



## IN THE CLASSROOM

### Tips for buying your livestock project

As the summer show season wraps up and fall approaches, the hunt for your next project begins. It's important to set goals and establish what you want to accomplish prior to beginning the selection process. Once you have decided what your goal is for the year, it's time to start looking!

Historically, traditional methods of purchasing animals have been through private-treaty sales, live auctions or pasture bid-off sales. During the past few years, however, a new trend has been established, and many animals are sold through online sales. For some new to this experience, this may seem foreign while others who were used to visiting a location and picking out their livestock projects may be overwhelmed by all the picture and video buying from your computer. No matter the method you choose nor the type of sale you buy from, there are some key factors that should help make your buying experience more successful.

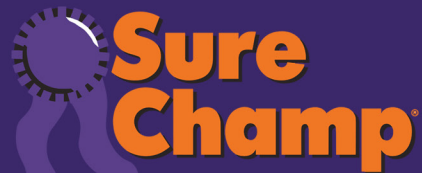
**First, establish a relationship with a reputable breeder.** No matter how you plan to purchase your project, getting to know the breeder and feeling comfortable with their program is important. If you reach out and they are not willing to spend time with you and answer questions during the selection process, this should be your first sign to look elsewhere. Most breeders want livestock to be successful and will appreciate the effort you put into selection, and see it as a direct correlation to the job you will do raising them.

**Go look at the livestock you buy.** It is easy to become complacent anymore with pictures and videos and stay home and buy livestock off of a computer. While these resources may be a great tool to help locate livestock you are interested in, nothing compares to looking at them in real life! Different angles in which pictures or videos are shot may change their appearance and their actual size may be hard to determine. If you are unable to look at the livestock, do not purchase livestock sight unseen without visiting with the seller.

**Make sure you ask questions** whether you look at them in person or in a video. It is important to understand the genetics behind the livestock you buy. Whether you are familiar with them or not, the breeder can give you information regarding their genetics, giving you the best insight as how the animal will develop outside of what you see phenotypically. Secondly, ask questions regarding the vaccination and deworming history. By the time you purchase your project they should have had several rounds of vaccines and been dewormed at least once. This is imperative to keeping your project healthy as you take them home and expose them to new animals and places. Additionally, ask questions about the nutritional program they have been on as well as how they think the animals should continue to be fed. This will help you develop a long-term nutritional plan.

**Buy animals whose age, maturity and weight fit the end-point show you are purchasing for.** It does not matter how good they are if they are not meant to show when you need them to. Asking the breeder for insight will also help in determining what the correct endpoint will be for the animal you are looking at. Many times they will know from previous experience watching their animals grow on how to project them.

**For additional livestock nutrition and stock show resources, visit [surechamp.com/blog](http://surechamp.com/blog).**



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**Establish a budget and be realistic about what you are looking at and what they will bring on sale day.** Try to focus on looking at livestock that will fit into your budget. While this can be hard to do most of the time, the breeder should direct you to the animals that best fit in the parameters of your budget. Be patient. There are a lot of livestock that sell and a lot of opportunities to find a great project. You don't always have to buy the first one you see.

Once you have purchased your project, bringing them home becomes very important. **Plan ahead to make this stressful transition as smooth as possible for your animal. It is important not to change their diet initially.** Try to maintain the same program they have been on. If a nutritional change is needed, transition them on the feed they have been eating and then begin to slowly make changes after you get them home. Make sure they always have access to clean, fresh water. This will keep their stomach(es) and digestive system functioning correctly and ultimately increase their feed intake. You may also consider using a probiotic to stimulate appetite. It is critical to pay close attention to the health of your new project as the temperatures change from season to season. Spending time watching their behavior to catch illness at an early stage will pay dividends. Be aggressive if you see them start to show any signs of illness. Communicate with your parents, an advisor or veterinarian to get a plan how to treat them as soon as you notice signs of sickness. The faster you respond the faster they will recover.

A successful project is a well-planned project. Plan ahead and prepare accordingly to find a project that will fit the show you are trying to end at as well as the goals you want to accomplish.