

# 4-H Livestock Auction Buyer Letters

**EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT—Marketing and salesmanship efforts pay off for 4-H and FFA members at the county fair livestock auctions!!**

## **WHY SEND BUYER LETTERS**

4-H and FFA members marketing livestock through the auctions at the fair expect to receive a premium price for their animals. The price paid for most animals at the auction is directly related to the amount of effort the exhibitor puts forth in recruiting buyers—inviting more buyers (especially **new** buyers) to the auction results in being paid a higher price for the animal. Many people and businesses are not aware of the livestock auctions that take place at the fair. With an invitation from you, they could become potential buyers!

Most buyers at the auction take into consideration several factors when bidding: did you send them a letter to buy your animal, did you send a thank you to them if they bought your animal in the past, and does your family conduct business with them when possible.

## **WHEN DO YOU SEND BUYER LETTERS**

Letters can be sent anytime prior to the fair. Sending your letters earlier gives buyers more time to prepare for the auction. You may consider sending a letter of introduction near the beginning of the project and a follow up letter closer to the fair. Some exhibitors prefer to wait until summer break when they have more available time to work on marketing.

## **WHO SHOULD SEND BUYER LETTERS**

Every person marketing an animal through the livestock auction at the fair should send letters to potential buyers inviting them to attend the auction and encouraging them bid on your animal.

## **WHERE TO SEND BUYER LETTERS**

Letters should be sent to anyone you identify as a potential buyer—businesses, organizations, individuals, or groups of individuals. Create a list of people you would like to contact. Your list should include past supporters of the livestock auctions as well as potential new buyers. You determine the number of buyers you contact; keep in mind the more people you contact the higher the chance that one of them will purchase your animal.

## **HOW DO YOU WRITE BUYER LETTERS**

Buyer letters should be written in business format, and addressed to the manager or specific person responsible for purchasing at the auction. The letter should be personalized; it can be handwritten or typed—never generalized (do not send letters “To whom it may concern”) or photocopied (hand sign each letter). Letters can be mailed, but many buyers prefer to meet with you in person. If you are unable to meet in person, you may consider including a picture of you and your project animal in the letter.

## **WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A BUYER LETTER**

- Name
- 4-H club or FFA chapter
- Animal you are selling
- What you did or learned through your project this year
- Your future plans
- Benefits to the buyer of buying an animal through the livestock auction
- Resale and processing options available to the buyer
- When and where the auction takes place
- How to register as a buyer
- Who to contact for more information