

DATE: January 15, 2025  
TO: Murray County 4-H Beef Families  
FROM: Kim Hause and Kerstin Thoms, Extension Educator  
RE: **IMPORTANT** – Market Beef Animal Identification Process

Thank you for enrolling in the 4-H Beef Project! This letter outlines the **online animal identification process** that will be used for all Market Beef animals (which includes all market steers, market heifers, and market dairy steers) in 2025. Market Beef Identification must be completed by midnight on **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**. (February 15, 2025 falls on a Saturday therefore the deadline will be pushed to Tuesday this year) This year we will not offer a county-wide weigh-in (weights are used to calculate a Rate of Gain winner at the current year's county fair/county showcase) Instead, families interested in participating will be allowed to weigh in their own animals using the rules and guidelines listed below in this letter. Breeding heifers, cow/calf pairs and prospect calves (steers and heifers) must be owned or leased, tagged or tattooed and identified by May 15, 2025. Please note that Cloverbuds do not need to identify beef animals in 4-H Online at this time.

### **Market Beef Identification**

Minnesota 4-H will continue to use its online enrollment system, [4HOnline](#), to record all animal identifications. 4HOnline has the capability to track animal ownership and identification data. Online animal identification reduces inaccuracies and inefficiencies that were a part of our past paper system. More information and a 4HOnline user guide can be found at [www.4-H.umn.edu/animal-ID](http://www.4-H.umn.edu/animal-ID).

### **Identification Steps:**

- 1) Read through the [4-H Beef Information Sheet](#) and the [Minnesota 4-H AnSci Updates for 2025](#) - these documents include information for identification, beef project rules, classes, State Fair participation and much more.
- 2) Get your 4-H tags and tagger from the Murray County Extension Office for your market beef projects. All market beef projects will need a 4-H RFID tag (including registered animals with breed tattoos). Prospect calves tagged in 2024 can have the 4-H Official ID tag (green). There are taggers available for you to check out and use. Please inquire about the return procedure.
- 3) Tag your animal and complete the [Market Beef ID Worksheet](#) (market beef steers, market heifers, and dairy steers) to assist you in entering your market beef information into 4-H Online. Unused 4-H tags must be returned to the Extension Office within 2 weeks of the ID deadline to be in compliance with MN Board of Animal Health and USDA official tag tracking.
- 4) Enter your market beef identification information into [4-H Online](#) by February 18, 2025. Use the animal ID'ing [tip sheet](#) for ease in entering your animal information. If you are unable to enter your information into 4-H Online, please bring your completed Market Beef or Dairy Steer ID worksheet to the Extension Office for assistance in entering your ID information into 4-H Online by the end of business day on February 18, 2025.

**Online Identification ONLY:** Murray County families must enter their own livestock identification information in 4HOnline – the Extension Office WILL NOT accept paper copies of ID Worksheets to be entered by Extension Staff. **Data entry must be completed by 11:59 pm, February 18, 2025;** you will not be able to complete identification after that point.

*\*If your family cannot self-enter the ID information:* 4-H family should contact the Murray County Extension office during normal business hours and staff will help guide the family through entering their own data using one of our computers, anytime on or before close of business on February 13. You must call first to ensure staff is available to help (836-6927).

An AFTER HOURS helpline is available for use if you are experiencing challenges with your identification process. Please use these helplines during the available hours only. All other calls for assistance should be directed to Kim, Mallory, or Melissa at the Murray County Extension Office during normal business hours. Helpline Dates and Hours:

Monday, February 17	4:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	507-369-6896
Tuesday, February 18	4:30 p.m. - 11:59 p.m.	218-252-0076

