Wisconsin Youth Livestock Program

Animal Sciences

Animal Observation – How do you care for your animal

Objectives:
Understanding animal behaviours

Develop strategies to care for animals

Life Skills:
Critical thinking
Concern for others

Grade Levels or Audiences:
3-5th graders

Time or Length of Experience:
5-10 minutes

Supplies Needed:
Animal, Handout, Writing Utensil

Developed by:
Bernadette (Bernie) O'Rourke, Extension Youth Livestock Specialist; Wisconsin Youth Livestock Program Manager

Photo credit: Bernadette (Bernie) O'Rourke

BACKGROUND:
Animals tell us a lot of how they feel through their behaviours. Behaviours are the things they do to tell us what they need. Behaviours could include, scratching at the door, indicating that they want to go outside or bawling and running the gate when you come in to feed them, telling us they are hungry. Some animal behaviours are just what they do. For example, cats lick themselves as a way to groom themselves.

ACTIVITY EXPERIENCE:
The task is to pick one or multiple animals to observe. It could be a dog, cat, reptile, steer, goat, etc. You get the idea. Watch what they do for one day and write those reflections in the handout. Feel free to make multiple copies of the handout and observe their actions for a longer period of time.

REFLECT AND APPLY:
Visit with family members and others on what your animal does all day. Does it appear to be healthy and happy through its activities and natural behaviours?   What are other ways you can give the animal good care? More bedding at night for your beef steer when it gets colder outside, perhaps letting the cat go outside more often as it sometimes appears bored.

	Animal 1	Animal 2
How often does it eat? **Note other behaviours. Does it eat a lot? Little bites? Slow? Fast?**		
How often does it drink? **Note other behaviours. Drink slow, fast, messy?**		
How often does the animal poop or pee? **Note other behaviours. Outside, Inside, same place?**		
How often does it lay down? **Note other behaviours. Location, position?**		
How often does it stand up? **Note other behaviours. Moves a lot, favorite activity**		
Other things you saw.		