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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Mary Ingram entitled "The Quality of the 1998 Skillathon and Premier Exhibitor Program as Perceived by Participants, Facilitators, 4-H Agents, and FFA Advisors." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Agriculture and Extension Education.

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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

The Quality of the 1998 Skillathon and Premier Exhibitor Program as Perceived by Participants, Facilitators, 4-H Agents, and FFA Advisors

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Science Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Mary Ingram
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my son, Johnny, who provided the inspiration for me to finish this project.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who helped make this degree a reality. I would like to express my appreciation to all of the members of my committee for their support and guidance throughout this five-year process. I would like to say a special thank you to Dr. Roy Lessly for his understanding and patience in 1998 when I was diagnosed with MS and six weeks later my father was diagnosed with lung cancer. Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Randol Waters for taking over as my graduate committee chairman after Dr. Lessly retired. Dr. Dwight Loveday was also invaluable for his suggestions and guidance throughout the study.

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Abstract

This study primarily focused on the skillathon's ability to meet educational objectives as well as an evaluation of the award recognition for participants. The specific objectives of the study were to: (1) Characterize the participants of the 1998 Beef and Sheep skillathons; (2) Characterize the present and past skillathon facilitators; (3) Characterize the 4-H agents and FFA advisors of past and present skillathon participants; (4) To determine the participants' perceptions of how the individual skillathon stations in Tennessee help increase their knowledge of a specific animal industry; (5) Determine the level of which the following skillathon goals are met: a)To provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry; b) To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills; c)To help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication; d) To increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult; e) To develop greater responsibility for completing a project; f) To provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments; (6) Determine the appropriateness of recognition provided for award recipients; and (7) Describe the differences of perceptions regarding skillathon goals between facilitators, 4-H agents and FFA Advisors.

Data Collection

Secondary information was obtained from a survey completed by the 1998 skillathon participants. This information was used to determine the youths' view of the effectiveness of the skillathon. Surveys were also mailed to facilitators and the 4-H agents and the FFA advisors of past and present Premier Exhibitor participants.

Major Findings and Implications

Tennessee livestock exhibitors were excited about the skillathon. Over 90% of beef and sheep participants thought the skillathon was fun and were willing to participate again. The exhibitors listed many reasons for participation, but most competed because they feel the skillathon is a good experience. Livestock exhibitors were not participating in this event just to win awards. The skillathon provided a learning laboratory that is educational and fun for participants.

The skillathon was a hands-on learning laboratory that forced participants to make decisions and solve problems in a pressure type situation. All groups surveyed supported this theory with the majority answering in the upper half of the Likert type scale when rating the skillathon goal to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The participants' negative view of the skillathon's ability to develop leadership skills was in sharp contrast to the adults' high opinion of the skillathon for developing self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication. There was also a marked difference of opinion between the adults and youth surveyed on the skillathon goal to increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult. The adults rated the skillathon much higher than the youth in this category. A negative facilitator/participant relationship seemed to have the greatest impact on these objectives.

The general knowledge of the specific animal industry taught in the skillathon increased the exhibitors' knowledge and understanding of the beef or sheep project they were completing. The skillathon and premier exhibitor provided additional opportunities

to recognize youth for their accomplishments. There was a difference of opinion among the survey groups as to what the actual awards should be. Overall the survey groups were pleased with the Tennessee skillathon's ability to meet the general skillathon goals.

Recommendations for Program Improvement

The skillathon was successful at increasing participants' knowledge of a specific animal industry. The stations should be modified each year in order to keep participant interest and increase the educational value of the skillathon. Many of the learning experiences provided by the skillathon are dependent upon the facilitators. Comments from the facilitator surveys show that not all facilitators understand this part of their task. A short orientation before the skillathon begins explaining the responsibilities of the facilitators could help correct this problem. Participants, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors all expressed a desire to know how every student ranked in the skillathon before EXPO is over. A score sheet could be displayed as soon as possible after the skillathon is closed, with the top ten contestants listed in random order.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Need for the Study

Extension, by its nature, is always changing. Extension is the primary link between university research and the general public. Because of their diverse clientele, Extension must broaden its programming to meet the needs of that clientele. Even the so-called traditional programming has undergone many alterations. Programming must be revised and evaluated continually to remain on the cutting edge.

