

Writing Buyer's Letters



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**4-H Youth Development
Children, Youth & Family Programs
Michigan State University Extension
Brining Knowledge to Life**

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Writing Letters to 4-H Livestock Auction Buyers

Introduction

The 4-H Market Livestock Project is hands on learning project about taking a market animal from _____ to market weight. The final stage in the learning objective is for you to market your animal. Through the 4-H Youth Development Program we have developed a location for you to market your animal at the Lenawee County Fair, during one of the three Livestock Auctions. (Small Animal, Dairy Feeder and Jr. Livestock).

Several years ago, a survey was done with buyers that attend the auction, the number one reason why buyers attend the auction was: to support YOUth. In order for these Livestock Auctions to be successful, it is important for you as the seller to recruit buyers to attend the auction.

Good buyer's letters help not only you but all the entrants at the fair because the buyer you invite may not bid on your animal, but they might bid on other exhibitor's animals. The more buyers we have supporting all youth, the better chance all members have to maintain a support price that is profitable as well as less burden it is on a few buyers.

This guide will assist you in writing buyer letters as well as thank you letters. Following up with buyers is crucial for the future of this program.

What is a Buyer's Letter?

A buyer's letter is a letter that a 4-H member sends out to potential buyers before the County Fair to tell them a little about themselves and their animal, and to invite them to the fair and livestock auction.

What is a Thank You Letter?

A thank you letter is a follow up after the County Fair to show the buyer's a 4-H member's appreciation for supporting the Livestock Auction.

Reasons for Writing Buyer's Letters

This guide will explain the dos and don'ts about writing buyer letters and good letter-writing format. 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 fair 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 fair 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 fair 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 county fair, 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.

The first part of my guide will talk about what the buyers in Trinity County like to see in buyers letters. The second part will show examples of good buyer's letters. The third part will show examples of bad buyer's letters. The fourth part will talk about good letter writing format.

Things you should include in your Buyer's Letters

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 fair 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 club

*Some buyers like to hear about your animal, how you raised it, and what 4-H club you belong to. They may choose to bid on your animal based on your club affiliation if they recognize your club from your activities that they have heard about.

3.) The fair dates

*This helps the buyer because they will know when the fair is and that way they can attend the fair. If they have fun and enjoy themselves they would be more likely to come back. If they don't know the dates of the fair 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 fair 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 fair.

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.) Consider adding a picture of you and your animal

* This can help people see what your animal looks like. Some people think that pictures of animals are cute and this may help them decide to bid on your animal instead of somebody else's or not bidding at all.

Examples of Letters to Use:

June 20, 2022

Dear J. J. Kind,

This is my seventh year in 4-H. I am a member of the Big Clovers 4-H Club. I would like to invite you to the Trinity County Fair and Livestock Auction. There is one day of sales at the Trinity County Fairgrounds.

The first sale is the sheep sale on Saturday, August 26 at 12:00 pm at the lamb showmanship arena. The steer auction is at 1:00 pm at the steer showmanship arena. The swine sale is at 2:00 pm at the swine showmanship arena. I am planning to sell my market hog at this sale. Small animals sell on Friday August 27 starting at 8:00 AM in the swine arena.

I have spent a lot of hours on feeding, watering, walking, and grooming Butch, my Hampshire market hog, for show and sale at the Trinity County Fair. I hope you will be able to attend one or more of this year's sale to support 4-H project animals .

Come enjoy a day at the Fair, see all the 4-H animals and spend some time in the auction barn. Your bids will make a difference whether you buy "Butch" or some other member's 4-H animal.

If you need a buyer's packet, please contact the Trinity County Fair Livestock Auction Committee at 555-1111.

Sincerely,

Bill Hub

June 20, 2022

Hayfork Construction
900 Hayfork Road
Hayfork, CA 9409

Dear Mr. Bill:

My name is Cory Hack and this is my second year in 4-H. I am taking a market lamb project to the fair. My lamb is a whether and his name is Duke. I have spent a lot of time with Duke this summer. I have walked him, fed him, and even given him a bath.

I will be showing and selling Duke at the 2022 Trinity County Fair. I would like to invite you to the Trinity County Fair Market Lamb Sale on Wednesday, August 27 at 9:00 AM, at the Lamb Showmanship Arena.

I hope you will be able to come to the Fair to see all the 4-H sheep 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 4-H club adviser told me you can request a Buyer's Packet by calling the Livestock Sale Committee at 555-1111. I hope you have a chance to come to the Fair and see my entire 4-H club's sheep.

