

Swine Camp teaches nationally recognized good production practices

AT A GLANCE

Youth attended a University of Idaho Extension educational program to increase their knowledge of swine good production practices and had lots of fun in the process.

The Situation

Youth need to have a better understanding of how to care for their livestock. Problems that can arise without education are unsafe handling of animals, misuse of medication and inadequate nutrition. Unsafe handling of livestock can lead to injury of both the animal and youth. Mismanagement of medications can cause health issues in the animal if administered and/or handled improperly. Inadequate nutrition can cause health issues for the animal as well as decreased growth and increased project expense.

Teaching youth basic livestock management skills gives them a better understanding of livestock care and the livestock industry. A lack of livestock education can cause more than just unsafe handling and poor care of animals but also creates a negative image of the livestock industry when youth and other producers are not treating or taking care of their animals properly. Providing youth education on pork quality assurance (PQA) good production practices gives young livestock producers an opportunity to learn about how to care for and handle livestock correctly. This workshop provided expertise in the areas of animal handling and health management and many exhibitors pursued the opportunity to better their management practices. 4-H coordinators, 4-H leaders and University of Idaho Extension educators encouraged their clientele to participate in the learn-



Extension Educator Carmen Willmore teaches youth how to read pig ear notches for proper identification. Photo by Cindy Kinder.

ing opportunity. It was expected that all youth would participate in a Skill-A-Thon contest and become PQA certified by the end of the day, leaving camp with better knowledge of how to care for their animals in a safe and humane way.

Our Response

Quality assurance programs provide education to youth and adult livestock producers on how their animal handling and management can affect product quality. Swine Camp provided hands-on learning for youth so that they could better understand that raising of livestock is important to their industry and consumer perceptions. On the consumer side, quality assurance programs ensure consumers that the products they purchase were produced in a humane and efficient manner.

Idaho 4-H Swine Camp was an area-wide effort by University of Idaho Extension for youth interested in

pigs and those having breeding and market pig projects. Camp was coordinated by Extension educators Carmen Willmore and Cindy Kinder and hosted at the Gooding County Fairgrounds. University of Idaho Extension faculty, 4-H volunteers and pork industry representatives worked together to educate youth on good production practices outlined by the PQA manual.

Program Outcomes

The one day workshop was attended by 72 participants. Fifty-six of those that attended participated in a Skill-A-Thon contest and judged a pen of pigs as part of the program. All youth participants became PQA certified by participating in camp.

Managing Animal Health

Youth and adults were surveyed on their experience and knowledge gained because of camp. One hundred percent of adults surveyed stated that “Because of camp I now have a better understanding of how pigs are identified,” and also stated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they could recognize an unhealthy animal. Adults also responded that they had a better understanding of handling vaccines, withdrawal times and reading medicine and feed labels. As a result of swine camp, 88% of youth participants were able to recognize an unhealthy animal and had a better understanding of how pigs are identified and 92% of youth participants had a better understanding of reading medicine and feed labels and had an increased awareness of handling vaccines.

Safe Animal Handling and Good Production Practices

Hands on activities were included in the workshop for students to learn how to ear notch and handle vaccines. Also both adult and youth participants gained experience in moving and handling pigs. Following camp 80% of those that attended planned to change at least one production practice based on the knowledge that was gained.

The Future

As a result of the success of the Swine Camp program it will be offered for a second year with a new series of topics to be covered. Many participants plan to attend camp in years to come and so the camp will be offered with additional programs and more advanced topics for senior 4-H members.



Idaho Swine Camp participants had a great experience at camp including learning new things and making friends from across the southern district. Photo by Cindy Kinder.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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