

Kentucky 4-H Livestock/Horse Volunteer Certification Program Guidelines

[Adopted September 1, 2012; Updated 12/10/13; Updated 1/8/15; Updated 2/14/17, Updated 3/29/21]

Introduction

4-H livestock and horse programs/projects may seem to be about animals, but in reality they are about kids. Young people are important to us and we want to make sure that we provide the very best educational experience that we can. For most, animal and animal-related programs/projects will provide a wide variety of life lessons which will positively impact them for the rest of their lives, no matter what career path they choose to follow. For a few, an animal science project will lead to a career. While it is important for youth in livestock and horse programs/projects to gain a basic understanding of animal anatomy, daily care, nutrition, reproduction, and marketing, it's the learning from hands-on experience—making decisions, then seeing the results, and accepting responsibility for the care of a living animal—where lives of youth are forever changed.

In an effort to make sure that every young person involved in a 4-H animal science program/project has the best possible learning experience, Kentucky 4-H put into place a system of “certification” for 4-H volunteers. In order for a county to offer livestock and horse projects through 4-H, at least one volunteer per club/group must complete specific specialized training. That volunteer must continue to hone his/her knowledge and skills in youth development and animal science to continue as a “certified” volunteer. This is a step toward providing the finest educational experience for youth that we can.

Livestock and Horse Volunteer Certification

Livestock and Horse Volunteer Certification is a state-wide effort to prepare 4-H volunteers who work with livestock or horse clubs/groups to provide a meaningful, well-rounded educational experience based on principles of positive youth development and agricultural research. The objectives of Livestock and Horse Volunteer Certification are:

- A. To provide the knowledge base necessary for volunteers to present in-depth educational experiences to 4-H youth. This knowledge base includes:
 - a. Youth development (including what to expect at different ages/stages of life and how youth learn).
 - b. The best methods to use when teaching youth.
 - c. 4-H club management.
 - d. Volunteer recruitment and development.
 - e. Subject matter and skills related to species of animal.
- B. To provide 4-H leaders with curricula and a ready-to-use set of resources and teaching tools needed to conduct successful learning activities at 4-H meetings.
- C. To provide a measure of consistency among counties in resources available for use in teaching 4-H members.
- D. To ensure that 4-H members have a sound, well-rounded educational experience—it's more than showing livestock or riding horses.
- E. To provide an opportunity for volunteers to introduce quality assurance and ethics lessons to youth.
- F. To reduce the liability that volunteers may encounter when working with 4-H animal projects and activities. This is accomplished by ensuring that all 4-H Livestock and Horse Volunteers are following a prescribed and approved curriculum and have been certified by the University of Kentucky to work with youth.
- G. To fulfill the desire of volunteers for greater personal knowledge of the subject matter which they need to teach to youth.

Guidelines related to 4-H Animal Science Programs/Projects and Certified Volunteers

