

Jefferson County Meat Animal Project sale celebrates 50 years

By Alexa Zoellner azoellner@dailyunion.com | Posted: Tuesday, July 12, 2016 9:30 am

JEFFERSON — Jefferson County's 50th annual 4-H Meat Animal Project (MAP) sale took place Saturday afternoon, bringing in about \$369,000 in total gavel earnings.

The event took place in the specially dedicated MAP building at the Jefferson County Fair Park and included the sale of beef, swine and lamb.

"It went good," Jeremy Chwala, a member of the Meat Animal Project Committee and an organizer of the sale, said. "We had a good sale. Total dollars were down, but we were also down on animals. I think the prices were fairly decent."

While the prices of the 216 animals sold were good, he said the gross profit was down at least \$50,000 from last year's sale.

"The main effect it (the number of animals being down) would have is the kids have to have more commission taken out," Chwala said. "Our budget for the sale doesn't change by the amount of animals, but we need to take more commission to cover our sale expenses.

"Last year our commission was 3.5 percent," he noted. "This year we had to bump it to 4 percent."

The MAP sale costs between \$10,000 and \$13,000 to put on and is coordinated entirely by the MAP Committee, which consists of a group of adults and high school-aged youth.

There are two adult and two high school representatives on the committee for each species. Participants range from third-graders to "13th-graders," or youth who are one year out of high school.

"Our main goal is to try to teach the kids about record keeping and how to produce a quality animal to send to market," Chwala said. "The kids have to do educational stuff and get point cards.

"For the most part, it's a 365-day project with educational stuff and record books," he added.



MAP SALE

MAP SALE — The Meat Animal Project (MAP) Sale took place in the Saturday afternoon. For more photos, [click here](#). — Daily Union photos by Alexa Zoellner and Pam Chickering Wilson.

Then they have to meet certain requirements in order to sell.”

The beef project typically begins in December and runs through fair week. The lamb and swine projects start in April.

Over the past 50 years, things have changed, Chwala said.

“I was in the project 25 years ago — everything (has) changed a lot (since then),” Chwala commented. “There’s a lot more buyers, there’s a lot more kids. It costs more to put the sale on.

“Every year the animal market industry standards change (and) so do our animals,” he added.

“The way they want animals to look for market has changed.”

Another new change this year was the combination of the MAP sale and the Miss Q milk quality competition and the Dairy Honors Auction.

“The committee felt that the dairy sale was confusing to the buyers that were coming to buy at the MAP sale,” Chwala said. “The Dairy Honors Auction) was going on when buyers were trying to check in for our sale. So we thought it would be advantageous to combine the two sales and have more buyers.

“A lot of the dairy kids don’t know that they’re going to be in the dairy sale until late Friday afternoon,” he continued. “Then they have to try to get buyers lined up to come. This way the buyers are pretty much already there.”

Chwala said he has heard mixed reviews on the combination of the two events and, currently, is not sure if the same thing will be done in future years.