

S H E E P : *From the Animal's Point of View*

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There is a lot to know about raising and caring for sheep. Having a sheep is a big responsibility and as its keeper you need to understand its behavior, housing requirements, nutritional needs, and certain aspects of its health care in order to prevent injury and disease. This essential knowledge is the foundation to becoming a successful sheep caretaker. By applying this knowledge carefully and thoughtfully, a caretaker can properly maintain the health and well-being of a sheep and ensure a high quality of life for the animal.

Sheep Care and Responsibility

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The content in this curriculum is designed to introduce youth to sheep behavior, needs and care. Additional emphases include life skills and positive youth development. This is not a guide to raising sheep for market or exhibition.

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Concepts and Vocabulary

- **Care:** Having concern for someone or something, which leads to tending or overseeing that person or thing.
- **Responsibility:** Being accountable for one's actions or behaviors.

Life Skills

Critical thinking, decision making, disease prevention, problem solving, sharing

Subject Links

Science, Language Arts

Overview of Activity

The Sheep Responsibility activity in this unit gives youth several scenarios that involve issues relating to the care and raising of sheep. Youth will need to use the knowledge they have gained from the previous four sheep units as they read the scenarios and answer questions concerning the proper care of sheep. Youth will discuss, reflect upon, and suggest alternative solutions for each scenario.

SHEEP RESPONSIBILITY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Owning an animal is an important responsibility. Domesticated animals need us to provide for their needs, such as a safe and comfortable home, healthy and nutritious food, and proper veterinary care. When we make the commitment to care for one or more animals, these responsibilities become a part of our everyday activities.

Time Required

45 to 60 minutes

Concepts and Vocabulary

Care, responsibility

Life Skills

Critical thinking, decision making, disease prevention, problem solving, sharing

Subject Links

Science, Language Arts

State Content Standards:

Science

- Third Grade:
 - » Investigation and Experimentation: 5e
- Sixth Grade:
 - » Investigation and Experimentation: 7d

Language Arts

- Third Grade:
 - » Reading Comprehension: 2.2, 2.6
- Fourth Grade:
 - » Listening and Speaking Strategies: 1.7, 1.8
- Fifth Grade:
 - » Reading Comprehension: 2.4
 - » Listening and Speaking Strategies: 1.5
- Sixth Grade:
 - » Listening and Speaking Strategies: 1.5
 - » Speaking Applications: 2.5a, 2.5b

Suggested Grouping

Pairs or small groups

Materials Needed

(* = *Materials provided in curriculum*)

- * *Sheep Responsibility Stories*
- Flip chart paper
- Writing instruments (pens, pencils, and/or markers)

Getting Ready

- Divide the youth into small groups.
- Make sure there is enough flip chart paper and pens, pencils, or markers for each group.
- Make enough copies of the *Sheep Responsibility Stories* so each group gets a story.

OPENING QUESTIONS

Have the youth work in pairs or small groups. Pose and discuss the following questions:

1. **What does being a “responsible animal owner” mean to you?** Ask the youth to share their ideas verbally or write their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided.
2. **What types of things do you think a responsible owner should do for his or her animal?** Ask the youth to share their ideas verbally or write their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided.
3. **What types of needs do you think sheep have, and how do you think an owner can best meet these needs?** Ask the youth to share their ideas verbally or write their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided.
4. **Describe some situations where you think it might be hard for an owner to keep up with sheep care responsibilities. What might be the consequences of this?** Ask the youth to share their ideas verbally or write their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided.

PROCEDURE (EXPERIENCING)

Inform the youth that they are going to review a story about youth who are in situations where they have to make decisions about how they are going to care for their sheep.

Give each group one of the *Sheep Responsibility Stories*. Encourage them to discuss their answers to the follow-up questions together and record their ideas on paper. Once the youth have discussed their stories, they will present their ideas to the group as a whole.

