

4-H Dairy

Got milk? This week I am highlighting the 4-H dairy project. The dairy project is for youth wanting to learn more about caring, raising and managing dairy animals. In 4-H, youth can learn about dairy cattle and dairy goats.

The dairy goat project is a great way for members to learn about agriculture around the world while the goats are in the backyard. 4-H members may start with a doe and then raise kids to create their own dairy goat herd.

The dairy cattle project is where 4-H members usually start with a heifer calf or yearling heifer learning how to select, lead and show. 4-H members with mature cows learn about feeding and milk production.

To learn more about the 4-H dairy project there is 4-H Curriculum that can be purchased. Here is a breakdown of what youth can learn at ages and stages:

Ages 7-9:

- Identify dairy goat breeds
- Manage and care for a dairy goat
- Learn to show a goat
- Identify the six breeds of dairy cattle
- Identify the body parts of a cow
- Select and raise a dairy calf

Ages 10-13:

- Learn to care, train and handle dairy goats safely
- Care for equipment and facilities needed for dairy goats
- Chart the growth of a kid
- Judge a class of dairy cows
- Discuss animal health issues
- Identify safe practices for handling milk and milk products

Ages 14-18:

- Develop a herd health calendar
- Keep milk production records
- Learn of by-products
- Evaluate the body condition of dairy animals
- Learn about animal welfare issues
- Determine the nutritional quality of dairy feed
- Explore career options in the dairy industry

In addition to the curriculum, youth are also encouraged to reach out to professionals within the dairy industry to learn more. Each year, youth are able to demonstrate their hard work locally at the county fair and depending on age and placing, the Kansas State Fair.

The dairy project is a great opportunity for youth to learn important life skills. For more information about this project, contact Jennifer K. Terrell, 4-H Youth Development for K-State Research and Extension – Southwind District at jkterrell@ksu.edu or 620-244-3826.