

How Do I Find a Buyer?

Before you begin writing your letters, it is important to have a plan. Who should I target to receive my buyers' letters? How many should I send out? The fair requires that I send out *two*, but is that really enough? Is it the best I can do?

Suggestions

- Advertisers listed in the Santa Barbara County Fair Livestock Exhibitor Book
- Companies/organizations that support 4-H and FFA at national or regional levels
- Family Doctor
- Family Dentist
- Eye Doctor
- Orthodontist
- Insurance Agent
- Banker
- Grocery Stores – Spencers, Albertsons, Vons, Vallarta
- Restaurants
- Hair Stylists
- Mechanics
- Contractors
- Engineers
- Veterinarian
- Feed Store
- Equipment Dealers
- Car Sales Dealers
- Relatives
- Neighbors
- Friends
- Parents' employers
- Your employer (if you are old enough to have a job)

Your goal is to get as many buyers as possible to the fair auction in order to have more buyers than sellers. **This will increase** the price you will receive for your animal. You should set a goal of sending out *more* than **2 letters**. You should send out *at least 10-25 letters*.

The Buyer's Letter

1. **Know to whom you are writing:** Owner, business, use first and last names. Be personal, rather than using an obvious form letter. When buyers get to the fair this information helps them make a connection with you.
2. **Give them information about your project:** Breed of your animal, name of the animal, target final weight, your feeding program, what you hope to accomplish, goals for the future, especially if you're a graduating senior.
3. **The fair dates:** Let the buyer know the dates and location of the fair, show, and auction. Invite them to the fair to watch you show your animal. Consider including a copy of the Schedule of Events.
4. **Tell them how they can participate as a buyer:** This is important if they are a first time buyer. Providing potential buyers with all the necessary information will make it easier for them to participate. Also be sure to mention what an **add-on** is. And don't assume they know that the animal goes to slaughter, not home with them (this may be covered in a follow-up phone call).
5. **Inform them where they can get more information:** People often have questions that you have not answered in your buyer's letter. This provides a way for them to contact you to get answers to their questions. Include a phone number and e-mail address for yourself, and also to the Youth Fair office in Bartow.
6. **Thank them for previous participation if they are a buyer from a previous year:** If you do this, it may motivate the buyer to come back and bid again. It lets them know you appreciate them taking the time to come to the fair.
7. **Include a picture of you and your animal:** This helps people connect with you, seeing you as a real person and not just someone asking for money.
8. **Hand delivery your letters before the start of fair:** It is best to start mailing and delivering letter a month before the fair. But it's not too late if you haven't done so!

Sample Buyer Letter:

June 15, 2019

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hunter
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Bob Hunter:

Hello, my name is Ricky Bobby. I am 18 years old and a senior at Righetti High School. I have shown livestock for six years now at our local fair.

This year I am raising a Market Steer to show at the 2019 Santa Barbara County Fair. I decided to name him Tuition. I have learned a lot about showing a steer. I found out that it's way different than other large livestock.

Tuition and I will be at the SBCF from Monday, July 8 through Sunday, July 14, 2019. The Fair will be held at the Santa Maria Fairgrounds located at 937 S. Thornburg St, Santa Maria, CA 93458. I would like to invite you to see him on show day, which is on Wednesday, July 10, at 10:00 am, and also bid for him at the Junior Livestock Auction, which is Saturday, July 13, at 3:00 pm. If you are unable to bid on him, another way to show your support is by giving an add-on to the purchase price.

If you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to call me or email me.

Thanks for your support. Tuition and I will look forward to seeing you at the Fair!

Sincerely,

Name
Email
Cell Phone

Sample Buyer Letter:

Steven James
1234 Livestock Road
Santa Maria, Ca 93454
Sjames11@ gmail.com
(805) 100-0000

June 1, 2019

Mr. Jim Phillips
President, Marketing
Phillips Tractor
4206 Gullet Court
Lake Wales, Ca 93454

Dear Mr. Phillips:

My name is Steven James, and this is my first year in the Righetti FFA Chapter. I am 15 years old, attend Righetti High School, and plan to major in Agribusiness after I graduate, hopefully at California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo. My hobbies include soccer, reading, and hiking.

This year I am raising a steer to show at the 2019 Santa Barbara County Fair. His name is Big Beef ("Big" for short). This is my second year raising a steer, but my first year in the Fair because my steer did not make weight last year. I learned a lot from that experience and, now that I know more about proper feeding, I plan to participate in the steer show and auction at the upcoming Fair.

Big and I will be at the SBCF from Monday, July 8 through Sunday, July 14, 2019. The Fair will be held at the Santa Maria Fairgrounds located at 937 S. Thornburg St, Santa Maria, CA 93458. I would like to invite you to see him on show day, which is on Wednesday, July 10, at 10:00 am, and also bid for him at the Junior Livestock Auction, which is Saturday, July 13, at 3:00 pm.

I have enclosed a picture. If you have any questions for me, you can call me or e-mail me (phone number and email address above) and I will be happy to answer your questions. Also, if you have more detailed questions about the Santa Barbara County Fair, you can visit their website. Thank you for your time and attention. Big Beef and I look forward to seeing you at the Fair.

Sincerely,

Steven James

What is wrong with this letter?

Betty Lou Whonotme
1456 Lake Buffum Pass
Fort Meade, Florida 33841

January 5, 2014

Dear Bier at Winn Dixie

I am a sevent grade 4-H youth who is raising a steer for my 4-H project this year. I have been raising steers for 3 years and enjoy learning about animals. I hope to someday become a veternearean and attend the University of Florida. I have learned a lot about steers from my 4-H animal project.

On Thursday, January 30 at 6 p.m. their will be a Steer Show at the polk county youth fair. The livestock sale will be held Friday night and I hope you will attend that too.

In fact, I will be very disappointed if you do not attend and bid on my steer. My family has been shopping at your store for years and has spent a lot of money. We will stop supporting you store if you do not support me, and you don't want that because you have stores going out of bizness anyway. If someone else outbids you for my steer, you can always give me an add on amount. A big store like yours should give me at least \$100.

I will be looking for you to buy my steer at the fair.

Sincerely,

Betty Lou Whonotme

“Do’s and Don’ts” of Market Animal Buyer Letters

Do’s	Don’ts
Write a rough draft and get it proofread	Send your letter without having it proofread
Get the name, position title, and proper address of the contact	Send a letter “To Whom It May Concern” or “Dear Buyer”
Be personal, warm, and inviting	Use a cold, short, “cookie-cutter” letter
Use proper greeting, such as “Dear Mrs. Jones”	Address the person by first name, such as “Dear Bob”
Check your spelling	Depend only on the <i>Spell Check</i> function
Be gracious and use “Please” and “Thank you”	Make demands, or say “you should”
Use “Sincerely” to close	Close with “Fondly,” “Regards,” or “Yours Truly”
Sign your letter and include contact information	Forget to sign your letter and include contact information

Follow-Up

It is important to keep your buyers informed of you and your project animal’s progress.

Suggestions:

- Thanksgiving Card
- Christmas Card
- Business Cards
- Email of pictures
- Postcard – Picture of you and your animal

Thank You's

It is very important to *thank your buyer* and other people who have helped you with your project throughout the year. The thank you letter is required of you in order to get your sale check, but again, don't just do the minimum. It is especially important for your future years in the market project to thank your buyers, including those who purchase add-ons.

Summary

4-H and FFA livestock projects are more than just raising, feeding, showing, and selling the animal for the most money you can get. The project is about learning life skills and **MARKETING** yourself. The amount of effort and time **YOU** put into it will make all the difference.