Sincerely,

Cory Hack

June 20, 2022

Foster Feed
2030 Gold Rock Road
Weaverville, CA 96093

Dear Mr. Foster,

I am David Booster, President of the Clark Star 4-H Club. There are 25 members participating in the 2022 Trinity County Fair- August 22-29, a lot of the members will be showing market steers and then selling them on Friday, August 25.

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

I have enclosed a 2022 Buyer's Packet that tells you about the Trinity County Fair and Livestock auctions. You can decide what day you want to come enjoy the Fair 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 2022 Trinity County Fair and Auction will be greatly appreciated by all 4-H members. If you have any questions, please contact the Trinity County Livestock office at 555-1111.

Sincerely,

David Booster
Clark Star 4-H Club President

June 20, 2022

Tops Super Market
Mr. Ryan, Manager
120 Main Street
Weaverville, Ca 96093

Dear Mr. Ryan,

Last year you purchased my pen of market rabbits from the Trinity County Fair 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 Trinity County Fair – August 22-27. I will be showing and selling my pens of market chickens and rabbits for this year. I have learned a lot through 4-H 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 Fair. You can bring your whole family to enjoy seeing the 4-H animals, entertainment and eating the great fair food. Don't forget to visit the Rabbit and Poultry Barns.

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 August 26, at 10:00 in the Showmanship arena. I have enclosed a Buyer's Packet that outlines all of the sale times. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call the Trinity County Livestock Office at 555-1111.

Thanks once again for your support last year. You helped me be able to participate another year in 4-H with rabbit and poultry projects.

Sincerely,

Billy Bob
4-H member of Big Bunny

What you should not write in a 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 fair, 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 fair, 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 families 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 animal.

Examples of Letters Not to Use:

June 27, 2022

New Age Trucking
210 Larkspur Lane
Redding, CA. 96001

Dear Mr. York,

My name is Bob. I live on a farm in Lewiston 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 Trinity County Fair- August 25-27. We will also be selling them on Friday, August 27th. 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 fair.

Thanks for helping me, and my sister.

Sincerely,

Bob Running

June 20, 2022

Loin Eye Feeds
154 Show Hog Lane
New Castle, ID. 45678

Dear Mrs. Shire,

I know that you have been buying livestock at the Trinity County Fair for a long time. I would like you to buy my prize market steer “Tri Tip” at this year’s Trinity County Fair Market Steer Auction, Saturday August 26, 1:00 PM in the Showmanship arena, Trinity County Fairgrounds.

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 calling the Sale Committee at 241-1177.

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., 444Rural Road Weaverville, 96093.

Thanks for helping me out with my steer project.

Sincerely,

Joey Hamp Jr.

June 20, 2022

Dear B. B. Duck,

This is my last year showing at the Trinity County Fair. I have been taking 4-H and FFA projects for 14 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 lots of money on these projects, since it is my last year. I need for you to come to the Market Lamb Auction on August 26 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 Trinity County Fair a profitable and memorable one. I will be looking for you at the sales.

Sincerely,

John Doe

Buyer Letter Format

YOUR NAME
YOUR STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE ZIP-0000

INVITEE NAME (or BUSINESS)
STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE ZIP – 0000

TODAY’S DATE

DEAR _____ ,

In the first paragraph talk about yourself and what you have done in 4-H (example: My name is _____. I am in the _____ 4-H Club and this is my _____ year in 4-H.

In the second paragraph talk about the fair you go to and talk about the kind of animal you are raising and how many years you have raised that animal as a 4-H project.

In the third paragraph tell them when the fair and auction are. Invite the buyer to the fair. Encourage the buyer to go to the auction. Also, advise the buyer of the showmanship date and time for your species and encourage them to attend that event at the Fair.

In the fourth paragraph, tell the buyer that you hope to see them at the Fair and hope they will consider bidding on one of your animals.

Sincerely (or Yours Truly, or any other polite closing),

Your Name
Your 4-H Club

How to Write a Thank You Note

There are many reasons for writing a thank you note. Thank you notes may be written after receiving a gift, help from a friend, for attendance at an important event, or for any other occasion where you feel it is necessary. A simple thank you note shows your appreciation, it will make the person you are thanking feel better, improve your image as a grateful person, and/or increase the likelihood the person you are thanking will help out again.