Agricultural youth projects have remained popular and strong despite the urbanization of America. Traditional programs, such as the youth livestock projects, currently combine educational efforts for improving social skills and teaching of subject matter. Recently, the Ohio State University Extension Service developed a Premier Market Exhibitor award to help balance the educational value of junior livestock shows. This type of project is designed to provide a medium for teaching and developing life skills and project skills.

The Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service has adopted a variation of Ohio's Premier Market Exhibitor competition. The original design for this program included several goals concerning the accomplishments and recognition of participating youth. The Premier Exhibitor Recognition Program currently used in Tennessee has not yet gone under an official evaluation to see if these goals are being met.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of selected aspects of the Premier Exhibitor Recognition Program. The study primarily focused on the

skillathon's ability to meet educational objectives as well as an evaluation of the award recognition for participants. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. Characterize the participants of the 1998 Beef and Sheep skillathons.
2. Characterize the present and past skillathon facilitators.
3. Characterize the 4-H agents and FFA advisors of past and present skillathon participants.
4. Determine the participants' perceptions of how the individual skillathon stations in Tennessee help increase their knowledge of a specific animal industry.
5. Determine the level at which the following skillathon goals were met:
    a) To provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry.
    b) To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
    c) To help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication.
    d) To increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult.
    e) To develop greater responsibility for completing a project.
    f) To provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments.
6. Determine the appropriateness of recognition provided for award recipients.
7. Describe the differences of perceptions regarding skillathon goals between facilitators, 4-H agents and FFA Advisors.

Scope of the Study

The survey groups utilized in this study consist of 1998 skillathon participants, past and present facilitators, and 4-H agents and FFA advisors of past and present skillathon participants. All findings were generalized to those exhibitors who participated in the study in 1998.

Chapter II
Review of Literature

4-H

4-H was not created from a single movement or notion. Instead, 4-H was derived from various events and activities. Boy's Corn Clubs and Girl's Tomato Clubs are the roots of 4-H. Over the years, these clubs made the evolution to the modern 4-H organization.

The National 4-H organization contributes its development to two causes. The original driving force behind the development of this youth organization was the need to improve rural education. Early 4-H clubs tried to add a practical side to education. The second reason involved the need to increase the diffusion of new agricultural technology ("A Clover is," 1998). Early program leaders believed that the parents would also learn from the youth projects. Therefore, early programs were designed to teach the adult as well as the child.

Currently, 4-H programs tend to concentrate on youth development instead of using the organization as a medium to teach adults. A review of literature shows that the National 4-H organization tries to make educational experiences focus on developing positive self-esteem, leadership skills, decision making, citizenship, and other life skills ("A Clover is," 1998). In order to meet the needs of an ever-changing world, 4-H has also broadened its programming opportunities and delivery methods. Although a host of new programs are offered, the more traditional programs still remain popular among America's youth.

The Animal Science Programs

Animal science projects have remained popular and strong despite the urbanization of America. An astounding variety of projects are offered in this group. Historical projects of farm animals have progressed to include rabbits, exotic animals, and countless other species. Skillathons and other leadership activities have also been added. 4-H animal science projects and activities provide more than knowledge of subject matter. These projects provide media for teaching and developing life skills and leadership ability.

Historically a popular program, the animal science activities have been barraged by a multitude of criticisms. Livestock shows have developed a poor public image. Highly publicized cheating incidents weakened public support of many programs. Animal rights activists targeted 4-H animal science programs as a medium that condones and supports cruelty to animals. Public sentiment regarding the practical merit of 4-H animal science programming is a significant challenge.

