

## Youth Livestock Projects

The 2019 youth livestock show season ended with the Kansas Junior Livestock show a few weeks ago and now it is time to start all over again. The cost of “show” animals keeps going up along with the cost of feed that doubles or triples when you call it a “show feed”. Are we pricing our livestock projects so the average youth can’t be competitive without losing a lot of money? An animal that has “show potential” should cost more than a typical animal going through a sale barn. The breeder usually has a lot more invested in raising that show animal. I personally don’t know of a better way to raise your kids than in a barn with their own livestock projects.

The decision of what type of project should be made by the size and space of the facilities that is available and sometimes even how much time is available. The size of the budget should also influence their project. There are several youth loans available for livestock projects and this can be a great way of establishing a credit history that will help them later in their life.

I hear parents talk about the money and time that they also have to spend on their kids’ projects, but I look at it as an investment in their future and the future of our country. Most youth livestock projects will only be successful with parental help and supervision. That is not to say the parents should be doing the chores, but an adult needs to monitor the health and many times the feeding schedule to make sure the animal is being taken care of properly.

Raising the grand champion at the county fair might be a goal in life, but using livestock projects to raise responsible, caring youth is the main goal that I desire to see attained!

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