

Sheep Project Guide

Helpful information for your sheep project (Richwood version)

There are several lamb projects that you can enroll in as a 4-H member. Here's a brief summary of each project that can be found in the Richwood Jr Fair rules:

| # | Title | Description |
|-----|----------------|---|
| 198 | Market Lamb | Raise a meat breed wether or ewe of any color to harvest weight |
| 199 | Sheep Breeding | Raise any breed or sex and must be registered in the name of the exhibitor or in partnership. |

Project Literature

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

- **Sheep Project Handbook** (\$19) Designed to be used for all years of your lamb projects.
- **Sheep Project and Record Book** (\$8) Obtain and keep for the resource info it contains. Note: do not use for your annual record keeping.
- **Union County Livestock Project Record Book** (free) Download this document and use as your Record book for your project. Keep a new one each year.

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 you 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 Union County Livestock Record Book to keep this information.

Participation in Richwood Junior Fair

If you are interested in exhibiting a lamb at the Richwood Fair, you need to know and meet the exhibition requirements. Basic exhibition requirement include:

- You must participate annually in Livestock Quality Assurance Education, by the deadline of July 1st.
- You must be a member in good standing of your 4-H Club; meaning attending a minimum of 5 meetings, doing a demonstration, etc.
- You must own your animal(s) by June 1st, 2023.
- All sheep, of every kind, MUST have a Scrapie tag.
 - The breeder should have the scrapie tag in the lamb's ear before you take possession. (Do NOT buy a lamb without a Scrapie tag). This tag has a State premise ID-individual sheep number. Ex: OH 7884 0400
- For market lambs; you must register your animals (submit scrapie ID and photos) online by the deadline of June 8th.
- In coordination with your 4-H Advisor you must submit a Fair entry card by the Fair entry deadline of August 1st.



At the Richwood Fair there are several different classes in which you can exhibit your lambs.

Market Lamb Classes

- The Richwood Fair has classes for both market ewes (females) and market wethers (castrated males).
- You can show up to 2 market ewes and up to 2 market wethers, for a maximum of 4 total market lambs. For both Market Ewes and Wethers; the Champion and Reserve Champion animals are terminal, meaning they must go to market.
- Market ewes and wethers are weighed on the first day of the fair and classes are divided by weight.

Additional Requirements for market lambs

- Repeat: You must register ("tag In") your lamb(s) online by June 8.
- Market lambs must be between 95-145 pounds to show.

Additional information for Breeding sheep:

- Must have a scrapie tag (will be checked by USDA)
- Shown by age, not weight, and are not weighed in.
- Sheep may be horned.
- Breeding sheep will be retained by the showmen and not sold through the Junior Fair Sale.

Basics for your sheep project:

- Your 4-H Advisor 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).
- For market lambs: it's important to choose an animal of the correct size and growth potential so that it can meet the required weight range to show at Richwood 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'll 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 good.
- 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:

- Some type of shelter to keep lambs out of the elements. Ventilation is key for keeping them healthy in the summer time, 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. At the fair, you must bed with shavings.

Feeding:

- You will need a water bucket and 1 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 very important. Lambs will eat 3-4% of their body weight per day. A good place to start is 1 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.

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. Don't 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 working on 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 routine daily. Even if you are short on time 15 minutes of practice can make a huge 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 prior to 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 just fine. Take your time to make sure you have cleaned everywhere, scrub the hooves, ear tag is clean etc. The details matter. Be careful to not get water in the ears.

Health Care

- It is your responsibility as an animal owner and/or food animal producer to establish a relationship with a veterinarian, in order to help with health care decisions for your animal. Your 4-H Advisor 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 your animal.

Fair Entries and Fair Rules

- Your 4-H Advisor will coordinate the submission of Fair entry cards. Discussion of and completion of Fair entry cards will likely take place at one of your club meetings (another reason it is very important to attend meetings). It is your responsibility to communicate with your 4-H Advisor about what you want to enter in the Fair and the details of your entry (example; breed and age of your breeding sheep entry).
- Richwood Junior Fair entries are due to the Fair Board on August 1st. Therefore; completing entry cards will take place in July. Your Advisor will be able to answer questions about the Fair entry process.
- When you choose to become a Jr 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 Richwood Fair website or in the fair paper under Jr Fair Rules. 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, 4H advisors, or other members of your club, and assistance is limited to explanation and minimal demonstration (ORC 901.19.31).

Drug Use Notification Form (DUNF)

- If you are exhibiting a Market animal you are required, by the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) to submit a DUNF immediately prior to the Fair. This form requires you to declare the use of any medication that has been given to your animal. An online link will be sent to you by email to use for completing your form. You are not eligible to exhibit a market animal until this form is submitted to ODA.

Activities that will take place at the Fair

Arrival & Departure

Check the Fair Schedule and/or ask your Advisor to confirm the window of time you must arrive with your animal to the Fairgrounds. Upon arrival, find your assigned pen and unload your lambs efficiently so as not to create a line. There are Barn Superintendents in the barn on arrival day to answer questions.

If you are not going to sell your lamb through the Jr Fair Livestock Sale; check the time that animals are released at the end of Fair week; meaning this is the time you can reload and take your animal home.

Barn Meeting

Check the Fair Schedule for the time of the Barn Meeting. There will be individual species meetings Tuesday evening and then a Barn Meeting for all Exhibitors will be held on Wednesday morning of the Fair, prior to weigh in.

