



Quick Tips for Choosing a Market Project Animal

- *Be familiar with the rules for the shows that you intend on participating in **BEFORE** purchasing your animal. All shows have slightly different rules in regards to ownership, weight ranges and birthdates. There is no one size fits all set of rules.*
- *All market animals for the Delaware State Fair should be born after January 1, must be owned by 60 days prior to the fair and must be tagged with a Delaware State Fair ear tag in order to be exhibited in a market class. Feeder calves also need to be tagged. Breed animals do not need to be tagged.*
- *Purchase the appropriate age and size/weight animal to meet your target market date and weights. It is much easier to feed an animal straight through than to push or hold an animal to meet your target weight. Your animal will also look better and be fresher in the ring if you don't have to hold it. A general rule of thumb for average rate of gain over the project period is:*
 - *Market Goat- 0.3 lb/day*
 - *Market Hog- 1.5- 2.0 lb/day*
 - *Market Lamb- 0.4-0.5 lb/day*
 - *Market Steer- 2.0 lb/day*
- *Purchase an animal that appears healthy. It should be free moving, have clear eyes and no discharge from the nostrils. It should not cough or have scours and the hair coat should be smooth.*
- *Animals purchased should have some form of ID. At minimum, sheep and goats should be identified with an official US scrapie tag. Market pigs should have an RFID tag or tag with the US shield. If the breeder does not supply these tags, the tags that are used by the Delaware State Fair for swine and beef cattle are compliant with this requirement.*
- *If you already have animals of the same species at home, make sure you isolate any new animals purchased for two weeks. This means no nose to nose contact through the fence, no sharing of feed tubs or water buckets and no sharing of*

any other equipment. You should feed your new animals after you have fed your existing ones as you yourself can transmit disease between animals.

- *Make sure that the animal you have purchased is adequately vaccinated. Specifically ask the breeder what your animal has been vaccinated for and when it was vaccinated. Consult the UD Cooperative Extension Vaccination Guidelines (available on the state 4-H website) for market projects and show animals to assist you. Vaccinating an animal just prior to a show is of no good to you. Animals need 3-4 weeks to mount a sufficient immune response to be protected against disease and some vaccinations need to be given multiple time to be effective.*
- *Other questions to ask the breeder:*
 - *Age/birthdate?*
 - *Breed and/or pedigree?*
 - *Vaccinations given and dates?*
 - *Deworming? When and what product was used?*
 - *Performance of flock/herd/related animals?*
 - *Sheep- Scrapie status of flock?*
 - *Swine- Any signs of PRRS in the herd?*
- *Cheapest is not always best but most expensive is not always best either. You can find a well-bred, well vaccinated animal at a reasonable price if you spend some time looking.*
- *Make sure you read the Delaware 4-H project guidelines for your market project. They are updated each year based on changes in the Delaware State Fair livestock department rules and are available on the state 4-H website*
- *If you are not sure about rules, call someone! Your county 4-H agent, animal science agent or livestock department superintendent are all resources willing to help.*

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