The 4-H animal science programs go beyond teaching livestock management and selection. The Tennessee 4-H mission statement requires that 4-H activities "provide research-based Extension educational experiences that will stimulate young people to gain knowledge, develop life skills, and form positive attitudes to prepare them to become capable, responsible, and compassionate adults" (Tennessee 4-H Home Page, 1997). Animal science 4-H projects help complete this type of mission by teaching leadership development and life skills.

Youth organizations are placing greater emphasis on leadership training. Therefore, leadership development is an essential piece of the 4-H curriculum

framework. Animal Science projects are designed to give members the opportunity to master leadership skills. Research at New Mexico State University indicates livestock shows and judging contests were among the number one contributors to leadership development in 4-H (Seevers and Dormody, 1995).

Alumni believe that 4-H and other youth organizations contributed to the development of their leadership abilities. Sawi and Smith suggest that many leadership competencies could be gained by interacting with other members and leaders (1997). Skills developed in this manner are immeasurable, but are still a result of 4-H involvement.

Life skills are those skills developed to enable a person to function in life. These skills range from responsibility, record keeping, relating to others, decision making, and countless others. By their nature, 4-H animal science projects are instrumental in developing these skills. A study surveying the impact of 4-H livestock projects determined that 4-H does have a positive effect on the development of life skills. (Beaty, 1993).

Research in New Jersey examined the relationship between participation in 4-H animal science projects and skill development. Participants were asked to rate how influential 4-H was in the development of certain skills. The respondents answered on a five point Likert scale, 1 being no influence and 5 meaning a great deal of influence. The survey results averaged 4.2 overall. The skills most influenced were responsibility and the ability to relate to others (Ward, 1996). Other studies conducted in Ohio and Iowa concur with these findings (Shurson and Lattener, 1991 and Gamon and Dehegedus-

Hetzel, 1994). Therefore, animal science projects are key in developing life skills in participants.

Youth Livestock Shows

Tennessee has traditionally upheld a strong youth livestock program. In 1917, the first fat stock exposition was held at the Nashville Union Stockyards. Both youth and adults were eligible for competition in this first show. Since then, the show has moved to the state fairgrounds to accommodate the growing number of junior exhibitors. In 1972, the market show was combined with the junior beef heifer show to create one of the largest junior beef shows in the southeast ("4-H A Tennessee," 1986).

The Union Stockyards of Nashville was also the home of the first Tennessee Junior Market Lamb Show in 1934. In 1973, this show was combined with the beef show to create the Tennessee Junior Livestock Exposition ("4-H A Tennessee," 1986). Due to the increasing numbers of exhibitors and stock, this show was separated in 1994. The Junior Beef Exposition is held at the state fairgrounds in Nashville each July, while the Sheep Exposition is currently being held at the Hyder-Burks Arena in Cookeville.

Premier Exhibitor Program Recognition

Both the Beef and Sheep livestock projects have expanded to include a Premier Exhibitor award. The Premier Exhibitor award is made up of three divisions. The divisions consist of showmanship, skillathon, and class results. Each division carries equal weight for the award. The award is set up to recognize the exhibitor's accomplishments more so than the accomplishments of the animal.

A review of literature revealed that the purpose of the Premier Exhibitor award is to "provide 4-H and FFA members the opportunity to demonstrate the skills and

knowledge learned and gained by participating in junior livestock projects" ("1998 Guidelines," 1998). This award increases the emphasis on subject matter skills while adding to the livestock show's sense of fairness and the development of life skills ("1998 Guidelines," 1998).