- A. To start or continue to offer livestock and horse programs/projects as part of the county 4-H program, the county must have in place at least one (1) volunteer serving in the role of “Certified Livestock and/or Horse Volunteer Leader”.
 - a. If a county does not have at least one Certified Volunteer Leader for each livestock or horse club/group, they will not be able to offer that project/program or activities related to that project/program. That means youth will not be able to participate in projects, programs, events, and activities in the livestock or horse project/program area.
- B. The county must have a minimum of one (1) Certified Volunteer Leader per club/group certified in livestock to offer 4-H livestock and dairy opportunities related to:
 - a. Projects including beef cattle, dairy cattle, goats, sheep, swine, and country ham.
 - b. Programs and activities including livestock and dairy on-foot shows, livestock judging, dairy judging, meats judging, livestock skillathon, dairy jeopardy, country ham, and all other livestock, dairy, and meats events and activities.
- C. The county must have a minimum of one (1) Certified Volunteer Leader per club/group certified in horse to offer 4-H horse opportunities related to:
 - a. Projects including all horse disciplines and horseless horse.
 - b. Programs and activities including horse shows, drill team, horse judging, hippology, horse bowl, and all other horse events and activities.
- D. Certified Volunteer Leaders:
 - a. Certified Volunteer Leaders can only be certified in one county. Furthermore, if a volunteer is certified in both Livestock and Horse, the certification for both must be in the same county.
 - b. Volunteers are not certified for specific disciplines in Horse or species in Livestock.
 - c. County Extension Agents may not serve in the role of Certified Volunteer Leader, but they do have programmatic oversight responsibility for all 4-H programs and projects. **COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE IN THE TRAINING WHERE THEIR VOLUNTEERS ARE CERTIFIED.**
 - d. Teens may not be a Certified Volunteer Leader, but they can be accredited by attending and completing a Kentucky 4-H Livestock/Horse Volunteer Certification Workshop.
- E. The specific number of Certified Volunteer Leaders required depends on the structure of the livestock and horse program in the county. Each project/program club/group must have a Certified Volunteer Leader, and every 4-H member enrolled in a 4-H livestock or horse project/program must be in a project/program club/group led by a Certified Volunteer Leader.
 - a. Scenario A: If a county has one countywide Livestock Club, then the county must have at least one Certified Volunteer Leader.
 - b. Scenario B: If a county has separate project clubs/groups for beef, sheep, swine, goats, dairy, and(or) country ham project, or separate program clubs/groups for livestock judging teams, meats judging teams, livestock skillathon team, dairy judging team, and(or) dairy jeopardy team, then each of those project/program clubs/groups must have a Certified Volunteer Leader.
 - c. Scenario C: If a county has one countywide Horse Club, then the county must have at least one Certified Volunteer Leader.
 - d. Scenario D: If a county has separate project/programs clubs/groups for drill team, English, Western, etc., horse judging, hippology, etc., then each of those project/program clubs/groups must have at least one Certified Volunteer Leader.
 - e. Scenario E: If a 4-H member is enrolled as an individual / independent study (not in a club/group), he/she must have at least one Certified Volunteer identified as his/her leader.

- F. Each 4-H member participating in any aspect of the livestock or horse program must be enrolled in a program/project that is led by a Certified Volunteer Leader.
 - a. If a family chooses not to affiliate with a club/group, then the parent or legal guardian must complete the certification training to become a Certified Volunteer Leader so their youth can participate through independent study.
- G. Except in those limited cases where cross-county participation has been granted, a 4-H member is to participate in 4-H in the county in which he/she lives or goes to school.
- H. To be a 4-H member, each youth must participate in a minimum of six (6) hours of education in the program/project under the oversight of their county's Certified Volunteer Leader(s).
- I. Educational hours completed by each youth must be documented by the Certified Volunteer Leader(s) and the 4-H YD agent.
- J. The six (6) hour educational requirement must be completed annually by each 4-H member enrolled in livestock or horse programs/projects:
 - a. Between September 1 and the Validation/KUIP tagging date for market animals (market steers, market heifers, market goats, market lambs, and market swine).
 - b. Between September 1 and the May 31 deadline for breeding animal nominations (breeding beef cattle bulls, breeding beef cattle heifers, breeding ewes, breeding does, and breeding gilts).
 - c. Between September 1 and the date of the livestock, dairy, or meats team event (includes livestock judging, dairy judging, meats judging, livestock skillathon, dairy jeopardy, country ham, and all other livestock, dairy, and meats events and activities).
 - d. Between September 1 and April 30 for horse and horse team events (includes all horse disciplines, horseless horse, drill team, horse judging, hippology, horse bowl, and all other horse events and activities).
 - e. Between September 1 and June 1 for all dairy cattle project animals (registered and grade) and dairy non-ownership projects.
- K. Youth who do not receive 6 hours of education in any one year have not fulfilled the requirement for participation in a livestock or horse program/project, and are **NOT** eligible to participate or compete in these events or activities during that 4-H year.

