

4-H livestock show falls victim to pandemic restrictions

By Jodi Schneider
Correspondent

The 4-H program strives to prepare young people for success in life by teaching them life skills through many different experiences — in science, health, agriculture and civic engagement.

Raising livestock is one of those experiences.

Learning what it takes to care for an animal teaches the children tremendous responsibility. Along the way they build confidence as they learn new skills or share what they know with others.

For 35 years Pam Mitchell has been leading the Cloverdale Livestock 4-H Club, and the Deschutes County Fair has been a key part of her life since the fourth grade when she became a 4-H member.

This year most states, including Oregon, have canceled their traditional state and county fairs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2020 Cloverdale Livestock 4-H Club has a group of local kids raising beef, sheep, and swine. The young members have been working hard with their animals since February and did their part to be ready. A modified County Fair 4-H Livestock Show was to be held at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds this week, but unfortunately because of the increase of Coronavirus cases in Oregon, Governor Kate Brown recently announced new COVID-19 measures.

“The news came our way on July 22 that the maximum indoor capacity limit is capped at 100. The 4-H livestock show had to cancel,” Mitchell told *The Nugget*. “The numbers just wouldn’t work anymore.”

She added, “This was tough news to process. We’re here at this outdoor meeting so I could visit more with the kids and their animals. And we are ear tagging some of the lambs for the virtual auction that is still taking place. It’s been quite a roller coaster ride this year. I feel especially bad for the seniors that have been doing this for nine years and never quit working on their projects.”

Candi Bothum, coordinator of the 2020 4-H livestock show and auction, is considered to be a key creator of what the Deschutes County 4-H has evolved into today. She has been involved in the Deschutes County 4-H program since she was 9 years old and has worked over 20 years as a staff member in Deschutes County.

Bothum said, “It’s a very sad day to have to cancel the show, we have so many 4-H members who have worked hard to prepare. This virus is something none of us have

seen or can predict. Healthy communities are so very important. Fortunately, we also know these youth still had the opportunity to learn and experience many things in spite of not being able to participate in a culminating competition.”

The 4-Hers learned to be responsible for something other than themselves. They learned work ethic, preparation, setting goals and striving to meet said goals, financial management and strategies. This all comes with the young members’ dedication and commitment to their projects.

Conner Cyrus, age 12, is in his third year as a Cloverdale 4-H member and for the first time learned about livestock breeding.

“I did get to breed my lamb, Perry,” Cyrus said. “I’ve walked him around enough, so he’s used to me. But I am a little disappointed because we aren’t going to have the competition and receive awards.”

Hayden Habein, a senior in Bend, has been working with a steer, a heifer, and a show or breeding ewe.

He noted, “This is my fourth year in 4-H. I’ve been working every day since February on this. I’ve put up my own money for feed and other necessities for my animals. I had to pay for my steer, and I went all the way to Idaho for my calf. This is

my last year and I wanted to do well.”

This is the first year for Joel and Jayden Vogt, ages 10 and 14, as members in the Cloverdale 4-H Club. Both brothers had lambs that they have been working with for months.

“I’m disappointed about the cancellation of the show and just frustrated about COVID-19 in general,” Jayden said.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic closing the Deschutes County Fair this year, local students involved in 4-H and FFA will still be able to sell their animals on Saturday, August 1.

The Deschutes County Youth Livestock Auction is working with the Deschutes County Health Department to meet the criteria from the state to have a safe event. The Auction will comply with state guidelines, and all attendees must wear a face mask.

Bothum said that the current plan is to have an



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER

Conner Cyrus, 12, raised his lamb, Perry, for the 4-H program this year.

auctioneer at the fairgrounds and livestream into each of the three Conference Centers on the grounds and on a website. The auctioneer will be selling each animal and community members will see a photo of the member with their animal and learn a little

about the member as well.” Community members who wish to participate must pre-register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2HSYK8L>. Questions can be directed to deschutesco4hffauctioncomm@gmail.com.

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