



**2020-2021 TEXAS 4-H/FFA LIVESTOCK PROGRAM ETHICS POLICY**  
**(Updated April 2020)**



This ethics policy applies to any 4-H/FFA member planning to exhibit animals at livestock shows in Texas. All classes of livestock offered at the livestock event are included: Cattle, Goats, Sheep, Swine, and any other livestock classes offered. This "Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy" will be enhanced with additional rules and guidelines which individual fairs and livestock shows adhere to on the local, county, regional, and state levels.

**4-H and FFA livestock project exhibitors are under the supervision of an Agricultural Science Teacher or County Extension Agent who serves as the advisor for that project.** The Major Livestock Shows of Texas support the educational content and leadership provided by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and the Texas Education Agency/VATAT. Also, the Texas Major Livestock Shows fully support the administrative authority of Agricultural Science Teachers and County Extension Agents to certify the fulfillment of all validation protocols and appropriate paperwork between the exhibitor, Texas 4-H/Texas FFA, the major livestock shows and the supervising educator. Exhibiting livestock is a privilege, and exhibitors must comply with this document and respect the authority granted to his/her supervisor.

The following practices or procedures are unacceptable and are defined as being deceptive, fraudulent, unethical, and inhumane in the care, fitting, preparation and showing of all classes of livestock. The use of any illegal drug is prohibited. Any practice used to alter the appearance of an animal entered in livestock events is prohibited (See Rule #9 & #10). Proof of any animal being subjected to illegal and/or unethical practice(s) and/or procedure(s) described herein subjects the animal to immediate disqualification from the state validation program. If a violation is found of any of the following rules, this may result in a cancelled validation record.

The following is a listing of rules all 4-H/FFA exhibitors must follow to enter livestock at organized competitive events.

1. Exhibitors must be bona fide members of a 4-H Club or FFA Chapter in the state of Texas and care for their animals under the direct supervision of a County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher. Exhibitors must be enrolled in, and attending, public or private and/or home school elementary or secondary schools in Texas.
2. County-Level State Validation serves as proof of ownership for state validated livestock. Market animals (Beef, Sheep, Swine, Goats) must be owned and under exhibitor's daily care by the following deadline dates: June 30 – All major Steers and State Fair Lambs, Goats, Swine; October 31 – Lambs and Goats; November 30 – Swine; to be eligible to participate at any major livestock show within Texas. For breeding animals, the official ownership date is the date reflected on the registration papers. This date is the specific date for each breed of record as recognized by the validation program. (Individual show rules may determine ownership requirements for non-market animals.) Registered breeding livestock (with the exception of breeding swine at the 2020 State Fair of Texas) must show the exhibitor as the sole owner of the animal on the breed association papers. Breeding animals with additional registration papers within the breed association of validation record or in another breed association may be evaluated for multiple ownership. If additional registration papers are found active within an association indicating ownership information conflicting with the exhibitor's sole ownership designation, the breeding animal may be considered multiple-owned and subject to disqualification. Breeding animal validation deadlines dates: June 30 – Spring Heifer Validation, State Fair and Heart of Texas Breeding Gilts; October 31 – Breeding Sheep and Goats; November 1 – Fall Heifer Validation and November 30 – Registered and Crossbred Gilts for San Antonio Livestock Show, San Angelo Stock Show, and Texas' Elite Showcase.
3. To gain the life skills developed through the livestock project; exhibitors must be closely engaged in the feeding, maintenance, training, grooming and overall welfare of his/her animals. Exhibitors and immediate family/guardians are responsible for providing the primary and continuous daily care of livestock projects throughout the validation period. The validation period begins immediately following the county-level state validation date (not the validation deadline date listed previously) through exhibition at all livestock shows (*exhibitors must provide continuous care for breeding heifers, sheep, swine and goats throughout the animal's eligibility to show*).
  - a. **4-H and FFA livestock project exhibitors are under the supervision of an Agricultural Science Teacher or County Extension Agent who serves as the advisor for that project.** Excessive involvement of third-party consultants, breeders, fitters not affiliated with the Texas 4-H and/or Texas FFA programs is prohibited. Third party involvement interfering with the exhibitor's ability to provide primary daily care of and engagement with livestock projects may result in the disqualification of all state validated livestock projects owned by all associated exhibitors/families. Likewise, third party involvement interfering with the County Extension Agent and Agricultural Science Teacher's ability to properly supervise the livestock project may result in the disqualification of all state validated livestock projects.
  - b. Livestock projects must be raised at the physical address of validation record. Prior approval must be granted by the "Species Specific County-Level State Validation Committee" in the event the animal will be outside the direct care of the exhibitor, immediate family/guardian, and/or the supervising County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher. Failure to gain approval from the supervising Agricultural Science Teacher/County Extension Agent and the Species-Specific County-Level State Validation Committee will result in the disqualification of all state validated livestock.
  - c. To obtain prior approval, exhibitors must complete an official 4-H/FFA Validation Rule #3 Prior Approval Form. Exhibitors not obtaining prior approval as outlined above will be subject to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other state validated livestock projects. [The form can be accessed here: https://texasyouthlivestock.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Rule-3-Approval-Form-4.14.20.pdf](https://texasyouthlivestock.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Rule-3-Approval-Form-4.14.20.pdf)
  - d. By signing this document, the exhibitor and parent/guardian, recognize his/her responsibilities for the primary and continuous care of livestock projects throughout the feeding period and hereby authorizes the State Validation Coordinator or designated representatives and/or State Validation Compliance Team, supervising AST/CEA and the "Species Specific County-Level State Validation Committee" **the right to inspect your livestock project(s), along with any other state validated livestock projects on premises, at any time during the feeding period with or without prior notice.** State validated livestock must be made available for inspection at any time requested at the address listed on validation record or any other property (public or privately owned) where the livestock may be located. Failure to make inspection available as requested will constitute a violation of validation rules and will lead to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other validated livestock. Additionally, any exhibitor in violation of the primary and continuous daily care rule is subject to disqualification.
4. Animals validated for major livestock shows may also be exhibited at other shows. Be advised, however, that if any validated animal is exhibited and SOLD at any other show (including a county show), the animal will be ineligible to show at any subsequent major livestock show. **Additionally, state validated livestock offered for sale during the feeding period via private treaty, private or public auction will be ineligible to show at any subsequent major livestock show. If ownership changes or has the possibility of changing through a sale offering (including animal(s) purchased back by the exhibitor of validation record), regardless of method or length of time, that chain of animal ownership is considered broken and will be ineligible to show at any remaining livestock shows in the feeding period requiring state validation.**

