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FFA, 4-H Show Yields Champions Among Livestock, Young Citizens

A SPEAKER at a recent livestock meeting in Oklahoma City said: "Give a pig and a boy everything they want and you will get a good pig and a bad boy!"

That might be a reasonable philosophical observation, but it is not the procedure for the 62nd annual Oklahoma 4-H and FFA Livestock Show, which opens Friday.

The goal here is to give both the pig and the boy what they really need: proper nourishment, good discipline and careful grooming. Then you get both good pigs and good boys. The same applies to girls who are participating and to steers or sheep that will be entered in the show by the hundreds.

Dr. William D. Strom, state program specialist for 4-H and Youth Development, estimates that at least half of the 19,000 beef, swine and sheep projects carried on by Oklahoma 4-H members are shown in at least one of the junior livestock events.

Add to this total thousands of other animals raised, fed, groomed and shown by Future Farmers of America, and you have a pretty big herd of livestock headed toward Oklahoma City.

Not all of the exhibitors make it to the big time on their first efforts. Their animals must be weighed and permanently identified months before the show. Last year, 1,900 steers were nominated for the Oklahoma City competition and a little over 800 showed up. After final "sifting" for qualifications, a total of 653 were in the show ring, and 72 went into the auction sale.

For this year's show, Larry Watkins, secretary-treasurer, says that

2,055 steers have been nominated, with prospects that close to 1,000 may be moving in at the State Fairgrounds Friday.

Last year, the club boys and girls also brought in 1,601 barrows, 1,250 lambs, 515 heifers and 115 ewes. The heifers and ewes are shown but are not marketed.

All animals sold in the premium auction sale must be slaughtered and any animal that has been sold in any premium auction sale prior to this show is ineligible to be exhibited.

These rules resulted in a major hassle a couple of years ago, but trustees of Southwest American Livestock Foundation, Inc., sponsor of the event, stood their ground.

The trustees determined after the 1975 show that the animal declared grand champion had been shown previously at a Texas show and did not meet requirements for continuous ownership and care by the young exhibitor.

The steer was disqualified and request made that premium monies and trophies be returned. This was refused at first, but a few weeks ago, with a court trial pending, the awards were given up and presented to the reserve champion exhibitor.

Trustees maintained that to do otherwise would be unfair to show participants and lower the integrity of the event.

Because 4-H and FFA constitute the largest youth organizations in Oklahoma, this ranks as a highly significant youth activity. It is a process of producing both "good pigs and good boys." FFA and 4-H demonstrate that it can be done.