#### **Details About 2025 Optional County Fair Market Beef Weigh-in:**

1. There WILL NOT be a centralized Market Beef Weigh-in for market beef and dairy steers. Instead, families will be allowed to weigh at home, at a neighbor's, or on a trailer using a certified scale (such as at an elevator) and then weighing back empty.
2. Weigh-in is completely **optional**, it is not mandatory, and it will not affect your county fair beef show placing if you choose to not participate in weigh-in. This should only be done if 4-H members are interested in competing in the Murray County Fair Market Beef Rate of Gain Contest, in which the animal's weight taken at county fair beef weigh-in, minus the animal's initial weigh-in weight, and divided by the number of days in between weigh dates will be used to calculate an Average Daily Gain, which will determine the county ROG winner.
3. In order to be eligible for this contest, families MUST submit a picture of their properly-ID'd market beef animal in/on the scale, and the picture(s) submitted must capture the animal's 4-H eartag number and the weight reading on the scale head monitor that shows without a doubt that it is that specific animal being weighed.
4. Families **will enter their own weights** into 4HOnline when they enter the animal's identification details. Pictures from weigh-in do not need to be submitted in 4HOnline; instead these should be emailed to Mallory Vos. *\*\*Important Note: if you enter a weigh-in weight in 4HOnline but do not send pictures of the calf and scale head weight to Mallory, that animal **will not be eligible** for the county fair Rate of Gain contest!*
5. In order to be eligible for the Rate of Gain contest, all weights must be taken prior to the Market Beef Animal ID deadline of Thursday, February 15. You will have one week to submit your pictures of the animal being weighed in following the ID deadline, but once families enter in their animal identification and optional weigh-in weights in 4HOnline and the system closes on the ID deadline, we will not accept weights from market animals weighed after this deadline.

Remember, by February 18, 2025 you must own your market beef animal, have it tagged with a MN 4-H RFID ear tag, and enter the animal information into 4-H Online. Please contact Kim Hause at (507)-836-1144 or [hausek@umn.edu](mailto:hausek@umn.edu), or Kerstin Thoms at (507)-836-1145 or [thoms531@umn.edu](mailto:thoms531@umn.edu) or Mallory Vos at (507)-836-6927 or [carl5049@umn.edu](mailto:carl5049@umn.edu) with any questions.

**\*IMPORTANT\*:** It is strongly *recommended* that ALL families submit a copy of their [ID Worksheet\(s\)](#) to the Extension Office in case there are any issues, discrepancies, or errors that occur when entering data into 4HOnline. It is to your advantage to make sure the Office has a copy of the data you entered online! *Copies of [ID Worksheets](#) can be mailed, emailed, faxed, or dropped off to the Extension Office.*

On rare occasions, 4-H animals will lose the official Minnesota 4-H ear tag. If this occurs, you will need to contact Kim immediately at 507-836-1144 so that the tag can be verified and replaced. Do not wait until the county fair if this occurs!

**4-H Ear Tags:** ALL Market Beef require a MN 4-H eartag. These tags must be picked up from the Extension Office prior to the February 18 deadline, and there will be no cost for eartags. We will continue to use only the Y-Tex taggers for **market beef tags** going forward. The Extension Office has taggers that will be available for check-out by families, but we cannot guarantee their availability as the ID deadline approaches (first come, first served!).

**2025: Livestock Quality Assurance (LQA&E) Training Options:** All youth participating as a state fair 4-H livestock exhibitor in beef, dairy, sheep, swine, poultry, rabbits, meat goat, dairy goat, and llama-alpaca must complete livestock quality assurance training.

- Certification is required for state fair grade/age-eligible youth. Must be completed before their home county fair qualifying show (deadline for certification set by county)
- Minnesota 4-H youth must participate in one of the training options to be eligible for Minnesota 4-H state fair shows. Again in 2025 Minnesota 4-H will have two training options:
  1. A face-to-face 3-hour livestock quality assurance and ethics training from Minnesota 4-H. These will be offered in multiple locations statewide. This certification is valid for three fair seasons. More information regarding the details of an in-person LQA&E training will be sent out later this spring to all youth who will need to complete it.
  2. An online 1-hour youth quality care of animals training offered via distance learning. This certification is **valid for one fair season**. Cost: \$12; pay at registration with a credit card. (This is a national program and registration fee pays for the national training system.)

Youth will receive a certificate of completion. Additional information concerning local Livestock Quality Assurance training in our area will be listed in upcoming Murray County Messengers and in the letter that will be sent out to all age-eligible youth who need to complete certification this year if they are interested in accepting a state fair livestock trip.

If you have any questions regarding online animal identification, weigh-in, LQA&E or anything else in this letter, please contact Kerstin, Kim, or Mallory at 507-836-6927 or emailing [thoms531@umn.edu](mailto:thoms531@umn.edu), [hausek@umn.edu](mailto:hausek@umn.edu) or [carl5049@umn.edu](mailto:carl5049@umn.edu)