Thank You Note Writing

Thank you notes can be written on just about anything but writing it on something nicer than just plain white paper or through email will add to the value and presentation of your note. A thank you note that is hand written on a card will look more personalized and sincere than a note printed off the computer. Notes can either be mailed or given in person but the sooner it is done the better, usually within two weeks is a good time frame to use. Thank you notes are usually simple but thoughtful messages thank you write to express your gratitude. The following is a guideline that you can use when writing your thank you note.

Greetings

To start out the note, you should greet the recipient, e.g. "Hi Aunt Kelly!"

Thank them

You should mention the gift/service and express your appreciation for it, e.g. "Thanks for the new bike you bought me for my birthday, it's just what I wanted."

Mention something you liked

Mention a specific detail about gift/service, e.g. "The color red fits the bike well! It is my favorite color."

Update them

Update the recipient on your life pertaining to the gift/service, e.g. "I plan on riding the bike around my neighborhood everyday right after school."

Add a personal note

Add a personal note to the recipient, it doesn't have to be very long or detailed, e.g. "I look forward to seeing you soon!"

Thank them again!

You can never say thank you too much, and since this is a thank you note it is a very appropriate place to do it, e.g. "Thanks again for the bike."

Closing

End the letter with a simple closing followed by your signature on the next line, e.g. "Love, (Line Break) Your Signature"

Notes & Tips

If you received money, don't mention the amount, you may want to write something along the lines of, "Thank you for your generosity, it is greatly appreciated."

Many people underestimate the power of the hand-written thank you note. Some think it is better to send an immediate e-mail or simply say thanks in person. But, a hand-written note is the ideal way to show your appreciation. With the ever-growing popularity of technology, the art of writing an "old-school" note is being lost. It may seem daunting and maybe a bit archaic to pick up a pen and a stationery card, but just remember these tips and you'll soon be a pro.

Thank You Note Do's

- **Handwrite the thank you note.** Don't just apply these tips to your e-mail thank-yous. Although it would be easier to send an e-mail or type a letter, a handwritten thank you note is the most sincere and appreciated form of gratitude. The extra effort goes a long way.
- **Buy stationery.** Embossed cards with complementary envelopes look much better than folded notebook paper stuffed in a plain envelope. You don't have to splurge on embossed or monogrammed stationery from a specialty store. You can find decent sets at office supply stores and online.
- **Personalize it.** Not just in the personalized stationery, but in what you actually say. If you're going to see the person in the future, refer to the event and say you're looking forward to it. If the person gave you a silver picture frame, don't simply thank them for it, but add, "I plan on using the frame for a wedding picture in my living room."
- **Even if it's late, send a note.** Don't feel embarrassed. It's better to send a late thank you than none at all.
- **Take your time.** An illegible note won't do much good and neither will one with scratch marks all over it. Use a nice, fine point pen, so the ink won't bleed or smudge. Traditionally, thank you notes are written in cursive. Sometimes this can look like a mess if your cursive is not up-to-par, so use your best judgment and do what you think looks best.
- **Send thanks for trivial things.** Why not? Whether it's for a casual get-together or for a neighbor who collected your mail and watered your plants while you were gone, a hand-written note is the best way to show your appreciation. It may also ensure that you'll get the invite or extra help in the future.

Thank You Note Don'ts

- **Don't exaggerate.** Of course you can rave about a gift, but don't lie about how much you like something. It may be obvious if you say, "The monogrammed soap is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen!" Most likely you've seen better, so simply say, "The monogrammed soap was very thoughtful and will be perfect for the powder room."
- **Don't be stiff.** Show your personality. It's okay to use humor, sarcasm, or idioms to express yourself, as long as you're not insulting the gift. If you're questioning whether you should write a certain joke or phrase, ask yourself if you would say it in-person. Try to maintain the same tone with the person on paper as you would in-person.
- **Don't refer to specific amounts of money.** These might seem like the hardest notes to write, but all you have to say is "I greatly appreciate your generosity. I hope to use the money to..." Just make sure the giver would support your money plans. Your great-aunt may not support a weekend getaway to Vegas, but she would understand a "much-needed vacation."
- **Don't ramble.** You may want to go on and on about how your new job is going, a family friend you ran into, or that new movie you saw, but don't. Be concise. It is a thank-you note after all, so stick to the thanks. If you feel like writing more, write them a separate note to fill them in on your life and see how they're doing.
- **Don't assume an in-person thanks is enough.** If a person went to the trouble of hosting a party or purchasing a gift for you, you surely can take the time to write a note. Make sure to thank the host of a party in-person, but since your thanks may get lost in the excitement, a note is a great addition.