The Premier Exhibitor Program in Tennessee is closely based on the Ohio State Fair Premier Market Exhibitor. The Ohio State University Extension Service added a Premier Market Exhibitor award after its livestock programs were marred by several cheating incidents. Carcass evaluations of the top ten steers at the 1994 Ohio State Fair revealed that seven of these carcasses contained illegal substances and/ or illegal drug residues. Unfortunately, the illegal activities were not limited to the beef show. The grand champion market lamb was also found to contain illegal substances. Further carcass testing in 1995 disqualified many more exhibitors. Many of these families were barred from showing due to failure to observe the correct withdrawal times and/or label instructions for commonly used drugs. The rules forced these exhibitors to be disqualified despite the fact that many of them did not intentionally cheat (Black, Miley, and Loveday, 1997).

While cheating is a problem in junior livestock shows, it appears that there is also a shortage of quality assurance education. The skillathon was created in an effort to increase the educational value of youth livestock projects and bring "real world agriculture" to the showring (Black et al, 1997).

Skillathon

The skillathon is a recent addition to youth livestock programs. A skillathon consists of several different learning stations that all pertain to one species. Each station

is dedicated to a particular activity or subject. The skillathon stations vary among the different age groups. General topics for skillathon stations include, but are not limited to breed identification, selection, feed identification, identification of retail and wholesale cuts, equipment identification, and quality assurance health practices.

The skillathon was created to increase the educational value of livestock projects. While the skillathon does act as an educational tool, it is also an evaluation tool. The skillathon allows 4-H or FFA members the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge in "a fun, hands on " environment (Black et al, 1997). A review of literature discovered six specific educational objectives. P.W. Spike lists these objectives as:

> "1) To provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry, 2) to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, 3) to help members gain self confidence and skill in interpersonal communication, 4) to increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult, 5) to develop greater responsibility for completing a project, and 6) to provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments." (1997)

These objectives are theoretically met in the following ways. Each skillathon focuses on increasing the participants' knowledge of a single animal industry. The facilitators offer the correct answers at the completion of each station to help insure that the skillathon is a learning experience. The participant's relationship with the facilitator helps increase his or her communication skills and gives participants the opportunity to interact one on one with an adult. Finally, the abilities covered by the skillathon are to be reflective of those skills needed by participants to successfully complete their respective livestock projects.

These characteristics allow the skillathon to provide the basis for learning life skills as well as subject matter.

Premier Exhibitor Scoring

The Tennessee Premier Exhibitor Award is made up of three divisions: skillathon, showmanship, and the animal score. Each of these divisions can earn participants up to one hundred points. There are currently five Premier Exhibitor age divisions in Tennessee. Premier Exhibitor awards are presented to the following age groups:

1. Explorer – 4th grade
2. Junior – 5th and 6th grades
3. Junior High – 7th and 8th grades
4. Senior Level I – 9th and 10th grades
5. Senior Level II – 11th and 12th grades

Skillathon

As stated earlier, the skillathon counts as one-third of the Premier Exhibitor score. Scores will be assigned at each of the five skillathon stations. After all the scoring is completed the participants are assigned their Premier Exhibitor points in the following manner:

First = 100 points	Sixth = 90 points
Second = 98 points	Seventh = 88 points
Third = 96 points	Eighth = 86 points
Fourth = 94 points	Ninth = 84 points
Fifth = 92 points	Tenth = 82 points

All others = All other ranked with a decrease of 2 points; minimum score is 50 points. ("1998 Guidelines, 1998)

Showmanship

Showmanship divisions exist for both market and breeding animals. Anyone who has an animal entered in the show is eligible for the showmanship competition.

