and exhibiting animals

- Emphasize the first step of training is building a relationship of trust between the animal and the handler. Animals are trained when they are young. Training our project animals teaches us more about the behavior of animals. Knowing the behavior of the animals we raise will help us handle them better. Exhibiting animals teaches teamwork, sportsmanship, competition, discipline and responsibility. Breaking rules, lying, deceiving and cheating are wrong. The majority of those involved in exhibiting livestock and horses will not tolerate unethical behavior.

The slaughter of animals

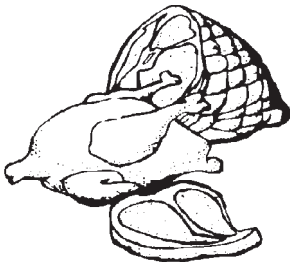
- People in this country want a diverse diet, which includes meat. Meat adds variety and necessary protein to our diet. We process animals in order to provide people with the food and fibre they demand. Animals are also used in the production of a wide range of products like pharmaceuticals, household products and mechanical items. Refer to Level Three for a complete list of examples.
- Most of the nutrients consumed by cattle come from foodstuffs not edible by humans such as grass, roughage and crop residue. A vast majority of grazing land is not suitable for farming or growing cultivated crops, because it is too high, too rough, too dry, or too wet. If it weren't for livestock, there would be no way to make productive use of this renewable resource.

Members selling animals for slaughter

- 4-H members recognize that market animals are being raised to provide a safe and abundant food supply and eventually their animal will be sold for processing. 4-H market projects help members prepare their market animal so that it is in the best condition for marketing. 4-H market animal projects help members learn to cope with separation and loss as well as the grieving process. Even pets like dogs and cats eventually die. Livestock auctions also bring the community together to support young people who are developing valuable life skills.

Eating meat

- Recognize people have the right to their own opinion about eating meat. However, if you enjoy eating meat, tell them you disagree; you also have the right to your opinion. The vegetarian diet may be the choice of some people, but the majority of Canadians strongly oppose the idea of people telling them what to eat. People have included meat in their diet since the beginning of time and they continue to do so. Including meat in the human diet is a healthy source of nutrition as it provides proteins that are not available in other foods.

**Animal rights**

- Animals act out of instinct. They neither know nor can they choose right or wrong. Therefore, they cannot be held responsible for their actions. A lion cannot be charged with murder for eating a zebra. Many people forget that humans feel and act differently than animals. We must keep these differences clearly in mind and the more we work with animals the more we learn how their behaviors and instincts differ from ours, and the ways in which we may be the same.

4-H

- Emphasize the role of 4-H in the educational development of young people. 4-H teaches youth important life skills such as public speaking, record keeping, leadership, cooperation and so on. 4-H promotes the responsible treatment of animals and members care for their animals according to “The Creed of the 4-H Stockkeeper.”

An observed situation of animal mistreatment

- Don’t get defensive when answering these kinds of questions. Instead, show patience and tolerance and reiterate that 4-H teaches members not only to respect animals while in their charge, but also the role of animals in our food production system. If you’re asked about a situation you are not aware of, say you will check into it and get back to the reporter. 4-H encourages youth to respect animals, but 4-H can’t always control the actions of individual members.

Responsibility

Part of practicing good animal welfare is not just looking out for the animals in our care, but looking out for the welfare of all animals. When we see animals that are not having their needs met or that are subjected to abuse and/or neglect it is our responsibility to make sure the animals receive the proper care they need. Alberta Farm Animal Care has established a hot line you can call to report any cases of animal neglect or abuse, or when you feel you cannot meet the needs of your animals. The ALERT line was established to allow producers to help producers ensure responsible animal care. **1-800-506-CARE (2273)**.

A partnership of Alberta Farm Animal Care Association and Alberta 4-H



In 1993, Alberta's major livestock groups formed AFAC. AFAC's goal is to improve animal handling and promote responsible animal care. As part of their mandate, AFAC engages in discussion with the public about today's livestock production; monitors and participates in issues and legislation that affect animal care and encourage research relevant to animal care.

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