Weigh-In

Only market animals are weighed.

Check the Fair Schedule, and listen at the Barn meeting, for the weigh in time for market lambs. You MUST bring your lamb(s) to the scales at the correct time to be eligible to show. There will be Barn Superintendents in the Barn to direct and help you get to the scales, but you MUST be present to get your lamb(s) weighed. Your picture will also be taken with your lamb during weigh in. Please dress as if you were showing that day.

Classes Posted

Once all lambs are weighed, classes will be created by dividing the ewes and wethers in approximately equal size classes based on their weights. These classes will be posted on the Sheep Barn bulletin board. It is your responsibility to review the class posting for accuracy. Check to see that the gender, ear tag number, and weight are correct. If you have questions about the class posting, contact the Jr Fair Board office immediately for assistance.

Showmanship and Show Classes

There are 3 different types of Classes within the Sheep Show:

Showmanship Classes: in these classes the Judge is evaluating the showmanship skills of the Exhibitor (you!). These classes are therefore divided by the age of the exhibitor. These classes will be posted in the Lamb Barn. Check the posting for accuracy. Participation in your Showmanship class is highly encouraged but is not mandatory.

Breeding Sheep Classes: Each breeding class that has an entry will be part of the show. Usually, these classes are shown between the showmanship Classes and Market classes.

Market Ewe and Market Wether Classes: in these classes the Judge is evaluating the conformation of the lambs. These classes are divided by the weight of the lamb. Following weigh-in, these classes will be posted in the Sheep Barn. Check the posting to see which class you are in. It is required to participate in showing your lamb to be eligible for awards and to be eligible to sell your goat in the Jr Fair Livestock Sale.

The Sheep Show will begin with Showmanship Classes, then Breeding, followed by Market Classes. Check the Barn Bulletin Board and listen for announcements on Show Day for any updates.

Skillathon

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 goats and at the fair, you will go into the skillathon and answer the questions they pose for you. There are typically 3 levels: juniors (8-10 years old), intermediates (11-13 years old), and seniors (14-18 years old.) The exhibitors with the highest scores can earn outstanding ribbons and then have a chance to earn cash prizes.

- The Sheep Skillathon is an activity that takes place at the Fair. It is a series of stations on topics you are learning about in your sheep project. The goal of the Skillathon is to facilitate learning about your sheep project and practice other life skills (interviewing for example). It is *expected* that you participate in the Sheep Skillathon.
- A Sheep Skillathon Study Guide is available which outlines what each topic and station in the Skillathon will be about. The Study Guide can be found on the Union County 4-H web site: union.osu.edu/program-areas/4-H-youth-development/study-guidesskillathon-information
- Information for the Sheep Skillathon can be found in your Sheep Resource Handbook or is attached to the Study Guide.
- Prizes are awarded to exhibitors who do well in the Skillathon. Prizes typically include cash and rosettes.

Premier Exhibitor Award Qualifications

- Premier Exhibitor is an award given to 1 Exhibitor per specie which recognizes the individual which has the best overall Combination of Skillathon score (40%), Showmanship (40%), market class placing (20%).
- To be eligible an exhibitor must; show a market animal project, participate in Skillathon, and participate in Showmanship.

Jr Fair Livestock Sale

The Richwood Fair Jr Fair Livestock Sale is held on Monday, the last day of the Fair. Exhibitors with market animals are eligible to sell ONE animal through the Jr Fair Sale, if they have met eligibility criteria (shown their animal, animal is within correct weight range, turned in Sale Designation form on time, etc).

During the Sheep Show; Sale Designation Forms will be made available to all Exhibitors. If you want to sell a lamb through the Jr Fair Sale, you must complete the Sale Designation Form, indicating which lamb you want to place in the Jr Fair Sale, and turn in the form by the end of the Sheep Show. You MUST be present during the Jr Fair Sale on Monday in order to sell your lamb. A Sale Catalog (list of animals for sale) will be created and posted. It is generally posted in the Barn on Sunday of the Fair. Check the posted Catalog to see where you are in the Sale order so you can be ready.

Once your animal is sold through the Sale; the Sale Committee will handle loading and transporting your animal on behalf of the buyer. Your responsibility is to keep your animal watered and comfortable until it is loaded, and to clean your pen once the animal is loaded.

Extra Animals

Many exhibitors will have an “extra” animal or 2, because you can only sell one animal through the Jr Fair Livestock Sale. It is your responsibility to decide and make arrangements for your extra animal(s). Options usually include:

- Take the animal home
- Sell the animal to the Re-sale bidder arranged by the Sale Committee. To do this you will complete a form, in the Jr Fair Office. The market price being offered will be posted there.
- Sell the animal privately. You would be entirely responsible for loading, transportation and all other aspects of the sale if you sell your extra animals privately.
- Schedule a slaughter date ahead of time. These book up quickly, so if you know you’ll have extra(s), please do this once you purchase the animals.

Finishing your lamb project

When the project year is concluded its time to thank the people that have helped you with your project. It’s a great idea to send thank you notes to:

- The buyer of your animal, if you participated in the Jr Fair Sale
- Your 4-H Advisors
- Other folks who helped you with your project (helped shear your lamb for example)
- The sponsors of any awards, ribbons, banners or other recognition you received