SHARING, PROCESSING, AND GENERALIZING

Follow the lines of thinking developed by the youth as they share and compare their thoughts and observations. If necessary, use more targeted questions as prompts to get to particular points. Specific questions might include

1. **Can you think of an example where you have had to make a difficult decision about caring for your sheep? Please describe the situation.**
2. **What are some ways that youth can learn to make the most responsible decisions about caring for their sheep?**
3. **Have you ever known someone who was not a responsible animal owner? What caused you to be concerned about the way that they cared for their animal? What, if anything, did you do in that situation?**

CONCEPTS AND TERMS

At this point, volunteers need to ensure that the concepts of **care** and **responsibility** have been introduced or discovered by the youth. (Note: The goal is to get the youth to develop concepts through their own exploration and define terms using their own words.)

CONCEPT APPLICATION

- **If youth have a project animal or pets**, have them review how they take care of their animals. Would they deem the care they are providing to be sufficient and appropriate for the needs of the animal? If not, what needs to be changed to provide the animal with sufficient and appropriate care?
- **If youth do not have a project animal or pets**, have them observe and review a friend's animal. Make sure to have them ask permission from the owner before observing the animal. Would they deem the care to be sufficient for the needs of the animal? If not, what needs to be changed to provide them with sufficient care?

REFERENCE

- Schoenian, S. 2006. Sheep diseases A – Z. Sheep101 infosite. www.sheep101.info/201/diseasesa-z.html#rabies
- University of Maine, Cooperative Extension. 2006. Are you thinking of raising sheep? University of Maine, Cooperative Extension Bulletin 2186. <http://umaine.edu/publications/2186/>.

SHEEP RESPONSIBILITY STORIES

What Should Steve Do?

Steve just bought a 45-day-old Suffolk lamb named Fuzzy to show at a local exhibition. The exhibition was a few months away, and Steve wanted to make sure both he and Fuzzy were ready for the exhibition, so he decided to join a sheep club to help him prepare for the exhibition. The club met once a week and gave tips on how to raise and show sheep.

Before bringing Fuzzy home, Steve decided to build an enclosure for Fuzzy in his backyard. The enclosure ended up being 15 square feet in size, with a small roofed area as a protection from bad weather. Steve thought this enclosure would be large enough to fit Fuzzy. Since the enclosure is outside, Steve figured that he didn't need to clean out the enclosure.

Steve fed Fuzzy mainly grain until Fuzzy was about four months old. At that age, Steve decided to switch the feed to mainly hay and silage. The sheep club emphasized the importance of observing your sheep every day and keeping track of its behavior. So every day, while caring for Fuzzy, Steve would observe his sheep and jot down notes about its

behaviors. One day while observing Fuzzy's respiration rate, Steve noticed that the rate was a little higher than normal. Steve also noticed that Fuzzy seemed to be hypersensitive to slight changes in the environment, such as noise. Taking a closer look at Fuzzy, Steve also noticed that Fuzzy had raw patches on its wool and was very restless.

The exhibition was coming up in a few weeks, and Steve was really excited. Steve wanted to practice showing his sheep, but when he went to get Fuzzy Steve noticed that the sheep was limping. It looked like Fuzzy was avoiding being on his feet. Taking a closer look, Steve noticed a strong odor coming from Fuzzy. Steve noticed that Fuzzy wasn't eating, so he decided to feed Fuzzy grain. Grain was Fuzzy's favorite food and Steve hoped this would entice Fuzzy to eat. The next day, Steve noticed that Fuzzy had eaten a lot of the grain, but continued to limp. Steve also noticed that Fuzzy's stomach looked larger than normal. Fuzzy also started to "baa" as if in pain. Steve was getting really worried about Fuzzy and wasn't sure what to do. He wanted to call his volunteer leader but was afraid that his leader would take him and Fuzzy out of the exhibition.

Questions for Discussion

1. What, if anything, do you think is wrong with Fuzzy?
2. What do you think could have caused the problem?
3. Is Steve meeting his responsibilities as a sheep owner? Why or why not?
4. Whom could Steve talk to for help with this situation?
5. If you were in Steve's situation, what would you do and why?
6. What could Steve have done to avoid this situation?

What Should Jessica Do?

An 8-year old girl named Jessica recently joined a sheep club and just got her first lamb. She picked a Dorset lamb and named her Dolly. Jessica's parents told her that they would pay for all of Dolly's expenses if Jessica took full responsibility for caring for her new lamb. Jessica was really excited and took extremely good care of Dolly. Jessica would wake up early in the morning to feed Dolly, give her clean water, and clean her shed. After coming back from school, Jessica would take Dolly out and play with her.