Showmanship classes should contain 15 to 20 participants. Because of the large number of exhibitors some of the age divisions are split into several classes. Participants are placed into three groups during classes, the blue group (90-100 points), the red group (80-90 points), and the white group (70-80 points). If age divisions are split into more than one class, a final showmanship is necessary. All of the participants who received a blue award will be called back to compete for the final showmanship round within each age division. The top ten showmen in each age division will be scored in the following manner:

First = 100 points	Sixth = 95 points
Second = 99 points	Seventh = 94 points
Third = 98 points	Eighth = 93 points
Fourth = 97 points	Ninth = 92 points
Fifth = 96 points	Tenth = 91 points

("1998 Guidelines," 1996)

Animal Show Score – Market Division

Exhibitors will receive points based on how well their animal places in class. If a participant has more than one animal the score will be based on the highest placing animal. Scores are assigned in the following manner:

First = 100 points	Sixth = 90 points
Second = 98 points	Seventh = 88 points
Third = 96 points	Eighth = 86 points
Fourth = 94 points	Ninth = 84 points
Fifth = 92 points	Tenth = 82 points

All other exhibitors receive 80 points if there is more than 10 in a class.
("1998 Guidelines," 1998)

Animal Show Score – Breeding Ewe

Breeding ewe exhibitor eligibility and scoring is slightly different from the market divisions for the Premier Exhibitor award. Three of the age divisions require that the

participant exhibit a pen of animals instead of a single entry. The divisions are broken down as follows:

> Senior Level II - Exhibition of one "pen of 3" ewes
> Senior Level I –Exhibition of one "pen of 2" ewes
> Junior High – Exhibition of one "pen of 2" ewes
> Junior – Exhibition of one ewe
> Explorer – Exhibition of one ewe
> ("1998 Guidelines," 1998)

The pens are exhibited following each breed show. Pens of mixed breeds will be exhibited at the end of the show. Scoring is split into three groups: the blue group (90-100 points), the red group (80 –90 points), and the white group (70-80 points) (Guidelines 41). Juniors' and Explorers' ewes are assigned points according to this scale during their normal classes. If a Junior or Explorer has more than one ewe, the ewe with the highest score is used for the Premier Exhibitor score ("1998 Guidelines" 1998).

Animal Show Score – Beef Heifer

The beef heifer division is also scored with the blue, red and white group system. However, the participants are only required to exhibit one animal to be eligible for the Premier Exhibitor award. Scores are recorded for each animal during class. If an exhibitor shows more than one animal, the animal with the highest score is used for the animal portion of the premier exhibitor competition ("1998 Guidelines," 1998).

Tie Breakers

In the event of a tie for the Premier Exhibitor award for any age division the following scores will be utilized to break the tie.

1. Skillathon score
2. Showmanship score
3. Skillathon station #1
4. Skillathon station #2

5. Skillathon station #3
6. Skillathon station #4
7. Skillathon station #5
8. Animal Score

("Info on Expo," 1998)

Premier Exhibitor Awards

As stated earlier, the Premier Exhibitor program was created to provide more recognition for the participants' accomplishments. According to Dr. James B. Neel, Professor and Leader of the University of Tennessee Animal Science-Beef, Sheep, and Horse Extension Department, stated that increased recognition for exhibitors was the leading reason for integrating this award into the Tennessee Junior Livestock Program (personal interview, May 15, 1998).

This program also increased the number of awards given to youth in other categories at the Tennessee Junior Livestock Expositions. The top five showmen in each age division are awarded medallions. Medallions are also awarded to the top five scorers in the Skillathon competition. The Premier Exhibitor award list is as follows:

Beef Heifer and Market Steer

Senior Level II - $1,000 Post-High School Scholarship
Senior Level I - $500 Post-High School Scholarship
Junior High - $250 Post-High School Scholarship
Junior - $150 Savings Bond
Explorer - $100 Savings Bond
("Info on Expo," 1998)

Breeding Ewe and Market Lamb

> Senior Level II - $1,000 Huse and Irene Martin Scholarship
> Senior Level I - $500 Huse and Irene Martin Scholarship
> Junior High – Belt Buckle by the Tennessee Sheep Producers Association
> Junior – Trimming Stand by the Tennessee Sheep Producers Association
> Explorer - $100 Gift Certificate for the purchase of next year's market lamb or a breeding sheep.
> ("Info on Expo," 1998)

In addition to these awards, medallions are awarded to the top five individuals in each age division for Premier Exhibitor.