The Volunteer Certification Process

- A. To become a Certified Livestock Volunteer Leader or a Certified Horse Volunteer Leader, a volunteer must attend and complete a Kentucky 4-H Livestock/Horse Certification Workshop.
 - a. Workshops are generally held twice a year at state parks located in different parts of the state. *Workshops are now 1 day in length, beginning on Saturday morning and ending by late afternoon on Saturday.*
 - b. The primary goal of workshop is not to provide subject matter training (although some subject matter training may occur). Rather, the workshops are designed to provide training and instruction on youth development, teaching methods, club management, and how to utilize the resource materials and curricula that have been developed.
 - c. In addition to participating in the workshop training, each volunteer participant must successfully complete a teaching practicum (typically done as a team with 2-4 other volunteer participants) to demonstrate their understanding of how to utilize the Livestock or Horse Resource Kit and curricula.
 - d. Upon successful completion of the Kentucky 4-H Livestock/Horse Certification Workshop, the Certified Volunteer Leader will sign a contract which states that he/she agrees to offer a minimum of nine (9) hours of instruction per year, prior to the established deadline(s) for the livestock or

horse projects/programs, and that he/she will require the youth in their project/program unit to participate in a minimum of six (6) hours of educational activities annually.

- e. A volunteer can become a Certified Volunteer Leader in both livestock and horse at the same workshop, but to do so will require that the curriculum for both livestock and horse be purchased.
- f. To remain as a Certified Volunteer Leader, the volunteer must complete at least two (2) hours of approved continuing educational training by August 31 every year. *All signed and completed Recertification Training Forms must be submitted to Zach Bartenslager or Mary Jane Little by September 15 each year.*

Recertification of Certified Volunteer Leaders

To maintain certification as a Certified Volunteer Leader for livestock and(or) horse, the volunteer must complete at least two (2) hours of approved continuing education by August 31st annually. Some examples of approved recertification training hours may include (but are not limited to) any Cooperative Extension sponsored or industry related Animal Science programming such as Master Cattleman or Horse College, and any other appropriate educational opportunities with topics relating to meat animal livestock, dairy cattle, meat sciences, or horses. Animal science related workshops that can be used for continuing education will be offered at the KY 4-H Volunteer Forum which is traditionally held during even years. Training may be completed at face-to-face sessions or via electronic media (such as Lync, CD, DVD, web, etc.). The process for receiving approval and credit for an educational training to count for recertification hours is as follows:

- A. Discuss the educational training with the supervising County Extension Agent (typically the 4-H YD Extension Agent) to gain their approval that the training is appropriate to aid you with the project/program you lead. For Livestock Certified Volunteer Leaders the recertification training should involve subject matter related to 4-H clubs or livestock, and for Horse Certified Volunteer Leaders the recertification training should involve subject matter related to 4-H clubs or horses.
- B. Once the Certified Volunteer Leader has completed the recertification training that was approved by their supervising County Extension Agent, the Certified Volunteer Leader must give the form signed by the instructor to the supervising County Extension Agent for their signature. The Agent will send *electronically* the completed and signed **Recertification Training Form** (available [here](#)) to either Zach Bartenslager (for Livestock Certified Volunteer Leaders) or Mary Jane Little (for Horse Certified Volunteer Leaders) to receive credit for the training.

NOTE: Zach Bartenslager and Mary Jane Little reserve the right to reject trainings that are not appropriate for recertification training. If there is a question concerning the appropriateness of a training for a leader's recertification, it is recommended that the Certified Volunteer Leader or their supervising County Extension Agent discuss the training with Zach and Mary Jane before the training is completed to determine its appropriateness.

