

What I've Learned from Raising an Animal for the Fair

Hi my name is Cadynce and I am a 13 year old girl from Somis, California. I have been a part of the Somis 4-H club for 5 years now. The species I will be raising this year is a market swine. On March 20th I went to my local breeders to pick up my pig. I chose a 50 pound belted barrow that I named Gunner. I will be attending the [2021 805 AG kids](#) invitational show and hope to see you there. I have learned so much during my 4-H journey. One of my favorite experiences of 4-H has to be the breeding/ birthing process. My local breeder Theresa Pellerino was kind enough to allow some of us 4-H kids to come out and help with the delivery of the piglets. We learned how to tie off the umbilical cords after birth, clear out the mucus from their mouths and noses, how to clean them off and warm them up, and she even taught us how to administer mouth to mouth in case of a piglet being unresponsive. I was also grateful to have the opportunity to help with the artificial insemination process as well as processing the piglets. Processing piglets means that we castrate the male pigs, dock their tails, clip their teeth, and give them their vaccination. All in all the whole process from start to finish is my favorite. You don't learn this stuff in school after all.

There is so much more that goes into a 4-H project than just feeding and selling your animal. Let's start with feeding. We have a weight limit that we have to meet and can not exceed so it is very important to come up with a feeding plan as well as weighing your animal on a regular basis so that you stay on track.. I keep a feeding log and weight chart to help with that. I feed twice a day and I weigh my pigs food so I know how much weight he will gain. You also have to make sure your animals have clean water at all times as it is a very important part of their diet and health.

Showmanship is also a very important part of raising 4-H animals. You need to put in lots of work with your animals if you want them to follow your commands in the show ring. I start working with my pig the day they come home. I spend lots of time in the pen letting them get to know me kind of like building their trust in me. We eventually move on to learning commands with the whip and the duration of practice time increases so they build up the endurance to walk for longer periods of time.

Animal care is another big thing I have learned during my 4-H experiences. It is important to always have a clean-dry place for your animal. I use wood shavings for bedding and I clean their pen 2 times a day. In the summer I make sure the pigs have a little mud pit to cool off in. Science pigs don't have sweat glands they use mud to cool themselves down. They also get lots of baths and brushed often. Another important thing I have learned is record keeping. It helps me stay organized in a way and helps me to stay on track with my goals. I keep track of my experiences, any community service I have done, my expenses, and other projects I may have done.

Overall I think 4-H has taught me many things but the most important thing it has taught me has to be responsibility. It has also made me want to become a Veterinarian when I grow up.