Summary

Youth livestock projects are historically and currently among the most popular curriculum offered in the 4-H and FFA framework. Livestock shows, judging teams and other animal science programs are noted for their ability to develop life skills as well as subject matter skills. However, youth livestock shows have recently been accused of producing champion livestock at the cost of the exhibitor's integrity and education.

To counteract this trend, 4-H and FFA programming has expanded the boundaries of the traditional livestock show. The skillathon was invented to give participants the chance to demonstrate their livestock skills in a hands-on situation. Premier Exhibitor awards shifted attention to the youth's achievement. Together, these new elements have added to the sense of fair, educational competition traditionally associated with youth livestock shows.

Chapter III
Procedures and Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Premier Exhibitor Recognition Program. The majority of the study focused on the skillathon's ability to meet the objectives outlined in previous studies. The study pays specific attention to the educational value, efficiency, and appropriateness of recognition for the Premier Exhibitor program. Furthermore, the study describes any differences in perceptions among facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors.

Design of the Study

Secondary information was obtained from a survey completed by the 1998 skillathon participants. The information was gathered on location at the 1998 beef and sheep skillathons. Participants were asked to voluntarily complete the surveys. This information was used to determine the youths' view of the effectiveness of the skillathon. Surveys were also mailed in September of 1998 to facilitators and the 4-H agents and the FFA advisors of past and present Premier Exhibitor participants. A follow-up letter was sent to non-respondents in December of 1998.

Instrumentation

Participants of the 1998 Beef and Sheep skillathons were asked to voluntarily complete the survey as they finished the skillathon. 129 Beef skillathon participants and 158 Sheep skillathon participants completed the survey.

The participant surveys consisted of open-ended questions concerning personal information. These included data such as age, county of residence, sex, number of hours spent preparing for the skillathon, method of skillathon preparation, and the number of times they have participated in a skillathon. Characterization was also determined by closed-ended questions that asked if they had fun and why they chose to participate in the skillathon. The youth surveys used closed-ended questioning to determine the participants' perceptions about the degree to which skillathon goals were met by the Tennessee skillathon system.

A list of 56 present and past facilitators was obtained from the skillathon program director, Dr. Dwight Loveday. Forty-seven (84%) surveys were returned in time for data analysis. This group was characterized by the number of times they had served as a facilitator. Closed-ended questions determined the degree to which skillathon goals were met by the Tennessee skillathon system.

Surveys were mailed to 70 4-H agents and 65 FFA advisors. Forty-seven (67%) 4-H agents and 25 (39%) FFA advisors returned surveys. These groups were characterized by their answers to open-ended questions concerning the number of times served as a facilitator, and the amount of time and method used to prepare their club members for skillathons. Closed-ended questions determined the degree to which skillathon goals were met by the Tennessee skillathon system.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS for Windows release 8.0. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the findings.

Chapter IV
Presentation of Data and Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study as they relate to the objectives. There are seven sections in this chapter, one for each objective. Section five is divided into two subsections one describing the participants' opinions the other describing the adults' views of the degree to which skillathon goals are being met. Section six is also divided into two subsections of participant and adult viewpoints.

Objective One

The first objective was to characterize the participants of the 1998 Beef and Sheep skillathons. The data collected regarding Beef participants is represented in Table 1 and the data pertaining to sheep participants is located in Table 2. The data collected to characterize participants was:

1. age
2. grade
3. 4-H / FFA membership
4. Gender
5. Number of years at EXPO
6. Number of times participating in skillathon
7. Was this a fun activity
8. Are you willing to participate in the skillathon again
9. Number of hours spent preparing for skillathon
10. Method of preparing for skillathon
11. Reasons for participating in skillathon
12. Main reason for participating in skillathon

Table 1. Selected Characteristics of 1998 Beef Skillathon Participants.