- C. If the recertification training is deemed appropriate, Zach and Mary Jane will forward an electronic copy of the **Recertification Training Form** to the appropriate State Specialist in the State 4-H Office (currently this individual is Ms. Ashley Osborne) for documentation purposes. The State Specialist will maintain an up-to-date database of Certified Volunteer Leaders and those that have received their two (2) hours of annual, approved continuing educational training.

NOTE: Failure of a Certified Volunteer Leader to receive at least two (2) hours of approved continuing education by August 31st annually will result in loss of certification as a Certified Volunteer Leader. Once certification by a Volunteer Leader has been lost, it can only be reestablished by attending another Kentucky 4-H Livestock/Horse Certification Workshop.

The Role of the Certified Volunteer Leader

- A. Maintain communications with the supervising County Extension Agent (usually 4-H YD agent).
- B. In coordination with the County Extension Agent(s) and the county's other Certified Volunteer Leaders, serve as a 4-H club/group leader to:
 - a. Schedule and coordinate 4-H club/group meetings.
 - b. Determine the subject matter/skills needed by 4-H club/group members.
 - c. Plan a series of learning activities to meet the subject matter/skills needs of the 4-H club/group members.
 - d. Conduct the learning activities or recruit individuals (professional in the field, guest speakers, individuals with a working knowledge of the subject, former members, parents, etc.) to conduct the learning activities.
 - e. Ensure that sufficient educational opportunities are offered so that each 4-H member receives a minimum of 6 hours of instruction each year.
 - f. Document the educational hours each 4-H member receives annually.

NOTE: As the professional with responsibility for all 4-H activities in the county, the County Extension Agent (usually the 4-H YD Agent) is the official representative of Kentucky Cooperative Extension. Final decision over all matters pertaining to management of the livestock and horse club at the local level rests with the County Extension Agent.

- C. Ask to be placed on the county mailing list for ANR newsletters and talk to the ANR agent about upcoming educational opportunities locally and in other nearby counties which may meet the requirement for continuing education.

The Role of the Supervising County Extension Agent

- A. Provide overall management, oversight, and leadership for the livestock and horse clubs at the local level.
- B. Work with the county's Certified Volunteer Leader(s) to plan and outline the educational sessions to be offered throughout the year.
- C. Recruit volunteers to attend/complete certification training.
- D. Assist Certified Volunteer Leaders in receiving their minimum of two (2) hours of approved continuing education by August 31st annually. Discuss with the ANR Agent any educational opportunities that will be available for Certified Volunteer Leaders to attend to receive their continuing education hours. Request that the Certified Volunteer Leaders be placed on the county ANR newsletter mailing list.
- E. Inform volunteers of county and state policies related to the project/program for which they provide leadership.
- F. Provide certificates for each 4-H member who completes the six (6) hours of instruction by the appropriate deadline each year.

Guidelines Related to Instruction

What instruction qualifies towards a youth's hours of instruction? Many of the lesson plans that are a part of both the livestock and horse curricula include the opportunity for various resource people to present programs and workshops. So long as a county's Certified Volunteer Leader(s) was involved with planning and coordination of the program, these hours could count. Additionally, opportunities exist for Certified Volunteer Leaders from multiple counties to work together in providing educational opportunities for youth. It is recommended that each county's Certified Volunteer Leader(s) and the County 4-H YD Agent determine at the beginning of the 4-H program year the educational programs/topics that will be offered, and the individuals that will conduct the instruction.

