

Wood County 4-H Beef Project Guide



Helpful information for your beef project.

The contents of this guide are meant to be just that, a **guide and may be subject to change without notice. Be vigilant about referencing the Wood County Fair website for the most up to date information regarding the fair. Additional resource: ohio4h.org/livestock.

Beef Project Overview

There are several beef projects that you can enroll in as a 4-H member. Here is a brief summary of each project:

4-H #	Title	Description
117B	Beef Breeding	Raise a meat breed for breeding or production purposes
117BF	Beef Feeder (Market)	Raise a beef breed calf to a suggested weight of 700 lbs. at fair
117DF	Dairy Beef Feeder (Market)	Raise a male dairy calf from a few days or weeks of age to a suggested weight of 600-900 lbs.
117M	Market Beef	Raise a market steer (male) or market heifer (female) for production purposes
COP-Animal	Beef Carcass	4-H members will have the opportunity to learn about raising a market beef project, from hoof to slaughter.

Project Literature

You will need the following project materials for your beef project:

- **Beef Resource Handbook** (\$28) – This one-time purchase contains essential information for members taking a market beef, beef breeding, beef feeder, or dairy beef feeder project. An excellent resource for skill-a-thons.
- **Beef Project and Record Book** (\$12) - Obtain and keep for the resource information it contains. Note: do not use for your annual record keeping (with the exception of the first year).
- **Wood County Livestock Project Record Book Insert** (free) - Download this document and use as your records for your project. You may also purchase one from the Extension Office for \$4. Obtain a new one each year. *You will need to bring this completed document to 4-H Project Interview Judging.
- Optional Supplement – **Beef, Sheep, and Swine Selection and Evaluation** (\$12) – This optional resource is for beginners who want to learn more about selecting and evaluating livestock. Purchase only once and refer to it when selecting projects.



- In Summary: obtain the first two books listed above and keep and use them for all years you are taking a Beef Project. Each year: download a new Livestock Record Insert and use it to keep your annual project records.

**Note to those with Market Animal Projects; as a food animal producer you are required, by law, to keep a record of any treatments, medications, drugs, etc. that are used for the health of your animal. Use the Treatment Record within your Wood County Livestock Record Insert to keep this information.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 4-H PARTICIPATION: * = Mandatory

Activity	Due Date	Location	Reference Page # (in this guide)
*Enroll in 4-H	No later than March 15	https://v2.4honline.com/#/user/sign-in	2
*4-H Project Interview Judging	Thursday, July 16 th	Wood County Fairgrounds Junior Fair Building	2
Skill-a-thon	Thursday, July 16 th	Wood County Fairgrounds Junior Fair Building	3

Activities that will take place in order to complete your 4-H beef project

The following 4-H activities are described below.

4-H Enrollment

Membership requires enrollment in an authorized Ohio 4-H club or group under the direction of an OSU Extension professional or an approved adult volunteer. Your 4-H club Advisor will assist you with the online enrollment process. Joining Ohio 4-H is a privilege and responsibility for individuals and is subject to the Ohio 4-H Code of Conduct and applicable policies of The Ohio State University. Members must remain in good standing with their 4-H club, meaning: attending a minimum of five meetings, completing a demonstration, fully participating, etc.

Project Interview

Project judging is an exciting time to showcase your hard work spent on your 4-H project. Our judges love talking with you and learning about your project. Please be patient and understand if a judge is running behind. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Judging Hints

- Arrive at the Junior Fair Building with your project book and record books. Remember to wear nice attire to judging. See Dress Code below.
- Check in at the registration table.
- Complete the top of a judging interview sheet. Be prepared to talk about your project, know what you did, how you did it, and what you learned. Be proud of your accomplishments! You worked hard. Have a seat, talk to friends, and RELAX!



- If you are unable to attend the specified project interview judging day in July at the Junior Fair Building, your advisor may judge the project and provide a grade to the Extension Office by the required date.
- *Please note* To be eligible for awards (premier livestock interviewer) you must be judged on the day your project is assigned.

Dress Code Rule for 4-H Project Interview Judging

Exhibitors must wear a collared polo shirt or buttoned shirt with some sleeve and nice blue jeans (no rips or cut-offs and no tank-tops, t-shirts, or sleeveless tops).

- **Consequences for not following this rule may include no interview until wardrobe is changed. This rule was adopted by the 4-H Committee and Junior Fair Board.

Skill-a-thon

This is where you have the chance to shine as an exhibitor. This is a contest to show who knows the most about their species. You will study various topics on beef and then at 4-H Project Interview Judging, you will go into the skill-a-thon and answer the questions they pose for you. There are two levels: juniors (8-13 years old) and seniors (14-18 years old.) The exhibitors with the highest scores can earn ribbons and then have a chance to earn cash prizes.

- The Beef Skill-a-thon is an activity that takes place prior to fair, at 4-H Project Interview Judging. It is a series of stations on topics you are learning about in your Beef project. The goal of the Skill-a-thon is to facilitate learning about your project. It is not *expected but highly encouraged* that you participate in the Skill-a-thon.
- A Beef Skill-a-thon Study Guide is available to assist your learning. The Study Guide can be found on the Wood County 4-H web site:
https://wood.osu.edu/sites/wood/files/imce/Program_Pages/4H/skillathon/beefskillstudy17.pdf
- Online study resources:
 - <https://ohio4h.org/animalsciences/beef-cattle>
- Additional information for the Skill-a-thon can be found in your Beef Resource Handbook.
- Prizes are awarded to exhibitors who perform well in the Skill-a-thon. Prizes typically include cash and rosettes which are handed out at 4-H Spirit Night in October.

Congratulations on the successful completion of your project!

Getting Started with your Beef Project**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

EXTENSION

Updated as of February 2026

**wood.osu.edu**

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information, visit cfaesdiversity.osu.edu.