Selected Characteristics of 1998 Beef Skillathon Participants	Number (N = 129)*	Valid Percent
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS		
Age of Participant		
10 years	13	10.1
11 years	14	10.8
12 years	16	12.4
13 years	19	14.7
14 years	18	14.0
15 years	16	12.4
16 years	12	9.3
17 years	16	12.4
18 years	4	3.1
19 years	1	0.8
Grade level of Participants		
4th	11	8.5
$5^{th} – 6^{th}$	33	25.6
$7^{th} – 8^{th}$	36	27.9
$9^{th} – 10^{th}$	30	23.3
$11^{th} – 12^{th}$	19	14.7
4-H / FFA Membership of Participants		
4-H only	96	74.4
FFA only	8	6.2
Both	25	19.4
Gender of Participants		
Male	79	61.2
Female	50	38.8
Participant's Number of Years at Beef EXPO		
3 or less	73	60.3
4 – 6	32	26.5
7 – 9	15	12.4
10	1	0.8
Number of times participating in a Beef Skillathon		
1	52	41.3
2	53	42.1
3	15	11.8
4	3	2.4
5	1	0.8
6	2	1.6

*Total number of participants polled was 129, all questions were not answered by all participants, the valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

Table 1. (Continued)

Selected Characteristics of 1998 *Beef Skillathon Participants*	**Number** *(N = 129)**	**Valid** *Percent*
Did you have fun		
Yes	113	92.6
No	9	7.4
Are you willing to participate in the skillathon again		
Yes	113	97.4
No	3	2.6
Number of hours participant spent preparing for beef skillathon		
1 hour or less	42	44.7
2 hours	16	17.0
3 hours	9	9.5
4 hours	8	8.5
5 hours	2	2.1
6 hours	7	7.4
7 hours	4	4.3
8 hours or more	6	6.5
Prepared for skillathon with the assistance of (check all that apply)		
Self-study	48	37.2
Parents	37	28.7
Volunteer Leader	37	28.7
County Workshop	30	23.3
4-H Agent	51	39.5
Ag Teacher	21	16.3
Another Member	36	27.9
Other	10	7.8
Participated in the skillathon because of (check all that apply)		
Skillathon Awards	39	31.7
Premier Exhibitor Awards	48	39.0
Parent Encouragement	58	47.2
Agent/Teacher Encouragement	51	41.5
A good experience	67	54.5
Other	16	13.0
The main reason I participated in the skillathon was		
Skillathon Awards	20	17.2
Premier Exhibitor Awards	22	19.0
Parent Encouragement	21	18.1
Agent/Teacher Encouragement	21	18.1
A good experience	29	25.0
Other	3	2.6

*Total number of participants polled was 129, all questions were not answered by all participants, the valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

Table 2. Selected Characteristics of 1998 Sheep Skillathon Participants.

Selected Characteristics of 1998 Sheep Skillathon Participants	Number (N = 158)*	Valid Percent
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS		
Age of Participant		
9 years	2	1.3
10 years	16	10.1
11 years	23	14.6
12 years	21	13.3
13 years	32	20.3
14 years	27	17.1
15 years	16	10.1
16 years	7	4.4
17 years	9	5.7
18 years	4	2.5
19 years	1	0.6
Grade level of Participants		
4th	18	11.5
$5^{th} – 6^{th}$	45	28.9
$7^{th} – 8^{th}$	56	35.9
$9^{th} – 10^{th}$	23	14.7
$11^{th} – 12^{th}$	14	9.1
4-H / FFA Membership of Participants		
4-H only	139	88.0
FFA only	3	1.9
Both	16	10.1
Gender of Participants		
Male	70	44.3
Female	88	55.7
Participant's Number of Years at Sheep EXPO		
3 or less	104	68.9
4 – 6	35	23.1
7 – 9	12	8.0
Number of times participating in a Sheep Skillathon		
1	53	34.4
2	40	26.0
3	59	38.3
4	1	0.6
5	0	0.0
6	1	0.6