Every month, Jessica would attend the sheep club's meetings. The meetings' focuses were to prepare youth for fairs and shows and to give advice on how to win at a fair. Jessica really wanted to take Dolly to a fair but she had to wait a few more months before Dolly would be allowed to enter. So Jessica took all the information she learned from the meetings and did all she could to prepare Dolly to be shown at a fair.

A few months passed and Dolly was finally ready to enter a fair. The day of the fair, Jessica was really excited. There were a lot of people at the fair. The fair had to open up an unused barn to be able to house all the animals. When entering the barn, Jessica felt the cold surrounding air and smelled the dampness of the barn. Jessica had to house Dolly in a pen with

other sheep. There were a lot of feces on the floor and some in the water and feed but Jessica didn't have time to clean it up because she had to go to check in.

After a long day at the fair, Dolly won first place in her category! Jessica was really excited and proud of Dolly. From then on Jessica wanted to enter as many fairs and shows as she could. She would enter Dolly in one show after the other. In just one month, Dolly was entered in 6 different shows! And at each show, Jessica always got a ribbon.

The big fair of the year was coming up, with a grand prize for the winner. A couple of days after going to the pre-qualifying fair and before going to the finals, Jessica noticed that Dolly started having diarrhea. As the days passed, the diarrhea turned from watery to bloody with mucous surrounding it. She also noticed that Dolly wasn't eating as much and was losing weight. The day of the show, as Jessica was loading Dolly onto the trailer, the sheep collapsed on the floor and wouldn't move. When Jessica's parents came out to see what was wrong, they said that Dolly didn't look well and that she shouldn't go to the fair. Jessica thought Dolly had a really good chance of winning, but she is now torn about whether she should take Dolly to the fair or not. What should she do?

Questions for Discussion

1. What, if anything, do you think is wrong with Dolly?
2. What do you think could have caused the problem?
3. Is Jessica meeting her responsibilities as a sheep owner? Why or why not?
4. Whom could Jessica talk to for help with her decision?
5. If you were in Jessica's situation, what would you do and why?
6. What could Jessica have done to avoid this situation?

What Should Joey Do?

Joey just got a sheep for his 12th birthday. The sheep he got was a 2-year-old Hampshire, and he named it Toby. Joey was really excited because he had always wanted a sheep. Because Joey didn't know too much about sheep, he decided to join an online sheep group to communicate with other sheep owners. Joey would go onto the website everyday and post messages on how to best care for his sheep. Many people replied, and he would take the advice he got from others and apply it to his sheep.

Joey learned a lot from the online group and took really good care of Toby. Before going to school, Joey would let Toby out while he would clean his stall. Joey always made sure there was enough water and food for Toby. Then he would give Toby a good rubdown before heading off to school. Occasionally when Toby was especially good, Joey would feed Toby grain, his favorite food.

Joey just found out that he had a family emergency and had to travel to visit his grandparents across the country. Joey was really stressed because he didn't know who could take care of Toby. Finally, Joey was able to convince his neighbors to watch over Toby while he was gone. Joey gave them directions on what to do to take care of Toby. He needed them to get

fresh food and water for Toby every day. Toby's stall needed to be cleaned every day and Toby should be combed every day.

Joey's neighbors were very busy and didn't have much time to take care of Toby. They would come to check up on Toby every other day. They would change his food and water every time they came. The stall didn't look too dirty so they didn't bother cleaning it. They didn't have time to comb Toby but they figured Joey would be back soon and could do it when he got home. One day, they realized they had run out of food for Toby. They searched around the barn and found food in the corner of the barn. So they gave this food to Toby for the remainder of the time they watched him.

Joey was gone for about two weeks. All the time he was gone, Joey would constantly think about Toby and wonder how he was doing. When he finally got home, he was shocked to see Toby. First, the pen was filthy! There was manure everywhere and it was obvious that no one had cleaned it. Toby's wool was matted and full of feces and food. Looking at the food bowl, he saw that the food in it was moldy. There was diarrhea and vomit around the stall. When Joey approached Toby, he was sitting on his side and seemed to be in a lot of pain. When Joey touched Toby's stomach, he yelped. Joey is very upset with his neighbors and doesn't know what is wrong with Toby. What should he do?

