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4-H LIVESTOCK AUCTION HIGHLIGHT OF FAYETTE COUNTY FAIR

Uniontown, PA – With the Fayette County Fair well under way, 4-H members and volunteers are gearing up for the annual livestock auction.

A global network of youth organizations, 4-H aims to help youth reach their full potential through a variety of programs. Its name represents four personal development areas: head, heart, hands and health.

On the last Friday of the fair each year, local businesses, organizations and individuals are asked to support the 4-H Livestock Auction and, in turn, support its youth members.

With hundreds of livestock projects completed each year, including steer, lamb, goat and swine, 4-Hers learn about the importance of protecting animal welfare, providing a safe and wholesome food supply and protecting the credibility of the animal industries they represent.

According to 4-H Extension Educator Jennifer Deichert, participation in 4-H livestock events offers experiential learning opportunities for youth to become more engaged in their animal projects, develop valuable life skills and interact with peers statewide.

“The culmination of the livestock projects takes place during the Fayette County Fair, when the youth participate in show competitions based on species,” Deichert wrote in an auction announcement letter. “This auction is open to the public and is a great way to support the 4-H youth who have worked diligently on their livestock projects.”

All animals may be purchased for personal use, company dinners and picnics or, if processed according to state regulations, restaurant and market use.

Fair Secretary Linda Rooker said the livestock auction dates back to the 1960s and has become a tradition benefiting both 4-Hers and the community.



“The 4-H members are financially compensated for producing their product and the community is purchasing a quality product,” Rooker said. “It is a great way to bring the agricultural community together and also help to inform the public on where their food comes from.”

Rooker said the auction process is also a good example of the farm-to-table process, with 4-Hers offering bidders refreshments throughout the auction which include the meat products available for purchase.

“This is a great way to familiarize the buyers with the quality of what they can purchase,” she said.

As Deichert explained, the auction process from purchase to end product is “simple and seamless.”

Buyers indicate their intended processor when registering and bid on animals based on price per pound, as indicated in the sale catalog. Animals are picked up at the fairgrounds the following day and transported to processors.

Any purchase amount over fair market value is considered a donation, and successful bidders may donate the animal back, with proceeds going to the 4-H Livestock Scholarship Fund. Thousands of dollars in scholarships are awarded to 4-H youth annually to help with continuing education.

4-H member Hailey Siba, 18, will participate in tomorrow’s auction before heading off to study nursing at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus this fall.

Siba has shown steers and pigs for the last nine years, with her latest steer winning Reserve Grand Champion earlier this week. With the auction profits alone, Siba has been able to build significant college savings.

“It’s definitely covered all my books and there’s still a good bit saved up for the semester,” Siba said. “For kids like me who have to save for college, the auction really helps out a lot.”

Siba said the auction allows her to meet a lot of new people and she most enjoys working with her 4-H friends during the event.

“The auction is important because the buyers know they’re getting the best meat ever,” she said. “With all the safety regulations we have to follow, it’s definitely the healthiest product.”

Siba said, although her 4-H career is over, she plans to return each year to help with the livestock auction and other events.

“The auction really does mean a lot to the kids,” she said. “At the end, when we meet the buyers and thank them, it’s really heartwarming to know how much they truly care about our livestock.”



Rooker said the auction teaches 4-Hers valuable life skills, as each member keeps a record book about their animal project.

“The record book tracks the amount of time, materials and expenses that were required to complete the project,” Rooker said. “Members also learn marketing skills by writing letters to potential buyers.

“Business and marketing skills are developed as the members prepare their animal to look great for the sale.”

Rooker said businesses and community members should support the 4-H Livestock Auction because it’s “a great way to invest in the future of agriculture in Fayette County.”

For auction details or to get involved, contact the Penn State Extension Office at 724-438-0111.

The Fayette County Fair is going on now through Saturday at the fairgrounds, 132 Pechin Rd., Dunbar. For more information on all the Fayette County Fair has to offer, visit www.fayettefair.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.info.

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