

UF/IFAS Jackson County Extension
2741 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite #3
Marianna, Florida 32448-4022
Phone: 850-482-9620
Fax: 850-482-9287
amgranger@ufl.edu
<http://jackson.ifas.ufl.edu/4-h/>

MANUAL

Marketing YOU and Your 4-H Project



Angel Granger, 4-H Youth Development Agent
UF/IFAS JACKSON COUNTY EXTENSION



The Foundation For The Gator Nation
An Equal Opportunity Institution

Introduction

Have you ever had to ask someone to lend you money? Have you ever had to complete a loan application? Have you ever applied for a job? Have you ever tried to sell something? If you answered NO to at least one of these questions, then you should consider finding ways to sharpen your business, financial and marketing skills! Not only do you need to be aware of these skills as a young person, but you especially need to be aware as you become an adult and go out into the world.

Whether you are trying to sell lemonade or your 4-H project animal, you are developing your skills as an **entrepreneur (a person who makes their own money)**, and there are some key elements that you need to consider. One of those elements is being able to sell “yourself” as a good investment for someone’s time or money.

In the next few pages we will walk through some of the components of marketing you and your 4-H project. No matter what species of animal you are working with, you will be developing your skills as an **entrepreneur**, from obtaining your animal(s) either by buying them or raising them on your farm and then selling them, your entrepreneurial skills will grow and become more refined. These skills will help you with basic economics and may help you to one day own your own business or become a valuable part of a business or organization. The word **economics** may sound scary but it is an important subject to have some understanding of, especially if you are going to market something.

There are three things that are for certain when you are preparing your 4-H project:

1. You will work hard.
2. You will learn valuable life skills.
3. You will need the support of a buyer or sponsor in order for your project to be a success.



Getting Started - Marketing

Let's look at some of the important components of marketing the 4-H project. Your goal should be to secure as many buyers as possible to the auction in order to have more buyers than sellers. **This will increase** the price you will receive for your animal. Marketing and sales is not easy but you should try to send out at least 15-25 letters. Remember, you are competing with everyone else for your potential investor's time and money. Sometimes the early bird really DOES get the worm!

- I. Marketing YOU – in order to market yourself you need to:
 - Know your project
 - Set goals
 - Keep good records
 - Be able to share your successes (judging, competing, public speaking, offices held, community service, etc.)
- II. Marketing your 4-H Project – in order to convince someone to invest their time and money into your project, be prepared to:
 - Identify buyers or sponsors
 - Contact buyers or sponsors (send letters)
 - Know your animal (breed, initial investment, break-even amount needed)
 - Know market standards for your animal (i.e., cuts and percentages, market price, processing fees, for beef, pork, etc.)
 - Know your numbers (project expenses – animal, feed, materials, entry fees, etc.)
- III. Buyers (investors and sponsors)
 - Compile the list of **potential** buyers (investors and sponsors)
 1. Businesses listed in the yellow pages of your local phone directory or obtain a list of businesses from your chamber of commerce
 2. Companies/organizations that support 4-H and FFA at local, national or regional levels
 3. Your family physicians – doctor, dentist ophthalmologist
 4. Banks
 5. Family insurance company/agent
 6. Grocery Stores – Winn Dixie, Wal-Mart, Save-a-Lot, locally owned
 7. Restaurants
 8. Hair salons
 9. Car dealerships
 10. Veterinarians
 11. Feed stores
 12. Civic groups (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist, etc.)
 13. Equipment dealers (tractors, farm equipment)
 14. Family
 15. Friends and neighbors
 16. Parents' employer
 17. Your employer (if you are old enough to work)
- IV. Contact
 - The Buyer's Letter
 1. Start sending at least two months in advance of the event and plan to touch base with those who do not respond by a certain date.
 2. Include a picture of you and your project.

3. Identify yourself and what you are doing. Give them your history and tell them about the raising of the animal. Tell them breed, age, original weight, projected end weight, weight gained, etc.
4. Make your letter personal, not a FORM letter.
5. Be sure to address the person by name.
6. Make your letter at least a page in length.
7. Be neat. Handwritten letters are acceptable as long as they are neatly written.
8. Double check for spelling errors!
9. Explain how important their support is not just for your project, but to other young people in your club.
10. Give them some background on the quality of your product. Let them know it is a trusted source of meat because you know what goes into the project from start to finish.
11. Tell them how they can participate as a buyer: This is important if they are a first time buyer. Providing potential buyers with all the necessary information will make it easier for them to participate. Also be sure to mention what an add-on is. And don't assume they know that the animal goes to slaughter, not home with them.
12. Give them dates: Event dates, auction dates, etc.
13. Be sure to thank them if it is known that they have participated in the past.
14. Provide contact information for yourself, and for someone connected with the event, in case they have additional questions.
15. Give them an idea of what it would cost to purchase an animal and have it processed. Give them options by suggesting that they might want to partner with others to split the costs.