Questions for Discussion

1. What, if anything, do you think is wrong with Toby?
2. What do you think could have caused the problems?
3. Is Joey meeting his responsibilities as a sheep owner? Why or why not?
4. Whom could Joey talk to for help with this situation?
5. If you were in Joey's situation, what would you do and why?
6. What could Joey have done to avoid this situation?

What Should Violet Do?

Violet had always wanted a sheep, ever since she was a little girl. She would beg her parents for one every Christmas. But her parents said that she could only get a sheep if she had the money to take care of it. Violet started doing household chores and helping out her neighbors to earn money. She saved up her money for one year. Violet's parents saw her determination and decided to give her a lamb for Christmas.

When Christmas came, Violet was so excited to have gotten a lamb! She got a Southdown and named it Henry. Violet was very good about taking care of Henry every day. Before getting Henry, Violet had already read many books about sheep and how to properly care for them. While taking care of Henry, Violet continued to do chores to earn money to pay for Henry's expenses, which included the purchase of food and water bowls, food, and toys and the construction and maintenance of a shelter.

Violet's favorite band was coming into town, and she really wanted to go to their concert because all of her friends were going. She had saved up money for Henry, but decided to use some of that money to buy a concert ticket. She figured she would be able to earn more money later on.

The next day, Violet set up a play date with Henry and a friend's lamb named Alfred. Henry and Alfred seemed to get along very well and had a great time playing with each other. Violet noticed that Alfred had small scabs around his mouth, but she didn't think much of it.

A few days later, Violet noticed the same scabs around Henry's mouth and eyes. She also saw that Henry's throat area looked larger than normal. Violet also started to notice the same scabs around her own arm. Concerned, Violet took Henry to the vet. The vet said that Henry had a goiter due to the lack of iodine in his diet. He also had sore mouth, which is caused by a virus and is very contagious between animals and humans. The veterinarian told Violet how much it would cost to get Henry treated. Unfortunately, Violet didn't have enough money to treat Henry because she used most of it for the concert ticket. What should Violet do?

Questions for Discussion

1. What should Violet do and why?
2. What do you think could have caused the problems?
3. Is Violet meeting her responsibilities as a sheep owner? Why or why not?
4. What could Violet have done earlier to prevent these problems?
5. If you were in Violet's situation, what would you do and why?
6. What could Violet have done to avoid this situation?

What Should Matt Do?

Matt wants to train his dog Billy to herd sheep. Matt had some money saved up from his allowance, and with the help of his parents he got a sheep named Bob. Matt's older siblings had raised sheep before, so they gave Matt pointers on how to raise Bob. Matt fed Bob twice a day and cleaned his water every day. In the morning, he would clean Bob's stall while letting Bob roam around the field.

After school, Matt would start training Billy to herd Bob. The first day was very chaotic. Billy would not listen to Matt's commands and would chase after Bob. Bob was really stressed from running and constantly trying to get away from Billy. After 30 minutes of doing this, Matt gave up and called it a day. When Matt took Bob back to the barn, Bob just plopped on his bedding and fell fast asleep.

Matt was determined to train Billy, so he decided to practice with Billy and Bob every day for at least 30 minutes. One day Matt found out that there was a dog herding contest coming in a few months, and he wanted Billy to participate in it. Slowly, Billy made progress with his herding skills, but Bob still seemed stressed every time they went out.

Billy had really progressed with his training and it looked like he would be ready for the herding competition. One day while they were training, Matt noticed an unfamiliar dog on the outskirts of the field. All of a sudden, the dog started

running after Bob. Scared, Bob started to run in the other direction. The dog took a swipe at Bob but Billy was able to tackle the dog before it could do any more damage. Billy and the other dog had a little bit of a fight before Matt was able to scare the other dog away. Looking at Billy and Bob, Matt noticed an open wound on Bob's leg and a couple of scratches on Billy. Matt cleaned them both up and let them rest for the remainder of the evening.

