

This guide provides details on animal sales, suggestions on selling ads, and getting buyers to the Katy Rodeo and Livestock Show.



Taylor High School FFA Guide

2018 – 2019 Edition

Taylor FFA Booster Club

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CONTACT AD BUYER FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR (RETURNING STUDENTS)

WHEN?

Just before or just after the start of school.

WHY?

Contacting your previous year Ad Buyers early will get them ready for you to show up for your current year ad. If you contacted your Ad Buyers monthly in the previous school year, they will be looking forward to your start of the school year letter. You want your Ad Buyer to be expecting you so you don't lose the buyer to someone else. This also means that you need to get to those buyers in the first 4 days after ads go on sale. While they will wait, they won't wait forever.

WHAT TO INCLUDE?

In these letters, you should include your name, details about their previous ad, an approximate date you will be around for this year, and a thank you for supporting the FFA.



POST ANIMAL PURCHASE

Once you have purchased your animal, take a picture of the student with the animal and print business cards using the picture to send in all of your letters. The business card should include the following information:

- Picture of student and animal
- Animal type – (Goat, Lamb, Pig, Steer, Rabbit, Roaster)
- Ear Tag Number – This will be used by buyers
- Student Name
- Student Email Address

ANIMAL SALES INFORMATION

WHAT IS THE AUCTION?

Each animal in the auction will be bid on individually. The number of auction slots is determined by the judges, however, normally the top performers from each weight class for each species and the top showmanship performers make the auction. The Grand Champion and Reserve Champion of each division will automatically be sold in the premium sale. The Grand Champion price will set the sale cap for each species. The Reserve Champion and each subsequent lot of that species may sell for a maximum of \$1 less than the Grand Champion. These limitations pertain to auction prices only, not add-ons. All other entries will be placed in sale order by the respective judges.

WHAT IS THE BARN SALE?

All projects exhibited at the Livestock Show that don't go to auction are eligible for the barn sale. At the barn sale, buyer can select any animal from the pens and pay the posted price for that animal (see prices below). Katy ISD does not guarantee a buyer in either the auction or the barn sale. If projects are not sold by the close of the barn sale, they will be sold for market value to a livestock commission company. Please check the Katy Rodeo and Livestock Show website for the barn sale schedule. The following are the barn sale prices for the 2018 Show and Sale:

- Steers \$ 2300
- Lambs \$350
- Goats \$350
- Hogs \$ 400
- Rabbit \$100
- Broilers \$100



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “BUY AN ANIMAL”?

Buying an animal doesn't mean that you take an animal home. Katy ISD Livestock show is a terminal show, so when you buy an animal you pay the price for the animal (either auction price or barn price) and an additional amount to process the meat from the animal. Then you have the following options when it comes to the meat:

OPTION 1 – KEEP THE MEAT FOR YOURSELF

OPTION 2 – DONATE THE MEAT/FUNDS FROM THE SALE OF THE MEAT TO A LOCAL CHARITY

OPTION 3 – DONATE THE FUNDS FROM THE SALE OF THE MEAT TO THE TAYLOR FFA CHAPTER

OPTION 4 – (STEER ONLY) DONATE THE MEAT TO THE TAYLOR FFA TO BE RAFFLED OFF AS A FUND RAISER.

*** You must have Option 4 approved with an FFA Teacher before choosing. ***

WHAT ARE ADD-ONS?

Add-ons are additional money that people can give to the student that raises the animal. There is no limit to the amount and number of add-ons that a student can collect.

Add-ons can be paid for in the following methods:

- Phoned in starting in early January, ending in early February and paid for via Visa or MasterCard.
- Mailed in, but must be postmarked by a date specified on the Add-on form link below
- During the Livestock Show they will be accepted up to one (1) hour following the conclusion of the Livestock Auction.

See the Add-on Form in the Useful Links section for specific dates and other details.



