

## **Teaching Importance of Farm to Fork**

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While most kids are preparing to relax and enjoy their summer break, 4-H livestock project members in the Southwind District will be learning more about their livestock projects through a new national program aimed at teaching youth that part of the learning process in raising livestock also involves understanding that our animals will eventually reach the food supply.

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) is a national multi-species quality assurance program for youth ages 8 to 21. The program is designed to provide an estimated 60 minutes of education each year. The online program requires the passing of a series of three quizzes to earn certification. An in-person YQCA workshop requires complete attendance.

YQCA is the result of a collaborative effort between states that have previously offered multi-species youth livestock quality assurance programs, the National Pork Board's Youth PQA Plus program and representatives from other national livestock groups.

YQCA is designed as an annual education and certification program focused on food safety, animal well-being and character awareness for youth ages 8 to 21 producing and/or showing pigs, beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, goats, market rabbits, and poultry. The program has been designed by extension specialists and national livestock program managers to ensure it is accurate, current and relevant to the needs of the animal industry and shows and is appropriate for youth.

The primary goals of the program include:

- Ensure safety and well-being of animals produced by youth for showing and for 4-H and FFA projects
- Ensure a safe food supply to consumers
- Enhance the future of livestock industry by educating youth on these very important issues so they can become more informed producers, consumers and/or employees in the agriculture and food industry
- Maximize the limited development time and budgets of state and national youth program leaders to provide an effective quality assurance program
- Offer livestock shows a valid, national quality assurance certification for youth livestock exhibitors

While the training is not required for youth to exhibit at our local county fairs, it is required for all species at the Kansas State Fair and Kansas Junior Livestock Show. Details can be found on Facebook at 'Southwind Extension District', or by calling the Iola Office at 620-365-2242.