

Maryland 4-H Code of Animal Science Ethics

Exhibitors of animals (beef, dairy, goat, horse, poultry, rabbit, sheep, dog, and swine), at all animal science activities and events shall at all times conduct themselves with honesty and good sportsmanship. Their conduct shall always reflect the highest standards of honor and dignity to promote the advancement of agricultural education. This code applies to all 4-H'ers who participate in structured classes of competition and animal science activities and events in 4-H. This code applies to all animals offered in any animal science activity, event, or show.

All youth leaders (including parents and MCE Volunteers) working with 4-H exhibitors are under an affirmative responsibility to do more than avoid improper conduct or questionable acts. Their moral values must be so certain and positive that those younger and more pliable will be influenced by their fine example. Owners who violate the code of animal science ethics will forfeit premiums, awards, and auction proceeds and may be prohibited from future participation. 4-H Exhibitors who violate this code of ethics demean the integrity of all animal exhibitors.

Infractions will be reviewed by a 4-H Board of Review, on the local or state level, as appropriate to the event in question and may be subject to a fair oversight committee. In addition, some acts may be subject to review of the State 4-H Office and/or MCE based upon the 4-H Behavioral Expectations (4-H 418) and/or MCE policies.

The following is a list of standards for all exhibitors and all animals in competitive events and activities:

1. All exhibitors must present, upon request of fair and livestock officials, proof of ownership, identity of animal, length of ownership, and age of all animals owned. Misrepresentation of ownership, identity of animal, age, or any facts relating thereto is prohibited.
2. Owners shall provide animal health certificates from licensed veterinarians upon request by fair or animal officials.
3. 4-H exhibitors are expected to care for and groom their animals while at fairs or animal science activities and events.
4. Animals shall be presented to activities and events, where they will enter the food chain, free of drugs. The act of entering an animal in an animal show, activity, or event is giving the consent by the owner for event management to obtain any specimens of urine, saliva, blood, hair, tissue, or other substance from the animal to be used in testing. Specimens may also be utilized to determine the identity of the animal. Animals entered shall not be administered drugs other than in accordance with applicable federal, state, and provincial statutes, regulations and rules. Animals shall not be exhibited if the drugs administered in accordance with federal, state, and provincial statutes, regulations and rules affect the animal's performance or appearance at the event.

If the laboratory report on the chemical analysis of saliva, urine, blood, hair, tissue, or other sample, taken from livestock, indicates the presence of forbidden drugs or medication, this shall be prima facie evidence such substance has been administered to the animal either internally or externally. It is presumed that the sample of urine, saliva, blood or other substance tested by the approved laboratory to which it is sent is the one taken from the animal in question, its integrity is preserved, and all procedures of said collection and preservation, transfer to the laboratory and analysis of the sample are correct and accurate and the report received from the laboratory pertains to the sample taken from the animal in question and correctly reflects the condition of the animal at the time the sample was taken, with the burden on the owner to prove otherwise at any review in regard to the matter conducted by the fair or livestock event or 4-H. At any time after an animal arrives on the fair or animal science event premises, a licensed veterinarian shall administer all treatments involving the use of drugs and/or medications.

5. Any surgical procedure or injection of any foreign substance or drug or the external application of any substance (irritant, counter irritant, or similar substance) which could affect the animal's performance or alter its natural contour, conformation, or appearance, except external applications of substances to the hoofs or horns of animals which affect appearance only and except for surgical procedures performed by a duly licensed veterinarian for the sole purpose of protecting the health of the animal, is prohibited.
6. Using ice, ice packs, cold packs, or cold compresses, internally or externally, other than those prescribed to relieve heat stress or a medical condition as diagnosed by a duly licensed veterinarian for the sole purpose of protecting the health of the animal, is prohibited.

