



Introduction

The Youth Livestock Literacy (YLL) program was started in 2022 to expand the educational scope of youth livestock related opportunities beyond quality assurance. However, quality assurance is a crucial and required component of all approved YLL programs. Nearly all youth livestock programs across the country require youth to complete quality assurance training to be able to exhibit their animals.

Why is it required?

One of the most important things for anyone, youth or adult, raising livestock to understand is that they are producing food for consumers and it is their responsibility and obligation to produce safe and wholesome food. The livestock industry depends on consumers' trust in the safety of their food supply. Food safety is a founding principle of all quality assurance programs, including various youth programs, Beef Quality Assurance (BQA), Pork Quality Assurance (PQA), Sheep Safety and Quality Assurance (SSQA), Dairy Animal Care and Quality Assurance (DACQA), and others.

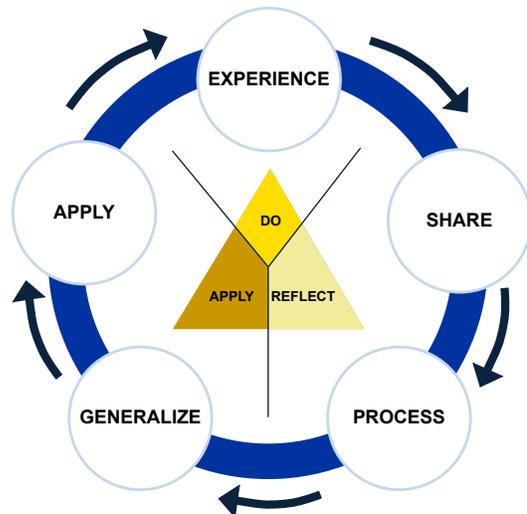
Procedure (effective 2025-2026 program year)

The following is a checklist for South Dakota 4-H livestock exhibitors:

- Enroll youth and projects in 4HOnline. **Deadline is 11:59 PM CDT June 1.**
 - Identify animals with the approved methods and submit DNA samples.
- Complete at least one Youth Livestock Literacy (YLL) certified event. **Deadline is July 1.** See menu of options on the next page.
 - If attending the event in your own 4-H county, sign in at registration and your county's 4-H office will record your certification.
 - If attending a YLL event out-of-county, confirm that your home 4-H county's office has been notified.
 - If using YQCA Online as your YLL event, you must present the completion certificate with youth's name to your home 4-H county's Extension Office.
- Complete the Livestock Integrity Pledge. **Deadline is 11:59 PM CDT August 1.**
 - This will be part of FairEntry registration for State Fair livestock/animal exhibits. Counties may use FairEntry or paper versions of the Livestock Integrity pledge and will have a deadline based on their county fair/achievement days.

What are the quality assurance components of an approved YLL event?

The quality assurance component must be a significant part of the overall program, with a minimum of 15-30 minutes in educational activities. Ideally, there should be information and activities for youth to participate in, followed by a review of what was done and learned. In other words, using the Experiential Learning Model which is a core of 4-H programming and includes the circle of Do-Reflect-Apply.



YLL – Quality Assurance:

Topics covered should meet the overall goals of youth quality assurance programs, which are:

- Ensure safety and well-being of animals produced by youth,
- Ensure a safe food supply for consumers, and
- Enhance the future of the livestock industry by educating youth on these issues so they can become more informed livestock producers, consumers, and/or employees in the agriculture and food industries.

Examples of quality assurance topics and accompanying activities are listed below.

- Administering animal health products – reading/explaining scenarios that involve products with withdrawal times, calculating withdrawal times and discussing the importance of these.
- Administering animal health products – label reading activity with questions for youth to complete about what species the product is approved for and dosages for different weights of animals, along with discussing why following label instructions is important.
- Biosecurity – interactive scenarios demonstrating how diseases can be introduced and spread on farms via visitors, shared equipment, footwear etc., along with discussing good biosecurity practices producers use to ensure animal health and a safe food supply.
- Animal identification – hands-on activities with animal identification and providing explanation on how animal identification at the farm level is tied to food safety for consumers.
- Record keeping – covering what records must be kept when animal health products are used and why this is important from a food safety perspective.
- Medicated feeds – hands-on activity simulating feed mixing and how medications can pass from one container to another unless intentional cleaning is done, and how not doing this could ultimately affect consumers' food supply.
- Addressing consumer concerns about drug residues or implants – provide scenarios and/or example questions for youth to act as consumers and the spokespeople for agriculture, giving “elevator speeches” about what producers' do to ensure a safe food supply for consumers.

These are just a few examples. The key is meeting the goals of the quality assurance programs and helping youth make the connection between what they do with their animals and consumers' trust in their food products and ultimately farmers, ranchers and the agricultural industry.

YLL Menu of Options

- Attend a 4-H YLL certified in your county; common examples include:
 - In-person instructor-led YQCA (\$3).
 - Veterinarian led clinic covering quality assurance topics.
 - Skill-A-Thon school/clinic that includes review of quality assurance materials.
- Attend an approved YLL event in another county.
- Complete YQCA Online training
 - Cost is \$12 for this web-based training; available at <https://yqcaprogram.org/>
 - Certificates must be presented to your county's Extension Office prior to the July 1 deadline.
 - Certificate must be in youth's name, not the family's name.
- Beef project youth may complete Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) and convey a current certificate to their home county's Extension Office.
 - Certificate must be in youth's name, not the family's name.

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