



Companion and Specialty Animals

Georgia 4-H Project Achievement empowers young people with skills for a lifetime. Through a competitive process, students explore their interests, unleash their creativity, share their work, and celebrate their achievements! This guide provides 9th—12th graders with examples for getting started with their project exploration.

Description of Project:

4-H'ers may explore the care of companion and specialty animals, traditionally kept as pets, including feeding, handling, grooming, training, and veterinary care. Through this project 4-H'ers may:

- identify companion or specialty animals (kept primarily for company or protection) as opposed to working animals, livestock, or laboratory animals (kept primarily for performance, agricultural value, or research)
- learn about and acquire skills for selecting, breeding, feeding, caring for, housing, handling, training, grooming, managing, owning, and exhibiting
- acquire knowledge about the history, breeds, characteristics, and identification of companion and specialty animals
- discover the current and historic roles, environmental and societal impacts, and therapeutic benefits of companion and specialty animals
- explore equipment and safety protocols associated with animal care
- understand the role of veterinary care, as well as basic first aid and treatment for animal ailments not requiring veterinary attention
- explore careers related to companion and specialty animals

Overview:

- ⇒ Choose project
- ⇒ Develop skills in:
 - Project
 - Leadership
 - Service
- ⇒ Prepare portfolio for work completed from January 1—December 31
- ⇒ Prepare presentation
- ⇒ Practice
- ⇒ Compete
- ⇒ Reflect

Examples of Project Development Experiences:

- Attend UGA's VetCAMP, UGA College of Veterinary Medicine open house, veterinary workshops/clinics, animal specialty camps, field days, animal shows, etc.
- Tour animal clinics/hospitals, animal shelters, boarding facilities, pet stores, and zoos
- Acquire and read books, magazines, pamphlets, and online media about animals
- Raise and care for animals; consider showing your animals
- Participate in 4-H judging contests and quiz bowls related to animals
- Interview an animal trainer, tour the training facilities, and discuss training basics and trends
- Shadow someone with a support animal, veterinarian, animal groomer, and/or animal scientist
- Learn to control parasites on your companion or specialty animal
- Observe an animal agility class and make your own course at home

Project Sharing and Helping Examples:

- Hold a pet care demonstration for friends and family
- Organize a group to tour a local veterinary clinic, boarding facility, animal shelter, pet store, zoo, and/or veterinary school
- Assist with a pet adoption day at your local animal shelter
- Organize a group to volunteer at an animal show
- Volunteer at a local animal shelter and/or rabies clinic
- Set up a pet care display at your county fair, library, civic club, festivals, pet stores, etc.
- Organize a pet therapy program for a local nursing home
- Collect food and enrichment/training items for an animal shelter
- Start a Companion and Specialty Animals project club at school
- Coordinate an informational interview with a trainer for a group
- Raise awareness for local animal shelters and the medical needs of the animals there
- Organize a petting zoo or animal exhibit for your community
- Coordinate a volunteer day at an animal rescue center
- Assist an animal rescuer with grooming and health activities
- Demonstrate animal training techniques to others and help in training their companion and specialty animals
- Mentor a younger 4-H'er in the Companion and Specialty Animals project

Recommended Resources:

- georgia4h.org/projectachievement
- vet.uga.edu
- vet.uga.edu/academic/vetcamp
- omicsonline.org/veterinary-science-technology.php
- adoptapet.com
- humanesociety.org
- aspca.org
- avma.org

Special Considerations:

- Live animals and weapons are not permitted in the presentation.
- Showing animals is not a requirement of the project work.
- This project can address any issue related to companion and specialty animals. Members may gain experience in a number of ways, such as assisting with managing a boarding facility, raising or training animals, studying husbandry, etc.
- Exercise safety when handling tools, animals, and equipment.
- Ask permission before photographing, taping, or quoting.
- Safety for you, other staff, and animals is of the utmost importance; include parents/friends in all interactions.

At Competition:

Companion and Specialty Animals Projects may use posters, artifacts, biofacts, and/or technology to support their presentation. The time limit for these presentations is 12 minutes.

Computers, projectors, screens, and other technological devices may be used.

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Sources: Strickland, James and Ronnie Silcox. 1998. *Junior/Senior Project Notebook*. "Dog Care and Training Project."
The University of Georgia CAES. 2016. Project Achievement. <http://www.georgia4h.org/projectachievement/>