CONTACT POTENTIAL BUYERS

It's early winter and your animals are growing well. They look good, are healthy and you think you have a chance at getting Grand Champion. You have worked hard and spent lots of time working with your animal so you and your animal are ready for showmanship. You are almost ready for show but now you need to write your buyer's letters. Obviously, you want to get the best price possible for your animals and a big part of that is getting buyers to come to the show and bid on your animals. Good buyer's letters help not only you but all the entrants at the show because the buyer you invite may not bid on your animal, but they might bid on other exhibitor's animals.

A buyer's letter is a letter that an FFA member sends out to potential buyers before their show to tell them a little about themselves and their animal, and to invite them to the show and livestock auction. This section will explain the dos and don'ts about writing buyer letters and good letter-writing format. My hope is that FFA members who are selling animals for the first time can use the guide to write a successful buyer letter and continuing members might be able to compose a better letter by using the guide.

Why should you write a buyer's letter? It is your responsibility to help get new and returning buyers to come to the livestock sales. Some people come to the show every year and buy one or more animals but without new buyers a time may come where there aren't enough buyers to purchase all the animals. The prices may drop to a point where exhibitors are losing money by raising their animals. New buyers or returning buyers that are happy with the letters they have received are more likely to come to the show and pay the premium prices we all enjoy receiving for our animals. Buyers pay far more than the market value of the animals we sell and it is up to the individual exhibitor to encourage as many potential buyers as possible to come to the show and bid on their animals. Buyers like a personal letter from exhibitors, particularly children. It lets them know that you have raised an animal, are exhibiting it at the show, and trying to sell it at the market sale.

You should consider sending your letters to anyone who might be willing to buy your animals. They might include your family doctor, dentist, eye doctor, orthodontist, insurance agent, and banker. It might also include places where your family does business like the grocery store, restaurants, hair stylists, mechanics, or contractors. Your family veterinarian, feed store, equipment and/or car dealers are other possible places to send letters to. Don't forget to send letters to people who have previously bought your project animals, as well as relatives, neighbors, and family friends. If you have a job, then your employer is someone you can send a letter to, as well as your parent's employer.

WHEN?

You should be in contact with both potential buyers and ad buyers on a monthly basis. This will build a relationship between you and potential buyers. This relationship will help draw more buyers to the Livestock Show and improves your potential of securing a buyer for your animal.



BUYER'S SURVEY

The following questions were asked in a poll of potential buyers who may attend the show from across the country. Some of those polled have attended the livestock shows and bought animals. Some have attended shows and seldom buy animals and some have never attended the show or received a buyer's letter but might be willing to attend in the future if they receive the right letter.

1. **What kind of content do you like to see in the buyer's letter?**

60% said they like to read something about the child's history, 60% said they prefer to receive information on both the animal and history of the child, and 40% said talk about the animal. (Some of those polled put more than one answer so that accounts for the total of more than 100%).

2. **Do you like pictures of the animal with the letter?**

80% said they preferred photos or drawings of the animal and 20% said it's not necessary.

3. **Which kind of letter do you prefer: hand written or typed?**

20% said they preferred a typed letter, 20% said they liked a hand-written letter, and 60% said it doesn't matter as long as it's personalized.

4. **Do you care how long the letter is?**

20% said the length of the letter did not matter. 40% said the letters should not be more than one page, and 40% said they did not have a preference as long as the letters aren't really short.

5. **Do you like the FFA members writing about themselves and their animals?**

80% said yes, and 20% said they preferred the letter just be about the animal.

6. **Is there anything you would especially like to see in a buyer's letter that might motivate you or the people you buy for to decide to bid on an FFA member's animals?**

60% said there wasn't anything specific as long as it is personalized, 20% said they did not have any preferences, and 20% like to receive a letter that comes in "flyer" format, (similar to an advertisement).

7. **Is there anything that you particularly don't like to see, something that would discourage you from considering bidding?**

60% said there wasn't anything that they didn't particularly like to see, 20% mentioned they didn't like form letters, and 20% said they didn't like to read about the specifics of the food or what you are going to use the money for.

