

Virtual Youth Livestock Evaluation

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Background Information:

Livestock Evaluation allows youth to build teamwork, communication skills, analytical thinking, and confidence. Youth learn how to evaluate livestock against the ideal animal and vocally justify their decision. There was an interest in having a youth livestock judging team for the Savannah Valley. Participants were from 3 different counties, and all had hectic schedules. Therefore, a virtual livestock judging model was created. Participants meet bi-weekly via Zoom for one hour starting in November and ending in March, with at least one in-person practice a month.



Materials and Methods:

A monthly schedule was created for bi-weekly meetings via Zoom with in-person practices. Participants also had access to a Google Classroom to find information about livestock, write oral reasons, and watch practice videos. Youth were also given homework assignments to complete. During the zoom practices, youth watched livestockjudging.com videos and had to give oral reasons. During Zoom practices, we also played Livestock Judging Jeopardy, Pin the Part, and other games. In-person practices allowed participants to interact with local producers and learn more about the industry while gaining skills in judging. We visited with local beef, swine, and sheep farmers throughout the year.



Results:

Did you enjoy participating in the program?

Yes
100%

Did you gain skills in livestock evaluation?

Yes
100%

Did you gain skills in oral reasons?

Yes
100%

Do you feel like you were able to learn from the virtual practices?

No
100%

Will you participate in the program again?

Yes
100%

The participants enjoyed the program, and all gained the skills necessary to judge livestock successfully. They were asked what they would like to improve in the program, and all suggested more in-person practices. Also, based on the survey results, participants felt they did not learn from the virtual practices. Upon receiving their scores after the contest, the scores indicated that the virtual practices were successful. The results from the competition showed that each participant in the junior category was ranked in the top ten and placed 3rd as a team. Also, in the senior category, each participant placed in the top ten and placed 4th as a team. Even though the participants did not feel they could learn from the virtual format, their contest scores reflect that they did.

Future Impact :

Participants gained skills in building teamwork, communication skills, analytical thinking, and confidence. These are skills that participants can use when making decisions and comparing products now and later in life as adults. Since all past participants would like to continue livestock evaluation, this program will continue. There has also been an increase in interest in the program, and we now have two complete sets of teams, plus alternates. Everyone is excited about the new year and is looking forward to learning more about the industry.