

Online Youth Animal Care Training Modules

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Although the cold temperatures are keeping youth inside, it is the perfect time to encourage young people to learn more

about their large-animal project. A variety of curricula exist, in print and online, to teach youth about the project they are raising, and management strategies for maintaining human and animal health. According to Michigan State University (MSU) Extension, quality-assurance

programs promote the industry's efforts to produce a safe and wholesome food product, with particular attention to the care and well-being of animals raised for human consumption. Additionally, these programs include best production practices and animal management strategies, which

are useful whether or not the animal is entering the food system.

Two youth quality-assurance programs are available online — Youth Animal Care Training and Youth Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus. These programs are geared toward youth raising and exhibiting beef, dairy, horse and swine projects.

Youth can learn animal care and quality assurance practices about beef, dairy, horses and swine without leaving their home.

The Youth Animal Care Training was created in 2012 by the Beef Cattle Institute at Kansas State University (K-State). These free online educational training modules are for high-school-aged youth and younger. Through participation in the training, youth can improve their knowledge of animal handling, animal welfare, antimicrobial residue avoidance and food safety. Currently, there are four training packages, consisting of:

- Youth Beef Quality Assurance (28 modules)
- Youth Beef Industry Food Safety (7 modules)
- Youth Dairy Animal Care and Quality Assurance (31 modules)
- Youth Humane Equine Management (10 modules)

They can be accessed at www.animalcaretraining.org/Youth/default.aspx?action=Packagedetail.

Youth register online and are immediately able to work through the multimedia training modules at their own pace. Each module ranges from five to 20 minutes in length. Once all the modules within a package are completed and quizzes are passed with 80% accuracy or higher, a printable certificate is available. There is no time limit or deadline to complete the modules and quizzes. If youth wish to keep their certificate for quality assurance up-to-date, they can recertify every three years.

For more information about Youth Animal Care Training, visit www.animalcaretraining.org/youth.

Youth PQA Plus was created in 2007 by the National Pork Board. The educational program is offered online or taught by a certified advisor face-to-face to youth ages 8 to 18. For more information about the Youth PQA Plus program, visit <http://www.pork.org/Certification/2344/youthPqaPlus.aspx>.

Editor's Note: Julie Thelen is extension educator, 4-H Livestock and Veterinary Science, for Michigan State University Extension, which provided this article. For more information, visit www.msue.msu.edu. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-678-3464.

