IANR NebGuide
University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Know how. Know now.

G2175
(Revised August 2013)

Animal Care Resource Guide for 4-H and FFA Members

Knowing the Livestock Lingo

Lindsay M. Chichester, Extension Educator; Karna Dam, Extension Educator; and Dennis E. Bauer, Extension Educator

There are many terms associated with livestock production that may be unfamiliar to youth. This NebGuide lists and defines terms common between species and specific to certain species. This is No. 4 in a series of five resource guides.

Sometimes there may be terms or language used in livestock and poultry production that you may not be familiar with. These terms can be specific to certain species or they may be similar across species. The list of terms also includes significant points in the animal's life cycle and terms used in feed ration development.

General Terminology	
Herd	A grouping of a species of animals (cattle, swine, goats)
Flock	A grouping of a species of animals (sheep, poultry)
Litter	Multiple offspring produced at one birth by a multiparous mammal
Multiparous	Having given birth more than one time
Primiparous	Having given birth once
Gestation length	The amount of time an animal is pregnant. These lengths will vary by breed and individual animal.
Breed	A group of animals that, as a result of breeding and selection, have certain distinguishable characteristics
Breeding animal	Livestock bred and raised to be included in a reproductive program
Market animal	Livestock bred and raised for food consumption
Weaned	An offspring that is removed from the care of its dam
Weanling	An animal that is no longer nursing
Yearling	An animal that is 1 to 2 years in age
Harvest	To slaughter an animal for human consumption
Bulling	When one animal is riding another animal; may cause physical and health problems to the animal being ridden
Breeding and Reproduction	
Sire	A male parent
Dam	A female parent
Artificial insemination (AI)	Introduction of semen into the vagina or uterus using technology rather than by sexual contact between animals
Embryo	An organism in its early stages of development, especially before it has reached a distinctively recognizable form
Ovary	Female reproductive organ that produces ova and, in vertebrates, estrogen and progesterone
Ovulation	To produce ova; discharge eggs from the ovary
Testicle	Male reproductive organ that produces testosterone
Castrate	The alteration of a male animal's reproductive system that renders it infertile
Intact	Describes a male animal that is unaltered and therefore capable of reproducing; uncastrated
Gestation	Duration of pregnancy; the period of development in the uterus from conception until birth
Lactation	The period during which mammary glands secrete milk
Puberty	When an animal's reproductive system begins to function. This will vary by species, breed, age, and weight of animals.
Estrus (heat)	When a female is receptive to a male for mating
Estrous (heat) cycle	Physiological changes that occur in mammalian females which are controlled by hormones and used for the maturation of and release of follicles from the ovary
Signs of estrus (In-heat)	If an animal is in-heat, she may stand for other animals to ride her, may try to ride other animals, have loss of appetite, sniff and smell the air, may act nervous and restless, experience increase in mucous discharge from the vulva, and/or the vulva may be red and swollen.