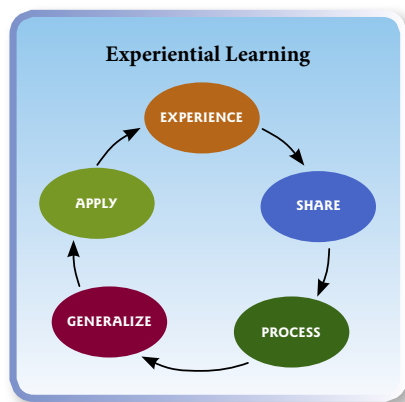
In the morning, Matt went to check up on Billy and Bob. When Matt entered Bob's stall, he noticed Bob vigorously pulling out his wool. Billy seemed fine but Matt was still worried about them. Matt isn't sure if he should go to the vet or not. What should Matt do?

Questions for Discussion

1. What, if anything, do you think is wrong with Bob? What about Billy?
2. What do you think could have caused the problem?
3. Is Matt meeting his responsibilities as a sheep and dog owner? Why or why not?
4. Whom could Matt talk to for help with this situation?
5. If you were in Matt's situation, what would you do and why?
6. What could Matt have done to avoid this situation?

APPENDIX

The activities in this curriculum are designed around inquiry and experiential learning. Inquiry is a learner-centered approach in which individuals are problem solvers investigating questions through active engagement, observing and manipulating objects and phenomena, and acquiring or discovering knowledge. Experiential learning (EL) is a foundational educational strategy used in 4-H. In it, the learner has an experience phase of engagement in an activity, a reflection phase in which observations and reactions are shared and discussed, and an application phase in which new knowledge and skills are applied to a real-life setting. In 4-H, an EL model that uses a 5-step learning cycle is most commonly used. These five steps—Exploration, Sharing, Processing, Generalizing, and Application—are part of a recurring process that helps build learner understanding over time.



For more information on inquiry, EL and the 5-step learning cycle, please visit the University of California's Science, Technology, Environmental Literacy Workgroup's Experiential Learning website, <http://www.experientiallearning.ucdavis.edu/default.shtml>.

GLOSSARY

- **Balanced diet:** Eating the right types of food in the right amounts to maintain a healthy body.
- **Basic nutrients:** Substances that help maintain a healthy body. These include carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals.
- **Care:** Having concern for someone or something, which leads to tending or overseeing that person or thing.
- **Direct contact:** Physical contact between an ill person or animal and a healthy person or animal.
- **Disease:** An abnormal condition that affects the normal function and health of an organism, decreasing the health of that organism.
- **Disease prevention:** Taking the necessary steps to prevent humans and/or animals from getting sick.
- **Disease transmission:** To transfer a disease from one person or animal to another.
- **Environmental needs of humans and sheep:** The things that both humans and sheep need in their home or living area to help them survive and live comfortably.
- **Essential nutrients:** Nutrients that humans and animals must have to live and function properly.
- **Extensive systems:** Systems that don't constrain animals and allow them to perform their natural foraging behavior.
- **Facial recognition:** The ability to identify and remember a face or several faces.
- **Flight zone:** A buffer zone around an animal. Animals will move away from anything they perceive as a threat within the flight zone.
- **Flock (noun)/Flocking (verb):** A group of animals that stay together and feed together.
- **Flocking instinct:** The natural instinct of a group of animals to stick together and follow the actions of the leader of the group.
- **Germs:** A microorganism that has the potential to cause diseases.
- **Health care monitoring:** Closely observing an animal's health, behavior and activity everyday to determine what is normal or abnormal about your animal.
- **Herding:** The act of gathering and keeping a group of animals together.
- **Herding strategies:** Different techniques that ranchers use to gather and control a group of animals.
- **Illness:** Being unhealthy or in poor health.
- **Indirect contact:** When an uninfected person or animal touches the contaminated surface (e.g., table top) of an inanimate object (e.g., food dish).
- **Intensive systems:** Systems where animals are confined to a smaller area of land and where feeding is more controlled.
- **Life stages of sheep:** Sheep are categorized in different stages of development or life stages. Sheep at each life stage have different nutritional requirements to grow and stay healthy.
- **Predator:** An animal that hunts and eats other animals in order to survive.
- **Preventive health care:** The act of maintaining the health of humans and animals by preventing them from catching an illness or disease.
- **Prey:** Animals that are considered food by other animals.
- **Responsibility:** Being accountable for one's actions or behaviors.

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