

4-H Turkey Project

Jacob Hadfield, Extension Assistant Professor

As November approaches, many of us begin thinking about Thanksgiving, whether it's spending time with family or enjoying the delicious meals prepared for the holiday. However, some youth in Juab County and across the state have been focusing on Thanksgiving for a different reason: the 4-H Turkey Project.

The 4-H Turkey Project provides youth with the opportunity to receive turkey poults in early July and raise them until they are fully grown in November. Once mature, the turkeys are harvested, and the processed birds are returned to the participants to sell to customers for Thanksgiving. This project gives youth firsthand experience in raising an animal for meat production.

In addition to the harvest, there is an option to participate in the Utah Turkey Show, where youth select their best hen and tom to be judged. The turkeys are evaluated based on their carcass quality, and any bird that places in the top 50 (for both toms and hens) qualifies for auction, offering the potential for higher earnings compared to standard sales.

This program is popular among youth throughout the state. One of the most appreciated aspects is that all participants receive poults from the same supplier, ensuring the birds are genetically similar. This creates a level playing field, emphasizing the importance of care and husbandry skills.

Although only a few youth in the county currently participate in the program, we would love to see more involvement. If you are interested in joining the project next year, please contact Jake Hadfield or Kacie Sorensen at the Extension Office.

Happy Thanksgiving!