

Livestock Show Animal Health Workshop

Workshop participants learn aspects of show animal care.

by **Blair Fannin**, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

A recent workshop hosted at Texas A&M University and made available to online participants taught attendees preventive care and treatment tips with livestock show projects.

Workshop organizers were Tom Hairgrove, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service livestock and food systems coordinator; Jason Cleere, AgriLife Extension Service beef cattle specialist; and Billy Zanolini, AgriLife Extension 4-H Youth Development specialist. The program featured perspectives from livestock show officials, veterinarians and an AgriLife Extension meat specialist.

The workshop attracted participants from all across Texas and was a joint effort by the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science, AgriLife Extension and Texas 4-H.

“Last year we had a similar program where veterinarians came from all across the state and heard similar presentations,” Hairgrove said. “We had lots of parents, Agrilife Extension agents and ag science teachers express interest in this type of training, and we are glad that this came together.”

In all, Hairgrove said the program reached 200 individuals on campus and online. He said all of the program discussion and information was well-received by participants.

Allyson Tjoelker, executive director of agricultural exhibits with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, opened the program, providing an overview of carcass residues in livestock projects.

Cleere provided a parent’s perspective on exhibiting livestock, noting that the youth livestock project’s primary goals are to develop a better understanding of livestock production and to help build character.

“It teaches us work ethic, responsibility and understanding,” Cleere said. “Work is what life is all about. These show projects also teach kids that they will win some and lose some.”



PHOTO BY BLAIR FANNIN

► The workshop, *Treating Show Animal Illness: Considering the Animal and Exhibitor*, was hosted recently at Texas A&M University and online.

“These show projects also teach kids that they will win some and lose some.”

— Tom Hairgrove

He recognized the financial commitment of taking on these show projects, as well as the parent involvement that is necessary.

“Overall, it’s an investment in the kids,” he said.

There’s also an emotional aspect to the project as kids get attached to the animals, as well as potential for disappointment.

“Your child works hard to maintain the animal, and it gets down to the last two months, and the calf gets sick,” Cleere said.

“We are not going to give you all the answers or tools to diagnose and make treatment decisions,” he said. “The key is to have a valid relationship with a working veterinarian.”

Showing meat animals

Davey Griffin, AgriLife Extension Service meat specialist, discussed the different aspects of a show animal becoming a meat product.

“There are all kinds of different issues we face,” he said. “There are a lot of different processes in making that show animal into a meat product.” Griffin provided an overview of issues, such as injection-site tissue damage,

that affect the quality of the show animal once harvested. He also discussed the impacts of withdrawal times and random sampling tests done at the livestock show.

Additionally, Griffin gave attendees insight from a packer’s perspective and some of the things they look for when processing carcasses.

Billy Zanolini, AgriLife Extension 4-H Youth Development specialist, provided an overview of www.texasyouthlivestock.com, a website where livestock show participants can get valuable information on show projects and related information.

Other featured speakers during the workshop were William Edmiston, Eldorado Veterinary Clinic; Steve Kennedy, Muleshoe Animal Clinic; Gary Warner, Elgin Veterinary Hospital; and Virginia Fajt, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M.

The veterinarians discussed preventive health practices that youth should implement after they purchase their calves and provided an overview of common ailments animals may face.

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Editor’s Note: Blair Fannin is a media relations specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Communications.