**State Validation Deadline Dates (These are state deadlines only, local deadlines take priority over the dates listed below):**

**State Fair and Heart of Texas:**

June 30 for steers, heifers, lambs, goats, and swine

**All Other Major Shows:**

June 30 for steers  
 October 31 for lambs and goats  
 October 31 breeding sheep and goats  
 November 1 breeding heifers  
 November 30 for swine

5. DNA samples obtained from livestock at the time of county-level state validation must match DNA assays obtained any time during the feeding period for the state validated animal and exhibitor record.
6. A state validated livestock project may not be simultaneously validated in more than one county. Additionally, a state validated animal may not be county or state validated under a different exhibitor's name in another county.
7. Any method used to misrepresent the age of an animal for a class in which it is shown is deceptive and considered a violation of the rules and guidelines.
8. Showing an animal for another individual by claiming ownership in order to show in a specific livestock class/event or claiming ownership through signage, social media, or any other advertising method is prohibited. False ownership is a violation of these guidelines and will lead to disqualification.
9. Treating an animal internally or externally, with any irritant, counter-irritant, or other substance used to artificially change the conformation or appearance of an animal for show is considered unethical, inhumane, and is prohibited. Surgery, injection or insertion of foreign material under the skin and/or into the flesh of an animal to change the natural contour, conformation or appearance of an animal's body is illegal. This includes **injection of gas, air, oil, or other foreign substances**; cutting/tearing of the hide/underneath the hide or removal of tissue in any attempt to alter the physical appearance of the animal; numbing or "deadening" an animal's tail; cutting tendons of an animal; using foreign substances to build or cosmetically re-shape feet (this does not include medically necessary treatments for injured hooves or feet); as well as "twining" which includes the attachment of hair or hair substances (i.e. baling twine, cloth, fiber, etc.). Acceptable practices of physical preparation which are allowed include, clipping of hair, trimming of hooves, dehorning, removal of ancillary teats, and docking of tails.
10. The use of unethical fitting, showing and/or handling practices or devices compromising animal welfare shall not be tolerated.
11. Livestock exhibitors will be held accountable for the Species-Specific Validation Guidelines for each species in which they state validate livestock projects. Livestock exhibitors will also be held accountable for the rules and guidelines for each major livestock show in which they exhibit state validated livestock. Validation Guidelines may be found at [www.texasyouthlivestock.com](http://www.texasyouthlivestock.com)
12. The Administration of the Texas 4-H and/or FFA Programs reserve the final and absolute right to interpret these rules and to settle and determine all matters, questions, and differences in regard thereto, or otherwise arising out of or connected with or incident to "Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy".

Any violation of the "Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy" and/or associated validation guidelines, as well as specific rules as designated by individual fairs and livestock shows may result in disqualification and/or probationary status and/or loss of eligibility for future participation in organized livestock competition. **Possible civil penalties may be imposed by the proper authorities based on evidence provided by the livestock show of exhibitors in violation of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act/or the animal mistreatment, neglect, and abandonment laws that apply on the local, state, and/or national levels.** All rule violations will be dealt with on an individual basis by the "Specie Specific County State Validation Committee", the State Validation Coordinators, and/or appropriate livestock show officials.

I, the parent/guardian and exhibitor, am verifying that I have read the "Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy" and understand the consequences of and penalties involved for illegal, unethical, inhumane, and unfair practices in livestock competition. I am also verifying knowledge that my family and I may be prohibited from future participation in organized validation programs in the State of Texas and could face possible criminal prosecution and/or civil penalties if implicated in any of the aforementioned acts.

**\*\*ATTENTION:** Please list the address the livestock will be housed below. The address where the animal(s) will be located should be approved by the local validation committee. If a housing address change occurs during the feeding period, the exhibitor is responsible for notifying their supervising CEA/AST who in-turn must notify the county-level state validation committee for approval. It will be the responsibility of the county-level state validation chair to notify the State Specie Specific Validation Chair of the address upon approval.

Physical Address	City	Zip
<b>**Important** Only one exhibitor per form.</b>		
Exhibitor (Printed Name)	Exhibitor (Signature)	Date
Parent/Guardian (Printed Name)	Parent/Guardian (Signature)	Date
Supervising CEA/AST (Printed Name)	Supervising CEA/AST (Signature)	Date
Validation Chairman (Printed Name)	Validation Chairman (Signature)	Date
FFA Chapter and/or County 4-H Name	County Name	