I. Example For Beef

- A 1,200 pound steer on the hoof, with an approximate 55% dress out, will provide approximately the following dressed (cut and wrapped) meat: Ground meat=132 lbs. Steak = 168 lbs.
Lesser cuts = 54 lbs. Roasts = 204 lbs.
Total = 558 lbs.
- With a bid of \$2.00, on a 1200 pound animal the cost would be \$2400.00
- Approximate processing charge @ .45/lb (depending on the market price) (slaughter, cutting, wrapping, freezing) \$600.00 (\$332=\$25-\$35 kill charge + \$297 cut & wrap charge)
- Approximate total cost - \$2400.00 + \$332= **\$2732.00.**

II. Example For Pork

- A 240 pound swine will provide approximately the following amounts of dressed cut & wrapped meat: Ham = 32 lbs. Bacon = 20 lbs. Pork Chops = 30 lbs. Spare Ribs = 7 lbs. Sausage w/ shoulder cuts included = 40 lbs. Neck bones for seasoning = 3 lbs.
Total = 132 lbs.
- If you bid \$4.00 per pound a 240 pound animal would cost \$960.00.
- Approximate processing charge @ .60 lb\$.45/lb (depending on the market price) (slaughter, cutting, smoking hams, smoking bacon, smoking sausage links, stuffing sausage links, wrapping, freezing) \$145.00 (\$84.40=\$25 kill charge + fresh cut & wrapped meat) To have bacon or sausage smoked is an additional \$.50-\$.85/lb for product to be smoked

➤ Approximate total cost - \$960.00 + \$144.00 (\$84.40) = **\$1,104.00.** (\$1044.40 for fresh product)

16. Tell them what your goals are for this project and for the future.
17. Give them the option of saying no and if they do, ask them to reply back and let you know whether you **may or may not** contact them again in the future.
18. Keep a copy of every letter you send out.
19. Do follow-up letters and thank-you letters. Include pictures of the final project.

Sample Letter

**Cole Granger, President
Gadsden County 4-H Livestock Club**

September 23, 2007

Mr. Ed Weaver
Talquin Electric Cooperative
16 Mainline Drive
Quincy, Florida 32351

Dear Mr. Weaver,

My name is Cole Granger and I had the pleasure of meeting you last year at the West Florida Livestock Show and Sale. In fact, you represented Talquin Electric Cooperative in the purchase of my Reserve Champion Steer. I would like to again thank you for your support of me and the 4-H program in Gadsden County, and I am hoping that we can again count on your support of this year's show. This will be my last year of participation in this show as I am a graduating senior. I have been participating in this event for 10 years and have shown Angus and Angus X calves.

Being a part of this show and participating in 4-H has taught me many valuable things that will help me as I prepare to enter college to pursue my degree in Civil Engineering. One of the most important things that I have learned is responsibility. I have been responsible for the feeding and care of many animals and have learned what it takes to start a project and see it through to the end. I am enclosing a picture of the project that I am working on for this year's show which will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2008 at 1:00 PM. The auction and sale will begin at 7:00PM and I hope to see you there.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. I am also enclosing a copy of this year's program.

Sincerely,

Cole Granger
2986 Juniper Road
Quincy, FL 32351
(850) 442-6212
Lagrange@tds.net

Summary

A 4-H livestock project is more than just raising, feeding, showing, and selling your animal for the most money you can get. It's about learning life skills that include learning how to MARKET yourself. Nothing in life is free and certainly a livestock project is one of the most expensive endeavors you will undertake. However, the amount of hard work, effort and time YOU put into your project, will make all the difference. What you take away from it will stay with you for the rest of your life. It may even mean the difference between you and someone else getting a scholarship or a job!

All the best,



Angel Granger, 4-H Agent
UF/IFAS Jackson County Extension



If you have any questions, or would like assistance with your letters, please feel free to contact me at the 4-H Office (850) 482-9620 or email amgranger@ufl.edu.

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