



IMPLEMENTING JUNIOR LIVESTOCK EDUCATION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



Brooke Holgate

USU Extension | Extension Assistant Professor | Agriculture and Natural Resources | brooke.holgate@usu.edu

Introduction

In Northeast Utah, participation in 4-H junior livestock projects has grown significantly in recent years. However, many new members and families have limited access to educational resources that help them successfully begin and manage a summer livestock project. Questions about where to start, how to properly care for animals, and how to prepare for the county fair are common among first-year participants.

To address this need, Duchesne County Extension implemented a summer junior livestock educational series designed to support youth and families throughout the project season. This program provides practical, hands-on education focused on animal care, nutrition, showmanship, and fair preparation, ensuring that 4-H members have the knowledge and confidence needed to successfully complete their livestock projects and participate in the county fair.



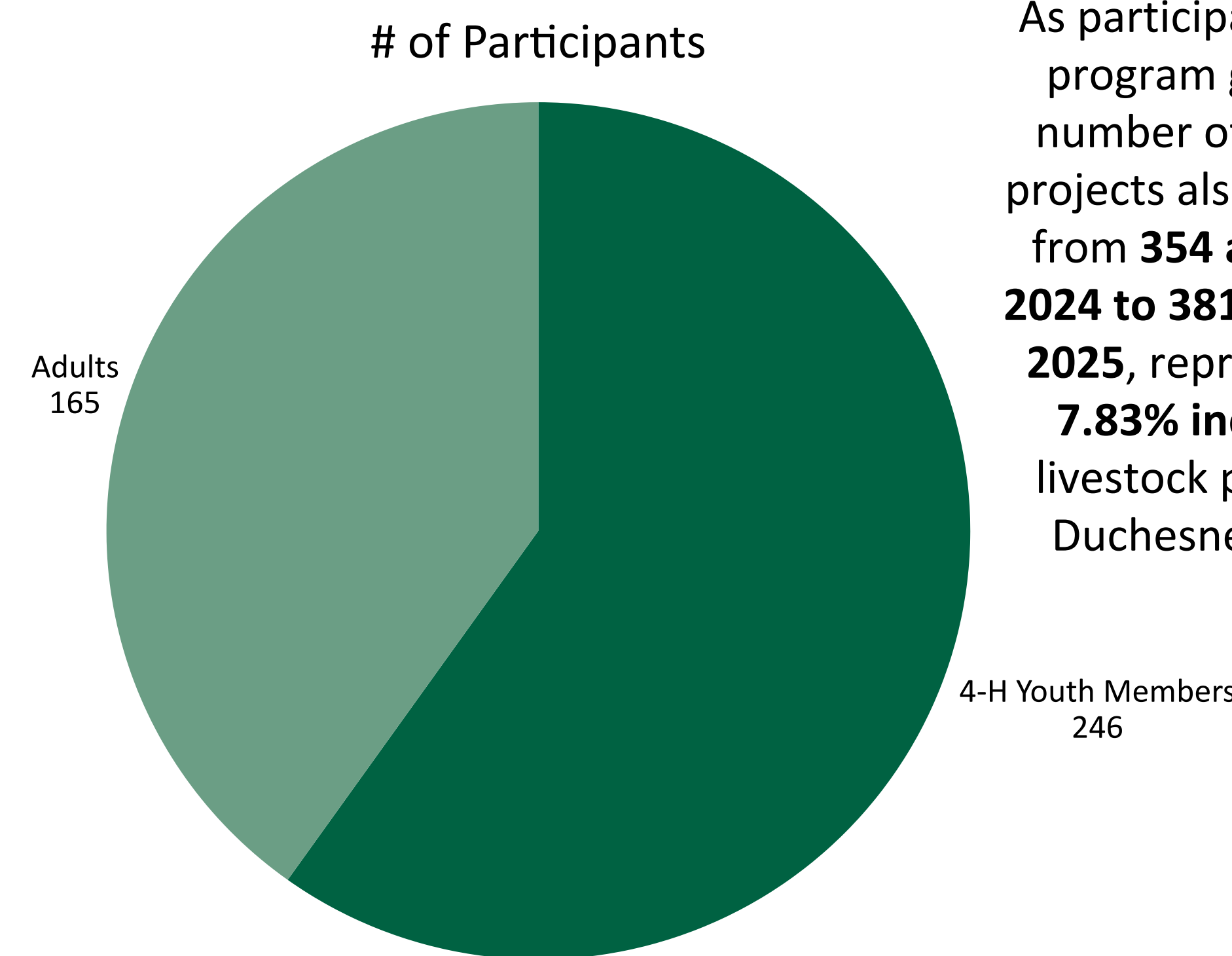
Youth participants learn proper sheep handling and showmanship techniques during a hands-on clinic taught by Duchesne County Extension Educators.

Objectives

Increase youth knowledge of the 4-H livestock program by helping participants:

- Develop livestock showmanship skills across multiple species
- Understand livestock nutrition and daily animal care practices
- Practice proper fitting and grooming techniques
- Build the ability to evaluate and select quality livestock projects
- Strengthen record book completion and livestock record-keeping skills

Program Content



As participation in the program grew, the number of livestock projects also increased from **354 animals in 2024 to 381 animals in 2025**, representing a **7.83% increase** in livestock projects in Duchesne County.

