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Junior Stock Show Helps City Folks

THOUSANDS of youngsters from across the state will parade their prize animals at the state fairgrounds, beginning Friday, to compete for cash prizes, bonuses and premium auction bids.

City folks might not always realize that the world's largest junior livestock show is held for their benefit, too. Experience that boys and girls receive helps many of them to become professional livestock raisers, and all of them receive training to become good citizens.

The event is the 65th Oklahoma 4-H and FFA Junior Livestock show. Judging will take place Saturday through Tuesday. The big auction sale is scheduled for 6 p.m., Tuesday, March 25, in the fairgrounds arena.

People sometimes ask: "What is the difference between 4-H and FFA? Why don't they have just one organization?"

The two groups are both compatible and competitive, and they serve somewhat similar but different interests.

The 4-H clubs, referring to Heart, Head, Hands and Health, include some 140,000 members, in nearly 3,000 groups, with members in every county, under supervision of OSU Extension Service.

Boys and girls may join 4-H when they are nine years old and continue through high school. They carry on an extensive range of individual and group projects under leadership of more than 10,000 volunteer sponsors, 4-H club workers and county extension directors.

Future Farmers of America is an association of about 19,000 boys and girls enrolled in vocational agriculture in 364 Oklahoma high schools. Their vo-ag teachers serve as FFA chapter advisers.

Both vocational agriculture and FFA are under supervision of the State Department of Vocational Education, headquartered at Stillwater but separate from Oklahoma State University.

Future Farmers of America stress their motto: "Learn by Doing."

Both 4-H and FFA were originated

to serve needs of rural youth but membership is open to urban boys and girls, and many are members.

Mike Herndon, vo-ag student at John Marshall High School, is current state FFA president. His father is an Oklahoma City physician. Terry Henderson, state 4-H club president, is the son of a professional agricultural worker who lives at Fort Gibson.

Since 1915, the Oklahoma City 4-H and FFA Junior Livestock show has been carried on by volunteer workers who want to encourage the boys and girls to strive for high ideals, awards and success.

Necessary committee work and financial support are provided mainly by the Livestock Show committee of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, the Southwest American Livestock Foundation, and the Sirloin Club of Oklahoma.

As the ratio of consumers to food producers increases, the importance of early agricultural training can hardly be overemphasized. And 4-H and FFA train member youngsters to be good citizens, besides.