Mason FFA Lamb Co-Op 2014

**Mission Statement**: The Mason FFA Lamb Co-Op will provide Mason FFA members with a positive experience in both animal husbandry and entrepreneurship. Co-op members will learn responsibility, teamwork, communication and record keeping skills.

**Daily Chores**

AM chores must be completed before 9:00 am. Afternoon chores should be completed a minimum of 8 hours after morning chores. The closer chore times are to 12 hours apart the better. The animals are relying on you!!! So are other co-op members!!! Please be respectful of others and the opportunity provided to you by fulfilling your responsibilities.

**Feed Program**

Lambs will be hand fed twice daily.

Weigh out the prescribed amount of feed in the morning and at night. Remove feeders after 20 minutes or so. You want them to eat like high school boys after a football game!

Make sure their water is topped off before you leave.

Provide them one flake of hay per day. Excess hay will lead to “hay bellies”, not what you want come show day and reduced feed consumption. Only feed the lambs their prescribed ration. Although treats may be tools for training your sheep… some foods can be harmful or even toxic to sheep and can create problems for their rumen.

The amount of feed per day will change. It is based on their weight and consumption, so they eat as much as they can in a 20 minute time span. Lambs may be divided based on weights and be fed accordingly. Please make sure to check you are feeding correct amounts of feed.

Please make sure you are knowledgeable and up to date on current feeding practices. I will communicate through Remind 101 and our chapter webpage www.masonffa.weebly.com.

**Exercise**

Lambs must be walked at least three times per week. They should be **walked** a minimum20 minutes each time. To build muscle, use a warm up followed by fast bursts of exercise and then a cool down. Be careful of exercising your animals in extreme heat.

**Weighing Lambs**

Lambs need to be weighed at least once a week. Each member will be responsible for weighing their lambs and recording their weight once each week on the weigh days, Monday. There will be a master record sheet that will stay in the barn and a second sheet that I can take with me to track in the computer. It would be best to complete this as a group if possible. Accurate weights on regular intervals are critical to evaluate growth and performance of your animals. I am also exploring a google document that members will be able to fill out. The google doc or the excel document of current weights will be posted on our chapter webpage.

**Member Communication**

Communication among co-op members and to the advisor is critical for success. Each pen will have a clipboard with a sheet to record data daily. Additional observations should be written down as well. Failure to complete this task will be considered a failure to do chores.

It is just as important to review previous member’s notes when you are completing chores to check for any updates or concerns.

It is important to note any activities you complete with your lambs or to the pen on your off days, including information about exercising your animals.

In addition to the communication on barn sheets, members, will for the first time be required to take a picture of the pen and the sign in sheet and send me a text message with those images and a quick note that chores have been completed immediately following completion of chores.

Please contact and work with other members of the co-op with any chore conflicts. Text me the solutions you have worked out with other co-op members.

**Fair**

All co-op members agree to show their lambs at the Ingham County Fair and complete all responsibilities that go along with that activity. Pen set-up, decoration set up, taking pigs to the fairgrounds, chores morning and night every day throughout fair week, pen tear down and barn clean out.

All co-op members also agree to work a minimum of 2 - four hour shifts at the Circle of Life exhibit.

**Financial**

All animals financed by the Mason FFA Chapter will remain in the Mason Agriscience Barn through the completion of the project. Financial responsibility, ultimately, belongs to the members of the co-op and is shared equally among the members. The FFA chapter will front the money for the project through its’ entirety. The Mason FFA will secure project costs for animals, feed, bedding, etc. from fair checks prior to members receiving their profits to simplify that process for members and protect our FFA chapter finances. New! Members who profit above $250 dollars will be accessed a $25 equipment fee. Members who profit less than $250 will be accessed a 10% equipment fee.

**Record Keeping**

Members are required to keep up to date records in their AET account to be turned in the day of pen decorating at the fair for me to trailer your livestock to the fair. A computer data base in excel can be an excellent tool for tracking efficiency factors such as daily gain and feed conversion as well.

**Soliciting Buyers - Marketing**

All members are required to send a minimum of fifteen buyer letters. Members are required to visit and talk in person with at least five potential buyers (can be part of the fifteen).

**Consequences**

Consequences for not fulfilling your commitment will be natural in some regards. Your animals will not perform as well. In addition to the natural consequences for not doing chores or failing to do them adequately will result in a $5 fine each time. That can add up fast! Make sure you do your job.

Incomplete records will result in a $5 fine as well. Please make sure you do your job and pay close attention to all details.

Remember, as with everything in life, you will only get out of this experience what you put into it. I know you all can do it and I look forward to great success working with you on this project!

**Lamb Showmanship**

One key to your success in the show ring is your ability to show lambs. Lamb showmanship is a fun, challenging and rewarding endeavor. But... requires a lot of practice and hard work. There are several opportunities to show your lamb and hone your skills through May and June. There is even a lamb camp (highly recommended) held in Alma each year. I am willing to help with tailoring your lambs to the shows at MSU or Alma this year. There are entry fees for those shows however, the experience they provide new and improving showman are extremely valuable opportunities. You are strongly encouraged to participate in lamb camp and one show this summer!

Full details and registration forms for those opportunities can be found at the Michigan Club Lamb Association webpage, www.michcla.com.

Lamb Camp in Alma is May 31st with a show the following day on June 1st. The shows at MSU are the following weekend. There is also a show sponsored by the Springport FFA at the Eaton County Fairgrounds June 28th

Mason FFA Lamb Co-Op Contract

The Mason FFA Chapter will…

1. Provide Lambs
2. Provide Proper Feed Ration
3. Provide Bedding Material
4. Provide Guidance to Members Throughout Project

Members of the Co-Op will…

1. Complete Chores as described above before 9:00 am and between 4:00 and 7:00 pm each evening (cooler temperatures in the early morning and evening increase feed intake / growth)
2. Text Mr. Barnum image of pen and information on chore sheet immediately after completion of chores
3. Exercise and work with my sheep a minimum of three times per week
4. Maintain an accurate record book for the project
5. Communicate with other co-op members and Mr. Barnum effectively
6. Participate in group activities for the project such as weighing lambs, setting up and taking down equipment and the lamb showmanship workouts
7. Show lambs from the project at the 2014 Ingham County Fair
8. Provide a $50 dollar deposit to participate in the project

All costs incurred for the project will be divided per member of the co-op. Those costs will be taken directly out of the member’s fair checks.

Any breach in contract by the part of the member may result in removal of the member from the co-op. Animals will be sold at market. All costs beyond those recovered from the sale of livestock at market is the responsibility of the co-op member in breach of the contract.

This contract is here by agreed upon on this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (month) 2014

between (FFA member) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the Mason FFA chapter.

I have read the above contract and agree to its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 FFA Member Advisor

As a parent I agree to assist in the supervision of this project. I will help to insure that animals are fed on time and cared for on each assigned co-op chore day.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Parent Signature