

Wood County 4-H Sheep Project Information



Helpful information for your sheep 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.

Sheep Project Overview

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

4-H #	Title	Description
198	Market Lamb	Can be a wether or ewe. Can be of any meat breed or color.
199	Sheep Breeding	Can be of any breed, female, or intact male, and must be registered in the name of the exhibitor or in partnership.

Project Literature

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

- **Sheep Resource Handbook** (\$28) - Designed to be used for all years of your lamb projects.
- **Market Lamb Project and Record Book OR Sheep Breeding 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** (free) - Download this document and use as your Record book 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 Sheep Project. Each year, download a new Livestock Record book and use it to keep your annual project records.

**Note to those with Food Animal (Market) 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 Book 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 prior in order to complete your 4-H sheep 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.

Project Interview 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 desk.
- 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 at the Junior Fair Building.



Dress Code Rule for 4-H Project Interview Judging

Exhibitors must wear a collared polo 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 class disqualification, or 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 sheep 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 Sheep 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 sheep project. The goal of the Skill-a-thon is to facilitate learning about your sheep project. It is not *expected*, but *highly encouraged* that you participate in the Sheep Skill-a-thon.
- A Sheep 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/sheepskillstudy17.pdf
- Online Study Resources:
 - <https://ohio4h.org/animalsciences/small-ruminant-sheepgoat>
- Additional information for the skill-a-thon can be found in your Sheep 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!



Basics For Your Sheep Project

- Your 4-H Advisor 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. Again, do not buy a lamb from ANY source that does not have a Scrapie tag in its ear (it is federal law for the breeder to apply this tag).
- Seek out an animal that has been born in the range of January 1 – February 15 of the current year.
- For market lambs: it is important to choose an animal of the correct size and growth potential so that it can meet the suggested weight range to show at the Wood County Fair (95- 145 pounds). You will want to select a meat breed lamb for a market project. For breeding sheep, you will want to choose an animal that fits your project goals. If you want to show your animal, you will want to make sure there is a class offered for the animal you are considering.
- When selecting market animals:
 - Look for a lamb that is square on their legs, straight (not sway) backed, wide chested, front legs set squarely down from their shoulder and wide in rear leg set.
 - Check birth date but also consider other factors such as genetics, nutrition, exercise, etc. Example: a single kid with a good milking ewe (mother) will grow much faster than a triplet that is getting limited nutrition.
- A rule of thumb is that a lamb will gain about 1/2 of pound per day or 15 pounds per month. However, this is largely influenced by type and quality of feed and other factors. (This is a rough estimate that can be influenced by many factors.)
- Check for lice and mites when getting your lamb and treat if needed to keep the wool/hair quality of your animal favorable.
- A healthy lamb should be alert, curious and move easily. Avoid a lamb that stands in the corner, is hunched up as it stands, drooped, or moves lethargically.

Housing

- Provide some type of shelter to keep lambs out of the elements. Ventilation is key for keeping them healthy in the summer, but you also want to have protection from wind, rain, and sun.
- You will want a pen that provides room for exercise but is not so big that the lambs are difficult to catch. 6' x 6' would be adequate, 10' x 10' would be ideal. Your lambs do not “need” to be on grass or pasture. In fact, it is easier to control feed intake and keep them free of parasites if they are not on grass.
- Bedding: straw or shavings. Shavings work better to manage the size of their belly for show, as the lambs will not eat the shavings as much. Clean pens regularly. Wet, dirty bedding is not ideal.

Feeding

- You will need a water bucket and one feeder per lamb. Water needs to be changed out multiple times per day. Clean the feeders out after every feeding. Lambs will not eat old, dirty feed.



- There are many types of quality show feeds available locally. Talk to your breeder to see what they recommend. Freshness is particularly important. Lambs will eat 3-4% of their body weight per day. A good place to start is one pound of feed, twice a day for each lamb. Market lambs only need a small handful of hay 1-2 times per day.
- Weigh them periodically! Don't wait until a week before the fair to find out you're not meeting weight. Drastic changes in diet to meet weight can cause sickness and lambs to stop eating.

Health Care

- It is your responsibility as an animal owner and/or food animal producer to establish a relationship with a veterinarian, to help with health care decisions for your animal. Your 4-H Advisor and/or Extension Office may be able to provide suggestions about veterinarians in the area that provide services for sheep. You can also seek suggestions from other sheep owners.
- Do NOT seek animal medical advice from farm store clerks, neighbors, other sheep owners, breeders, etc. Experienced sheep owners may be able to guide you in many areas, but if your animal needs veterinary care; it is your responsibility to provide proper care for that animal.



Wood County Junior Fair Participation

All Wood County Junior Fair Sheep information can be found here: <https://www.woodcounty-fair.com/sheep> 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 commitments of taking your 4-H project, but it is highly recommended. If you are interested in exhibiting a lamb(s) at the Wood County Fair, you need to know and meet the exhibition requirements. Basic exhibition requirements include (additional mandatory requirements can be found online):

- 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, meaning 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. 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 section of the Wood County Fair

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 FairEntry 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 Fair website or in the Fair Book under Junior Fair Rules, Sheep.

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 Sheep Committee.



Training Your Lamb to Show

- You will need a halter for each lamb.
- Start by putting a halter on your lamb and tying them up in their pen. Keep them tied for 20-30 minutes at first, then work up to an hour. NEVER leave your lamb unattended while tied.
- After they get used to standing while tied, you can start leading them. Do not pull hard or battle them to lead. Lambs are very stubborn. Walk beside or behind them at first. Patience pays off. After the lamb is comfortable walking with the halter, start leading them without a halter. Take them on short walks daily. Practice stopping and setting their legs as you would in the show ring occasionally. The earlier you start training your lamb to lead, the better. It is best if you start about a week after you get your project home.
- If you have a grooming stand (highly recommended), it can be beneficial for the lamb to practice standing with their legs set in place and their head up to prepare for the show ring.
- Establish a routine of walking and showmanship practice daily. Even if you are short on time 15 minutes of practice can make a dramatic difference.

Preparing Your Lamb to Show

- Lambs should be kept rough shorn throughout the summer to help with feed intake and monitoring body condition.
- You will want to show clip your lamb within 5 days prior to show day. The lamb needs to be clean and just slightly damp before you start to clip. You will want to clip all the wool above the knee and hock, including the head. Leave the hair below the knee and hock on the lower part of the leg. Prepare early so you have what you need when the time comes.
- Trim their hooves 5-7 days prior to show day, and also throughout the duration of the project. Hooves in poor condition can lead to other feet and leg issues. Take care to not trim their hooves too close.
- On show day, you will want to have your lamb freshly washed and clean. Dawn dish soap works fine. Take your time to make sure you have cleaned everywhere, scrub the hooves, ear tag, etc. The details matter. Be careful to not get water in the ears.

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

- Feed and feed pans
- Water bucket – suggestion: 5-gallon bucket inside of a milk crate to prevent spills or hook water bucket handle to gate with carabiner
- Halters
- Bedding (shavings are recommended)
- Lamb Fitting Stand (optional)
- Blower (optional) – suggestion: Shammy works great to dry sheep
- Hose and spray nozzle
- Show box or plastic tote to store feed and supplies
- Show clothing per dress code



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

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