Heat check	Watching for signs of estrus
Synchronization	Manipulating the estrus cycle of breeding females so they can be bred at approximately the same time
K-Mar	Heat detection device that is a capsule of red dye glued to the tailhead. When the animal is mounted, the capsule breaks, indicating that she may be in heat.
CIDR Devices (pronounced "cedar")	Devices containing the progesterone hormone, which is placed intravaginally to release progesterone at a controlled rate into the bloodstream. Animals will come into heat several days after the devices have been removed.
Early maturing	Female reaches mature size at a younger age
Later maturing	Female reaches mature size at an older age
Health and Well-Being	
Vaccinate	To inoculate with a vaccine in order to produce immunity to an infection or disease
Polled	A naturally hornless animal
Horned	An animal with horns
De-horning	Removal of horns from animals when they are young, making them easier to handle and less likely to injure each other and human handlers
Docking	The removal of the majority of the tail, leaving a small portion closest to the body
Gummers/Broken mouth	These are usually animals that are advanced in age, but may also be animals that have eaten off of a dirt pen floor where they may chew rocks, thus breaking their teeth. These animals may need additional or more easily consumed feed products.
Withdrawal time	The amount of time necessary for an animal to metabolize an administered product and the amount of time necessary for the product concentration level in the tissues to decrease to a safe, acceptable level for possible human consumption
Residues	The remainder of a drug in the tissue of an animal before the withdrawal time has been met
Pull rate	The amount of animals individually pulled out of a larger group of animals in which individual care or treatment is provided
Feed and Nutrition	
On-feed	An animal that is consuming its ration of feed normally
Off-feed	When an animal's consumption of feed decreases or stops. This may indicate the animal does not feel well or that there is something wrong with the feed.
Cud	A bolus of forage material that a ruminant animal regurgitates to be chewed again
Ruminants	Animals that have a stomach with four compartments that consume forages and regurgitate their cud to break it down so they can absorb the nutrients. Some ruminant animals include: cattle, sheep, goats, llamas, and deer, to name a few.
Rumination	The process of a ruminant animal regurgitating its cud, and chewing it again to facilitate proper breakdown of cellulose rich plant material
Monogastric	Having a single stomach chamber; able to digest limited fibrous material. Examples of monogastrics include: humans, swine, horses, rabbits, cats, and dogs.
Ad Lib	Also known as free choice. Sufficient feed is made available at all times to enable the animal to eat as much as it can eat.
Amino acids	Building blocks of protein, contain nitrogen
Animal Protein Product (APP)	The protein ingredient made from meat, bone meal, carcasses, blood, feathers, and/or fish that is treated at very high temperatures
As fed basis	Weight of the feed or ingredient including moisture (water) content
Balanced ration	A balanced ration must contain the five essential elements — water, protein, energy, vitamins, and minerals — in the proper amount and ratios for the species being fed and for the maintenance of that animal (i.e., egg production, body maintenance, desired growth)
Complete feed	A ration that provides all the nutrients required. This can generally be purchased or made locally.
Daily feed intake	The amount of feed consumed in a day
Deficient/Deficiencies	Short or lacking certain nutrients
Digestible	Term given to feedstuffs that can be broken down and absorbed in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract
Dry matter	The portion of feed remaining after removal of moisture
Dry feeds	Feeds that are approximately 90% dry matter; usually hay and pellets
Feeding rate	The amount in pounds or kilos that a specific feed must be fed per day or per animal
Indigestible	Term given to feedstuffs that cannot be broken down and absorbed in the GI tract
IU/International Units	A unit used to measure the effect of many vitamins and minerals
Limit Fed	Not allowing an animal to be fed to satisfy its appetite
Macro minerals/Major minerals	Minerals such as calcium and phosphorous that are included in a ration in relatively large amounts; usually measured in grams/day or percentage
Trace minerals/Minor minerals	Minerals such as copper and zinc that are included in a ration in very small amounts; usually measured in parts per million or 1/1000 of a gram fractions of a milligram per head per day
Nutrients	Items such as protein, fat, fiber, energy, minerals, trace minerals, and vitamins
Ration	The amount of feed given to an animal in a 24-hour period; determine ration based on weight, age, and nutritional needs of the animal
Roughage	Coarse, dense plant-based material; hay
Wet feeds	Fresh grass or silage; ingredients with a high moisture content

