

Intro to Ag Chicken SAE

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Agricultural Education Program

College of Agricultural,

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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Rich McCabe
Unity FFA Chapter- Tolono
mccaber@unity.k12.il.us

Intro to Ag Chicken SAE

The problem I have with starting students on their SAEs is that very few can drive or have a job that is going on during the school year, and few also come from an agricultural background where they would have animals or something that they can keep records on. I teach recordkeeping with the ITCS practice problems and then after the first of the year they open their own book. Students can choose any project provided they will have work during the school year on multiple days a week. I grade the record books as a part of class.

For students without practical SAE projects I provide them the opportunity to start one at school. I buy 1-2 broiler chickens per student and all of the feed and equipment. The students take care of the birds during class at the beginning and then on their own time from then on out. Students rotate coming in to check on them on weekends. The chickens are in our old greenhouse which is unlocked. After 10-12 weeks the birds are full size and ready for slaughter. **We slaughter them IN CLASS.** Both my principal and assistant principal hunt and they are totally on board. I also have taken them to Arthur where they have a poultry processing plant and allow us to tour the facility while they are killing our birds.

I consider the chickens and feed a short term loan from the FFA to the student and when the chickens are slaughtered the students pay their share of the expenses. If they don't want to take them home or sell their birds we keep them at school and have a cookout in class.

I also have all students open a greenhouse record book and they bring their own seeds in, start them in the greenhouse and then can sell them as part of our plant sale or plant at home to exhibit at the FFA Fair.

Pros

- Complete SAE project start to finish in 12 weeks
- Students get all phases of food production from hatch to table.
- Get non ag kids closer to agriculture

Cons

- Plucking feathers is not fun after the first bird
- Takes a few days to finish if confined to one class period.
- Poultry processing facilities are few and far between



Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you of some upcoming activities your son or daughter will be involved with in agriculture class. One of the units we explore in Introduction to Agriculture class is business recordkeeping. Since many students in this class either are too young to have full-time employment, or do not come from an agricultural background, we provide students with opportunities to keep records on an agricultural project. One opportunity allows students to grow plants in the school greenhouse, care for them, and then either sell them or keep them for home use. Students who further their plant project at home will have the opportunity to exhibit their project at the summer FFA fair in Melvin. The fair will be Monday July 5, and students with appropriate projects will earn money for their entry.

Some students in class also raised broiler chickens as part of their recordkeeping project. These chickens are now ready to be processed. Students will be involved in all facets of the processing during school in the coming days. Please indicate below that you have received this notice, and whether you approve of your son/daughter participating in this activity. If you do not wish for your child to be involved he or she will be given an alternative assignment. Successful completion of that assignment will result in no grade reduction.

Sincerely,

Rich McCabe
Unity High School
Agriculture Teacher

_____ My son/daughter_____ has my permission to participate in the Introduction to Agriculture poultry processing activities.

_____ My son/daughter_____ does not have my permission to participate in the Introduction to Agriculture poultry processing activities. Please provide him/her with an alternate activity.

Parent Signature