Beef 3

- Your 4-H Advisor, Fair Board, club members, and/or Extension Office can provide a list of possible sources of animals.
- It is highly advisable to seek out a reputable breeder to obtain your project animal. A good breeder wants you to be successful with your project and with the animal(s) they are offering. It is not advisable to look toward sale barns (stockyards) for project animals as you will not know the breed, health status, or anything else about the animal you are getting.
- Create a relationship with a veterinarian in your area. Verify that they are willing and able to see your animal(s) should the need arise and share contact information so that you are prepared.
- Provide a barn with adequate ventilation.
- Pen spacing of 25-30 square feet per animal is recommended.
- Pens need to be sturdy/strong and need to be at least four feet in height.
- A tub or tank to supply clean, adequate water during the project.
- Straw or mulch can be used for bedding.
- Good supply of CLEAN water, at all times.
- A feed trough or bunk will be needed to keep feed off the ground and fresh.
- Beef animals should consume 2% of their body weight daily.
- Do not switch feed all at once. Use a gradual method of introducing new feed. Check with breeder or local feed store nutritionist for feed recommendations.
- Offer a good quality grass hay, free of weeds, free choice to the animal(s).

Selecting a Quality Animal

- Selection of a project animal should be done carefully, with consideration given to breed, size, and quality. Size and quality are especially important. While management and nutrition have great influence on both, it is a big help to begin with a good animal.
- Make sure that the price you are willing to pay is consistent with your project objectives.
- A successful project outcome requires that the calf has a desirable genetic background and an excellent environment while in your care.

Duration of the Project

- Weigh your animals periodically during the summer.
- Closer to the fair, weighing is important, so you know if you need to adjust the amount of feed you are providing your animal.
- Keep ALL records of feed used and all medications given (if any).

Working With Your Calf

- Start walking your animal daily as soon as you get them.
- Rinse calves daily to promote hair growth for grooming.
- Keep pens clean with fresh bedding at all times.

Wood County Junior Fair Participation



All Wood County Junior Fair Beef information can be found here: <https://www.woodcounty-fair.com/beef-cattle> or in the Wood County Fair Book (printed annually each spring.)

Project Requirement for Exhibition at the Wood County Junior Fair

Participation is an opportunity available to you because you are a 4-H member. Exhibition at the Wood County Fair is not mandatory to fulfill the commitment of taking your 4-H project, but it is highly recommended. If you are interested in exhibiting a beef project at the Wood County Fair, you need to know and meet the exhibition requirements which can be found at the Wood County Fair website link above. Basic exhibition requirements include:

- You must be enrolled in 4-H (or FFA), no later than March 15th, in the project you want to exhibit.
- You must be a member in good standing of your 4-H Club: attending a minimum of five meetings, completing a demonstration, fully participating, etc.
- You must participate annually in Livestock Quality Assurance Education, by the deadline of June 1st for market ready projects only (this does not apply to dairy beef feeders or beef feeders). This training is provided by your 4-H club advisor or the county extension agent.
- You must register your animals in FairEntry online by the deadline of June 1st.
- Complete a Drug Use Notification Form (DUNF) online by the required date set by Junior Fair.
- Health Requirements can be found under the Junior Fair Rules & Guidelines sections in the Wood County Fair Book
- Additional mandatory requirements can be found online.

Things to Pack for Fair (may not be a complete list)

- Feed and feed pans.
- Water bucket, suggestion: 5-gallon bucket placed inside a milk crate. The crate can be zip tied to the gate or buried in the mulch to prevent spilling.
- Show box for equipment/supplies.
- Bottle of liquid soap (dish soap works fine)
- Hose and spray nozzle.
- Rope halter and neck rope.
- Leather show halter.
- Grooming chute (optional).
- Show stick.
- Scotch comb (used to style hair).
- Curry comb (used to clean dirt/manure off calf's hair).
- Fan should be used at the fair to keep animals cool. Hanging fans only.
- Blower (optional).
- Grooming clippers (optional)
- Show clothing attire per dress code: Collared shirt with no logos, pants with no holes, closed-toe shoes (preferably leather boots and no tennis shoes).



Fair Entries and Fair Rules

Each exhibitor is responsible for creating a fair entry for every animal that you plan to bring to the fair. Registering in 4-HOnline does not register you for fair. You register for fair in the FairEntry online program (with instruction from the Junior Fair Coordinator) by June 1st. Instruction on this will likely take place at one of your club meetings (another reason it is especially important to attend meetings). Your Advisor will be able to answer questions about the fair entry process.

When you choose to become a Junior Fair Exhibitor, you are responsible for knowing the general fair rules and the department rules for the project you are exhibiting. These can be found on the Wood County Fair website or in the Fair Book under Junior Fair Rules, Beef.

You should also be familiar with Ohio Revised Code Sections 901.70, 901.71, 901.72, 901.73, 901.74, 901.75, 901.76, 901.99 and 2925.94. These govern all livestock shows in the state of Ohio.

It is important to note that at the fair, the only people permitted to care for, fit, clip, or groom your animal are your immediate family members, 4-H Advisors, or other members of your club and assistance is limited to explanation and minimal demonstration (ORC 901.19.31).

Should you have any questions about rules, please contact the Fair Board Beef Committee.

The contents of this guide are meant to be just that, a **guide and may be subject to change without notice. Be vigilant about referencing the Wood County Fair website for the most up to date information regarding the fair.

<https://www.woodcounty-fair.com/>

Guide Credit: Christy Leeds, 4-H Extension Educator & Assistant Professor – Union County, Ohio



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENSION

Updated as of February 2026



wood.osu.edu
CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information, visit cfaesdiversity.osu.edu.

Beef 6