Livestock Evaluation Camp: Hands-on session teaching youth how to evaluate structure, muscle, and balance when selecting quality livestock projects.

Record Book Ready: Instruction on completing 4-H record books, tracking expenses and project activities, and developing strong record-keeping habits.

Feeding to win: Partnering with IFA, livestock nutrition workshop covering feed types, ration basics, and how proper nutrition impacts growth, health, and show performance.

Showmanship 101 (3): Multi-session workshop focused on animal handling, ring presence, and techniques for showing livestock across multiple species.

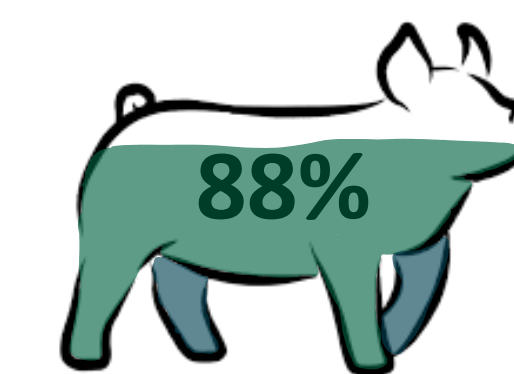
Fit to Compete: Demonstration of proper fitting and grooming techniques to prepare livestock for the show ring.



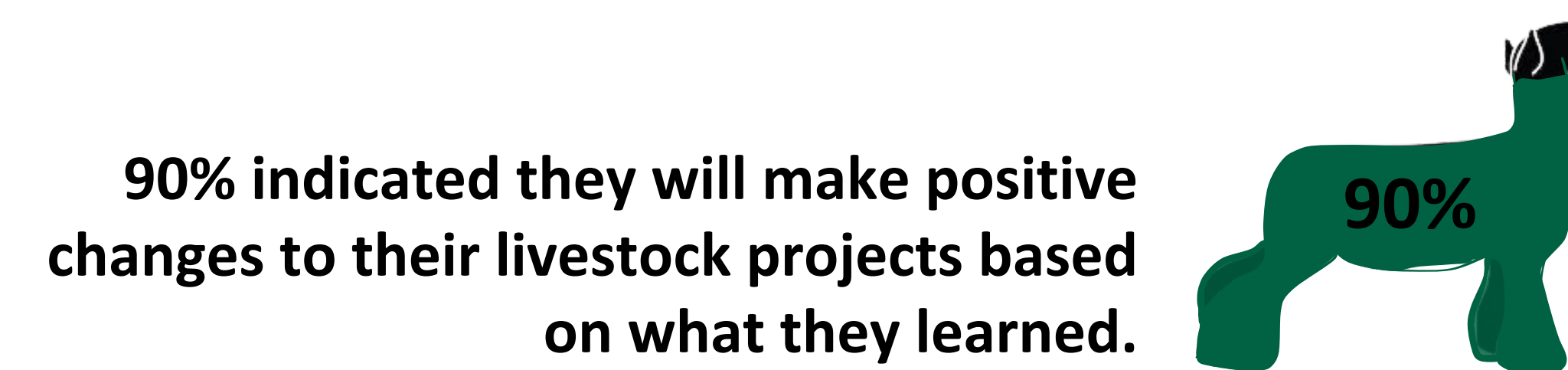
An IFA livestock nutritionist teaches a group of 4-H youth and parents about the importance of proper feed and nutrition for successful livestock projects.

Impacts

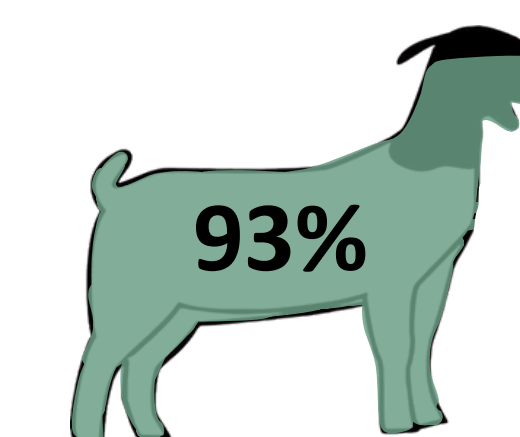
Program evaluation was conducted through a Qualtrics survey completed by **59 participants**.



88% reported a deeper understanding of the 4-H livestock program after attending the workshops.



90% indicated they will make positive changes to their livestock projects based on what they learned.



93% reported feeling more confident and prepared for the county fair.



100% stated they plan to participate in another 4-H livestock project next year.



Duchesne County 4-H youth compete in a state livestock judging contest, applying evaluation skills learned during the summer livestock education series.

Future Plans

Due to the strong participation and positive outcomes from the summer livestock education series, Duchesne County Extension plans to continue offering these workshops as an annual program. Future efforts will focus on expanding educational opportunities, strengthening hands-on learning experiences, and providing additional resources for new and returning 4-H livestock exhibitors.