- A. Below are examples of educational opportunities which might qualify toward a youth's six (6) hour educational requirement. This is not an all inclusive list, and is provided as examples only:
- a. Lessons/learning activities taught by the Certified Volunteer Leader(s).
 - b. Lessons/learning activities taught by Extension specialists, associates, or agents as part of the series of educational activities planned by the Certified Volunteer Leader(s) and the County 4-H YD Agent.
 - c. Lessons/learning activities taught by "experts" (such as Vocational Agriculture Teachers, veterinarians, allied industry personnel, and past 4-H members who are highly skilled in field, etc.) as part of the series of educational activities planned by the Certified Volunteer Leader(s) and the County 4-H YD Agent.
 - d. District, regional, or statewide educational events (such as coordinated multi-county educational events, Dairy Cow Camp, Dare to Dairy, KDA Livestock Camps, Meat Judging Workshops, Livestock Judging Workshops, etc.) may count for up to three (3) hours toward the six (6) hour requirement for youth provided the following criteria are met:
 1. The Certified Volunteer Leader(s) and the County 4-H YD Agent are in agreement that the educational event will be of value to their 4-H members.
 2. The educational opportunity is made available to all club/group members.
 3. The 4-H member's Certified Volunteer Leader(s) or the County 4-H YD Agent attends the educational event to document the youth's participation, **OR** documentation of participation is provided by event organizers to both the 4-H member's Certified Volunteer Leader(s) and the County 4-H YD Agent.
- B. Examples of opportunities that won't qualify toward a youth's six (6) hour educational requirement:
- a. Participation in KDA Preview and District Livestock Shows or KDA Junior Livestock Expos; Horse Shows; Judging Contests (Livestock, Dairy, Meats, Horse); County, District or State Fairs; or National Livestock or Horse Shows.
 - b. Educational activities provided only to members of a state team such as the State Livestock Judging Team, State Livestock Skillathon Team, State Dairy Judging Team, State Dairy Bowl Team, State Horse Judging Team, State Horse Hippology Team, etc. (Only the hours earned as part of the county's educational program will count.)

Contacts for Questions

Below is a listing of individuals that can be contacted with questions concerning the Livestock and Horse Volunteer Certification Program. The specific areas of expertise related to the certification program for the various individuals are also provided.

- A. For questions pertaining to the various processes of Livestock and Horse Volunteer Certification and Recertification, and for questions pertaining to Certified Volunteer Leaders, Livestock and Horse Resource Kits, or Livestock and Horse Curriculum, contact one of the following:

Ashley Osborne
State 4-H Office
212 Scovell Hall
Lexington, KY 40546-0064
(859) 218-0986
ashley.osborne@uky.edu

- B. For questions pertaining to educational trainings for Recertification, Livestock Projects (Beef, Goats, Sheep, Swine), Livestock Judging, or Livestock Skillathon, please contact one of the following:

Zach Bartenslager
Department of Animal and Food Sciences
603 W.P. Garrigus Building
Lexington, KY 40546-0215
(859) 257-7544
Steven.Austin@uky.edu

- C. For questions pertaining to Dairy Projects, Dairy Judging, or Dairy Jeopardy, please contact one of the following:

Larissa Tucker
Extension Associate
Dept. of Animal and Food Sciences
403 W.P. Garrigus Building
Lexington, KY 40546-0215
(859) 257-5986
Larissa.Tucker@uky.edu

Dr. George Heersche
Extension Dairy Specialist
Dept. of Animal and Food Sciences
406 W.P. Garrigus Building
Lexington, KY 40546-0215
(859) 257-5987
gheersch@uky.edu

- D. For questions pertaining to Country Ham Projects or Meats Judging, please contact:

Dr. Gregg Rentfrow
Extension Meats Specialist
Dept. of Animal and Food Sciences
205 W.P. Garrigus Building
Lexington, KY 40546-0215
(859) 257-7550
Gregg.Rentfrow@uky.edu

- E. For questions pertaining to Horse Projects and Horse Competitive Events, please contact one of the following:

Mary Jane Little
Equine Extension Associate
Dept. of Animal and Food Sciences
615 W.P. Garrigus Building
Lexington, KY 40546-0215
(859) 257-7501
MaryJane.Little@uky.edu

Dr. Fernanda Camargo
Dept. of Animal and Food Sciences
Extension Horse Specialist
610 W.P. Garrigus Building
Lexington, KY 40546-0215
Phone: (859) 257-7525
Fernanda.Camargo@uky.edu