

SOUTHEAST AREA EXTENSION SAYS

Contact: Bruce Fickenscher
CSU Extension Agent
Range and Livestock
719-438-5321
Email: bruce.fickenscher@colostate.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 14, 2010

JUNIOR LIVESTOCK PROJECTS AND CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

The Junior Livestock Show circuit is beginning to gather speed for 2010. Market Beef projects have been on feed for several months. Market sheep, goats, and swine have just begun their finishing period. One comment I hear, all too frequently as far as I am concerned, from parents is – “there is no comparison between the real world and the show world.” I can understand this to a certain extent (if my rationalization drive is on warp speed) for some bigger shows or seed stock exhibits. BUT, for Junior Market Livestock Shows? What are we teaching our children – hopefully future producers and most definitely future consumers!

Granted- and thankfully- the majority of our Junior Livestock members raise healthy, happy animals following proper animal husbandry practices – but there are exceptions; as the saying goes: One rotten apple spoils the barrel.

How many times have we heard: #1 “I know they are a little overweight but I will just hold them off feed for a while.” or #2 “It is getting close to show time but they need a little more muscle so I will add something to the ration to muscle them up?” Have you ever tried to eat one of these animals?

It seems we often forget that we are raising a product for eventual



Extension
Southeast Area

County Extension Offices

Baca County

772 Colorado St.
Springfield, CO 81073
719-523-6971

Bent County

1499 Amb. Thompson Blvd.
Las Animas, CO 81054
719-456-0764

Cheyenne County

425 S. 7th W.
P. O. Box 395
Cheyenne Wells, CO 80810
719-767-5716

Crowley County

603 North Main St.
Courthouse Annex
Ordway, CO 81063
719-267-4444, ext. 7

Kiowa County

1305 Goff
P. O. Box 97
Eads, CO 81036
719-438-5321

Otero County

411 N. 10th
P. O. Box 190
Rocky Ford, CO 81067
719-254-7608

Prowers County

1001 S. Main
Lamar, CO 81052
719-336-7734

human consumption, not just to win a pretty rosette (which can be purchased for \$6 to \$8). One of the quotes that I heard when I started in this position was: “It is better to raise a red ribbon animal and a blue ribbon child than a blue ribbon animal and a red ribbon child.” Granted it is nice to have both- the child and the animal- win a blue ribbon once in a while, but at what price? Is the real pride in the ribbon won or the gratification of the consumer who eventually utilizes the animal product?

We must remember (especially in the smaller, rural counties) the majority of our Junior Livestock animals are consumed by local residents. Again we must ask ourselves – would I want to eat that animal? A wise man recently wrote this quote in a trade publication: “The worth of work is not determined by a blue ribbon at the county fair. True worth is in the effect on people who use the product.”¹

If you need help with feed rations or general care of your Junior Livestock Market animals, resources are also just a click away at: <http://livestock.colostate.edu/youth/resources/index.html> or visit your local CSU Extension office in the Southeast Area.

¹ *Thad Box, April 2010, Society of Range Management – Rangeland*
