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Getting Started**Introduction**

Welcome to the 4-H market steer project! This project can be an unforgettable learning experience. You will do many things to help you undergo personal growth. You will also learn skills that will help you become a more responsible person. Skills you learn from raising a steer will be valuable in the future, and will carry over into other aspects of your life as a 4-H'er. We hope you will have fun, too.

This book will teach you most of the things you need to know to raise a 4-H market steer. There are skills and information to learn and activities to do. Some of the activities everyone should do and others you may choose to do. You should complete six activities per year. Twelve activities are required and should be completed in the first two years of the project. After the first two years, six activities should be selected from either the suggested activities list of this book, or from the "4-H Skills for Life" series, if your county uses them.

Do as many of the activities as you can by yourself, but be willing to call on others for help. As you get older and advance through the market steer project, you should select more advanced activities to accomplish. Your parents and project leaders will be happy to teach you all they know about raising market steers!

How to Use Your Reference Guide

Your reference guide is designed to fit into a three-ring notebook with your project record

books. You will receive only one reference guide for your entire 4-H career, so take care of it! It contains a checklist of things you should do and learn to complete your project. The things to do and learn are grouped into sections about beef cattle. Each section includes:

- objectives for that lesson
- information about steers and how to care for them
- words to learn
- ideas for presentations and talks
- suggested activities
- things to talk about with your leaders and other 4-H'ers

Purpose of the 4-H Market Steer Project

Using your *4-H Market Steer Project Reference Guide*, you will learn the fundamentals of being a good beef producer. You will also build skills that will prepare you for life.

Some of the things you will learn about market steer management are:

- why people raise beef cattle
- how to select project steers
- how to feed and care for your steer
- how to keep your steer healthy
- the normal behavior of cattle

- the parts of the steer
- how to fit and show a steer
- how to keep records
- how to prepare for the roundup

Working with your steer and taking part in 4-H activities will help you develop personally and build skills for living. These skills include:

- being a leader
- being a citizen
- learning communications
- developing personally
- relating to people
- developing values
- preparing for a career

Project Options

Two basic kinds of 4-H beef projects are:

1. Market steers—selection and feeding of one or more feeder steers to market weight.
2. Breeding cattle—care and management of cattle raised for breeding purposes. This project includes (a) selection and management of one or more heifers to breeding and calving age, or (b) management of cows and calves (not recommended for beginning 4-H members).

You will be the one responsible for caring for your cattle. You may choose to take a market steer project, a breeding heifer project, or both kinds of projects each year. Here are some things

to think about when choosing market or breeding projects:

- Do you want a short-term or a long-term project?
- How much money can you afford to spend?
- What kinds of buildings, equipment, and feeds do you need?
- How much help can your parents give?

Market steer projects can be completed in eight to ten months. They require fewer facilities and management skills for success than are required for breeding projects. Breeding projects are usually continued for more than one year.

This book contains information on market steer projects only. You will need to get a different reference book if you elect to take a breeding project.

What Do You Need?

Before purchasing a steer, make sure you have everything you need to properly manage it and keep it healthy. If you plan to take on a market project you will need:

- an interest in beef cattle
- a place to keep your steer
- equipment for feeding, watering, and handling cattle
- money to purchase and care for your steer
- support from your parents and leaders