8. **Do you remember the best letter or letters you have ever received and what did you like about them?**

25% said they like humor in the letter, 25% said they like the letter addressed to them by name and appreciate a letter that shows a lot of work went into them. 25% said they like little cartoons of the animal with a hand-written letter, and 25% said they like a full-page letter that focuses on the exhibitor.



9. **Can you think of any letters that did not encourage you to bid and can you tell me what about those letters did not motivate you to bid on the member's animals?**

25% said there weren't any letters that stopped them from wanting to buy an animal, 50% said letters like form letters which are a copied signature and that says Dear Buyer instead of the buyer's name, and 25% said a letter that just invited them to the show didn't motivate them to go to the auction.

10. **Is personal contact with a member important? If a member delivered a buyer's letter in person and introduced him or herself, would that help you decide to bid on their animal?**

80% said personal contact with a member is not really important, and 20% said it doesn't really matter until the day of the auction.

11. **If you have received a buyer's letter from a particular member in the past, does that influence your decision to bid on their animal in the future?**

75% said yes it does influence them, and 25% said it depends on how well the letter is written.



THINGS YOU SHOULD INCLUDE IN YOUR BUYER'S LETTER OR FLYER

1. Information about yourself

Tell them your name, age, and introduce yourself. This helps the buyer know whose letter they are reading. When they get to the show it will help them make a connection with you. Some buyers are more likely to bid on animals raised by people they know.

2. Information about your project and Taylor High School FFA

Some buyers like to hear about your animal, how you raised it, and what FFA group you belong to. They may choose to bid on your animal based on your school affiliation if they recognize your FFA group from your activities that they have heard about.

3. The show dates

This helps the buyer because they will know when the show is and that way they can attend the show. If they have fun and enjoy themselves they would be more likely to come back. If they don't know the dates of the show then they won't know when to come and look at your animals.

4. The sale dates, times and locations

In order for the buyer to bid on your animal they will need to know when the auction is and where it is. If you can't get them to the auction then they can't bid on your animal and you won't sell it as easily.

5. Tell them how they can participate as a buyer

This is important because if they are a first-time buyer they can find out what they have to do. Providing potential buyers with all of the necessary information will make it easier for them to participate. The easier it is for them the more likely it will be for them to come to the show and bid on your animal.

6. Inform them where they can get more information

People sometimes have questions that you haven't answered in your buyer letter. This tells them where they can go to get answers those questions.

7. Thank them for previous participation if they are a buyer from a previous year!

If you do this, it may motivate the buyer to come back and bid again. It lets them know you appreciate them taking the time to come to the show.

8. Personalize the letters

This is good because most buyers like letters that are signed by a real person and not photocopied letter, and also, they like their names on the letter not just Dear Buyer. The more individualized a letter is, the more likely a person is to read it.

9. Include your business card



EXAMPLES OF LETTERS TO USE

July 11, 2006

Dear J. J. Kind,

This is my third year in FFA. I am a member of the Taylor High School FFA group. I would like to invite you to the Katy Livestock Auction and Rodeo. There is one day of sales at the Merrell Center and LD Robinson Pavilion.

The first sale is the sheep sale on Saturday, August 26 at 12:00 pm at the Merrell Center. The steer auction is at 1:00 pm. The swine sale is at 2:00 pm. I am planning to sell my market hog at this sale. Small animals sell on Saturday, February 22nd starting at 8:00 AM.

I have spent a lot of hours on feeding, watering, walking, and grooming Butch, my Hampshire market hog, for show and sale at the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo. I hope you will be able to attend one or more of this year's sales to support FFA project animals.

Come enjoy a day at the show, see all of the FFA animals and spend some time in the auction barn. Your bids will make a difference whether you buy "Butch" or some other member's FFA animal.

If you need a buyer's packet, please visit the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo website at <http://katyrodeo.org/auction.aspx>.