Residue	What remains of a plant in a field after harvest
Harvest	To remove all grains or crop from a field, leaving residue
Beef and Dairy Cattle	
Bovine	Scientific name for cattle
Beef animal	Cattle developed for the production of red meat
Dairy animal	Cattle developed for the production of milk
Dual Purpose	Cattle developed for the production of both meat and milk
Gestation length	9 months
Bull	Sexually mature male
Steer	Castrated male beef animal
Cow	Mature female
Heifer	Young female that has not yet had a calf
Calf	Young offspring; sexually immature
Beef	Generic term for cattle; meat from cattle
Junior calf	An age classification used to separate calves into classes at fairs and exhibitions. This is a younger calf.
Senior calf	An age classification used to separate calves into classes at fairs and exhibitions. This is an older calf.
Bos indicus	Cattle developed to tolerate hot, humid climates; they generally have a hump on their necks, large ears, and thick skin. These cattle are well equipped to handle dry weather, heat, humidity, and insects. Breeds may include: Brahman and Santa Gertrudis.
Bos taurus	British and Continental breeds of cattle developed for the production of meat and/or milk. These cattle generally do not have humps on their necks, have short ears, and are thicker skinned. These cattle are better equipped to handle cold and wet climates. Breeds typically include: Angus, Hereford, Charolais, and many others.
British breeds	Breeds that were developed in the British Isles and brought to the U.S. in the late 1700s and early 1800s. When compared to the Continental breeds, these breeds are smaller in mature size, reach mature size at an earlier age, have less growth potential, excel in fertility and calving ease, attain higher quality grades, and yield carcasses with a lower percentage of salable product. These breeds include: Angus (red and black), Hereford (horned and polled), and Shorthorn.
Continental breeds	These breeds are newer to the U.S., being imported in the late 1960s and early 1970s, primarily to improve growth rate and leanness of existing breeds. These breeds are generally larger in mature size, are later maturing, and produce carcasses with less fat, a higher percentage of saleable product, and lower quality grades. Commonly referred to as "exotic" breeds and includes: Charolais, Chianina, Gelbvieh, Limousin, Maine Anjou, Salers, and Simmental.
Backgrounding	A system that grows calves to enter a feedlot
Swine	
Porcine	Scientific name for swine
Boar	Sexually mature male
Barrow	Castrated male
Sow	Mature female
Gilt	Young female
Litter	Multiple offspring produced during one birth
Gestation length	3 months, 3 weeks, 3 days
Piglet	Young offspring; sexually immature, (aka pig)
Hog	A mature swine
Pork	Meat from swine
Sheep	
Ovine	Scientific name for sheep
Ram, Buck	Sexually mature male
Wether	Castrated male
Ewe	Female sheep
Gestation length	5 months
Mutton	Meat of a mature sheep
Lamb	A sheep less than one year of age; meat from young sheep
Meat and Dairy Goats	
Caprine	Scientific name for animals in the goat family
Buck, Billy	Sexually mature male
Wether	Castrated male
Doe, Nanny	Female goat
Doeling	Young female goat; sexually immature
Buckling	Young male goat; sexually immature
Kid	Young offspring; sexually immature
Gestation length	5 months

Rabbit	
Leporidae	Scientific name for rabbits
Buck	Male rabbit
Doe	Female rabbit
Kit, Kitten	Young rabbit
Gestation length	1 month
Poultry (chickens, geese, ducks, turkeys)	
Aves	Scientific name for birds
Brooding	Natural setting on eggs by the hen
Cock, Rooster	Adult male chicken
Cockerel	Young male chicken; less than one year old
Capon	Castrated rooster
Hen	Adult female chicken or turkey
Chick	Newly hatched or very young chicken
Pullet	Young domestic hen, usually less than six months old
Broiler	A chicken that is 6 to 13 weeks of age used for meat production
Gander	Adult male goose
Goose	Mature female goose
Gosling	Young goose
Drake	Adult male duck
Duck	Mature female duck
Duckling	Young offspring of ducks
Tom	Adult male turkey
Poult	Young turkey
Incubation	Heating/brooding of eggs done by a hen or mechanical incubator for reproduction and hatching of poultry
Embryology	The scientific study of embryos and their development
Incubation period – Chicken	21 days
Incubation period – Duck	28 days (Pekin and Mallard); 35 days (Muscovy)
Incubation period – Goose	28 days
Incubation period – Turkey	28 days
Horse	
Stallion, Stud	Sexually mature male
Gelding	Castrated male
Dam	Mother of a foal
Mare	Mature female
Foal	Horse of either sex less than one year old
Filly	Young female offspring (usually under 4 years of age)
Colt	Young male offspring (usually under 4 years of age)
Gestation length	11 months, 11 days

Resources

For more information on animal care and well-being, visit *http://4h.unl.edu/resourceanimalcare* or contact:

Donald Beermann
UNL Institutional Animal Care Program
110 Mussehl Hall
Lincoln, NE 68583-0720
Email: *dbeermann2@unl.edu*

Lindsay Chichester
UNL Extension Educator
1700 Stone St.
Falls City, NE 68355
Email: *lchichester2@unl.edu*

Dennis Bauer
UNL Extension Educator
148 West Fourth St.
Ainsworth, NE 69210
Email: *dbauer1@unl.edu*

Acknowledgment

The authors thank Dr. Candace Croney, Associate Professor, Animal Behavior and Well-Being, Purdue University, for her assistance with the content and editing of this publication.

This publication has been peer reviewed.

UNL Extension publications are available online at *http://extension.unl.edu/publications*.

Index: Animals, General Management

2012, Revised September 2013

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.