Sincerely,

Bill Hub



June 9, 2016

Katy Construction
900 Mason Road
Katy, TX 77450

Dear Mr. Bill:

My name is Cory Hack and this is my second year in FFA. I am taking a market lamb project to the show. My lamb is a whether and his name is Duke. I have spent a lot of time with Duke this past fall/winter. I have walked him, fed him, and even given him a bath.

I will be showing and selling Duke at the 2015 Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo. I would like to invite you to the Market Lamb Sale on Saturday, February 22nd at 9:00 AM, at the Merrell Center.

I hope you will be able to come to the show to see all the FFA lambs at the Auction. I don't know what time Duke will sell in the sale. But please come to the Market Lamb Auction and bid if you find a lamb you'd like try to buy.

My FFA adviser told me you can request a Buyer's Packet by visiting the website at <http://katyrodeo.org/auction.aspx>. I hope you have a chance to come to the show and see my entire Taylor High School FFA group's sheep.

Sincerely,

Cory Hack



July 7, 2016

Foster Feed
2030 Gold Rock Road
Katy, TX 77450

Dear Mr. Foster,

I am David Booster, President of the Taylor High School FFA. There are 25 members participating in the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo – February 19-22nd, a lot of the members will be showing market steers and then selling them on Friday, February 21st.

As the FFA group's President, I would like to invite you to the Market Steer Sale that follows the Lamb Sale at the Merrell Center, at approximately 12:00 p.m. There will be approximately 100 steers sold at the auction.

I have enclosed a Buyer's Packet that tells you about the Katy Rodeo and Livestock auctions. You can decide what day you want to come enjoy the show and take in some of the Auction.

You may also invite friends or join with other businesses to purchase an animal(s) together out of the Livestock Auction(s). The enclosed Buyer's Packet explains how multiple buyer sells will be handled and processed.

Your support of the Katy Rodeo and Livestock Auction will be greatly appreciated by all FFA members. If you have any questions, please visit <http://katyrodeo.org/auction.aspx>.

Sincerely,

David Booster
Taylor FFA President



July 5, 2016

Super Market
Mr. Ryan, Manager
120 Main Street
Katy, TX 77450

Dear Mr. Ryan,

Last year you purchased my pen of market rabbits from the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo Small Animal Sale. Thank you again for your purchase, I used the money I earned from last year's sale to buy my market chickens and rabbits for this year.

I am going back to the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo February 19-22nd. I will be showing and selling my pens of market chickens and rabbits for this year. I have learned a lot through FFA with my projects. Some critical lessons I have learned are responsibility and time management. This is important since I am trying to balance school work, school sports, and church youth group.

I wanted to invite you to the show. You can bring your whole family to enjoy seeing the FFA animals, entertainment and eating the great fair food. Don't forget to visit the Rabbit and Poultry pens at the LD Robinson Pavilion.

After you take in all the great fair fun, I hope you attend one of the Livestock Auctions. The Rabbits and Poultry will be selling on Saturday February 22nd, at 10:00 in the Merrell Center. I have enclosed a Buyer's Packet that outlines all of the sale times. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to visit <http://katyrodeo.org/auction.aspx>.

Thanks once again for your support last year. You helped me be able to participate another year in FFA with rabbit and poultry projects.

Sincerely,

Billy Bob
FFA member of Taylor High School



WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT INCLUDE IN YOUR BUYER'S LETTER

1. Asking the buyer to just buy your animal

This can make you sound selfish and like you didn't put much effort into your letter. You *should* ask the prospective buyer to come to the show, invite them to the buyer's lunch, look at your animals then consider bidding on them. Don't be too direct or short.

2. Asking for a donation or sponsorship

This makes you sound like you are begging for money. Selling your animal is a business transaction with the buyer rewarding you for your hard work. The buyer ends up with quality meat and you end with a financial gain for your effort.

3. Stating in the letter to "buy my animal or we won't do business with you"

This is a threat and people don't respond well to threats. Raising your animal, the show, and selling your animal should be a positive experience that you can learn from. It shouldn't be a case of threatening people to give a certain amount of money.

4. Asking for a certain price or bid

This makes you sound greedy. This is a similar mistake to being too blunt and direct or just asking the buyer to buy your animal.

5. Statements related to your family's debt, hardships, etc.

Family financial problems should be kept to yourself and you should not tell everybody about them. Buyers may feel sorry for you but this sort of personal information is not anyone's business. It does not make you more attractive as somebody the buyer might want to purchase an animal from. Pity is not a positive motivating factor.

6. Talking about what you are going to use the money for

This can make you sound like you are forcing the buyer to buy your animal. Buyers want to hear about how good of a job you did, how you worked hard, how much fun you had and how much you learned not what you intend to spend your profits on.

7. Writing group letters, or including information on more than one exhibitor in a single letter

This is bad because the letter is supposed to be about *you* and *your animal* not everybody else and their animal.

8. Don't use a form letter with Dear Buyer, and photocopied signature

If you do this the letter isn't personal and it makes it sound like you didn't spend any time on the letter at all. Buyers want to reward your effort on the project in addition to receiving a high-quality grade of meat (or poultry). Part of the effort you give is the buyer's letters you send them. A poorly written letter or one that shows very little effort does not motivate a buyer to purchase or bid on your animals.



EXAMPLES OF LETTERS NOT TO USE

June 27, 2016

Katy Trucking
210 Larkspur Lane
Katy, TX 77450

Dear Mr. York,

My name is Bob. I live on a farm in Katy with my parents and sister. I am going to be showing my market pig. My sister is showing a market lamb.

We will be showing are animals at the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo – February 19-22nd. We will also be selling them on Saturday, February 22nd. We would like to ask you to come and buy our project animals. We need them to sell for a good price, so that we may pay for the feed and still have money for us to spend.

If you can't come to the Auction, that's okay you can send us \$50 or more. We can use this money towards purchasing our animals for the show.

Thanks for helping me, and my sister.

Sincerely,

Bob Running



July 15, 2016

Loin Eye Feeds
154 Show Hog Lane
Katy, TX 77450

Dear Mrs. Shire,

I know that you have been buying livestock at the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo for a long time. I would like you to buy my prize market steer "Tri Tip" at this year's Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo Market Steer Auction, Saturday February 22nd, 1:00 PM in the Merrell Center.

You can buy my steer by yourself or you may ask friends and other businesses to join you to buy my steer. You can learn how to buy my steer with other people by requesting a Buyer's Packet by visiting <http://katyrodeo.org/auction.aspx>.

If you can't come to the Steer Sale you can send me a donation towards my steer project. I can add your donation to my steer's price. Just send your check to Joey Hamp Jr., 444 Rural Road, Katy, TX, 77450.

Thanks for helping me out with my steer project.

Sincerely,

Joey Hamp Jr.



July 9, 2016

Dear B. B. Duck,

This is my last year showing at the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo. I have been taking FFA and FFA projects for 4 years. The money I have gotten for my livestock projects I have used to buy a truck and put gas in the gas tank.

This year I will be showing a market lamb and a market steer. I really need to make a lot of money on these projects, since it is my last year. I need for you to come to the Market Lamb Auction on February 22nd at 1:00 pm, and the Market Steer Auction on same day.

If you can't come to the sale, you could send a bid to one of my parents. One of them would bid for you- I was thinking maybe \$20/lb for the market lamb and \$10/lb for my market steer. My market lamb weighs 180 lbs. and my market steer weighs 1250 pounds. I thought you would want these weights so you could figure out the amount of money you would be spending on my animals.

Thanks for helping to make my last year at the Katy Livestock Show and Rodeo a profitable and memorable one. I will be looking for you at the sales.

Sincerely,

John Doe



USEFUL LINKS

[Add-on Form](#)

[Katy FFA Calendar](#)

[Katy Rodeo and Livestock Show](#)

[KRLS - Schedule](#)

[FFA EXHIBITOR HANDBOOK](#)