*Total number of participants polled was 158, all questions were not answered by all participants the valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

Table 2. (Continued)

Selected Characteristics of 1998 Sheep Skillathon Participants	Number (N = 158)*	Valid Percent
Did you have fun		
Yes	142	97.3
No	4	2.7
Are you willing to participate in the skillathon again		
Yes	139	98.6
No	2	1.4
Number of hours participant spent preparing for skillathon		
1 hour or less	41	31.8
2 hours	26	20.2
3 hours	15	11.6
4 hours	12	9.3
5 hours	10	7.8
6 hours	17	13.2
7 hours	1	0.8
8 hours or more	7	5.6
Prepared for skillathon with the assistance of (check all that apply)		
Self-Study	88	55.7
Parents	63	39.9
Volunteer Leader	43	27.2
County Workshop	52	32.9
4-H Agent	59	37.3
Ag Teacher	17	10.8
Another Member	49	31.0
Other	14	8.9
Participated in the skillathon because of (check all that apply)		
Skillathon Awards	60	39.7
Premier Exhibitor Awards	62	41.1
Parent Encouragement	68	45.0
Agent/Teacher Encouragement	71	47.0
A good experience	96	63.6
Other	20	13.3
The main reason I participated in the skillathon was		
Skillathon Awards	15	12.0
Premier Exhibitor Awards	22	17.6
Parent Encouragement	17	13.6
Agent/Teacher Encouragement	23	18.4
A good experience	42	33.3
Other	6	4.8

*Total number of participants polled was 158, all questions were not answered by all participants the valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

Beef Skillathon

The first question in the Beef Skillathon participant survey asked respondents about their age. One hundred twenty-six respondents answered the age question. The respondents reported that 13 (10.1%) were ten years old, 14 (10.8%) were eleven years old, 16 (12.4%) were twelve years old, 19 (14.7%) were thirteen years old, 18 (14.0%) were fourteen years old, 16 (12.4%) were fifteen years old, 12 (9.3%) were sixteen years old, 16 (12.4%) were seventeen years old, 4 (3.1%) were eighteen years old, and 1 (0.8%) was nineteen years old.

All 129 Beef Skillathon participants reported their grade level in the next section. Eleven (8.5%) were explorers or 4th graders, 33 (25.6%) were juniors in the 5th or 6th grades, 36 (27.9%) competed in the junior high division for 7th and 8th grade students, 30 (23.3%) were in the Senior Level I division for 9th and 10th grades, and 19 (14.7%) were Senior Level II or 11th and 12th grade students.

Next beef participants were asked about 4-H and FFA membership. Of the 129 responses were obtained.96 (74.4%) stated they were 4-H members only, 8 (6.2%) replied that they were FFA members only, and 25 (19.4%) reported as being both 4-H and FFA members.

Beef participants responses to the gender question indicated that 79 (61.2%) were male and 50 (38.8%) were female.

The fifth question asked beef participants to state the number of years they had participated in the Tennessee Beef Exposition. Seventy-three (60.3%) reported they had participated for three years or less, 32 (26.5%) had participated between 4-6 years, 15

(12.4%) had participated between 7 – 9 years, and one (0.8%) student had participated for ten years.

The next question asked beef participants how many times they had participated in a beef skillathon. Fifty-two (41.3%) responded that 1998 was the first time they had participated in a beef skillathon, 53 (42.1%) had participated twice, 15 (11.8%) had participated in three beef skillathons, 3 (2.4%) had participated four times, one student (0.8%) had participated in five beef skillathons, and 2 (1.6%) had participated in six beef skillathons.

Students were asked to reply "yes" or "no" to the question, did you have fun? One hundred thirteen (92.6 %) responded yes, they did have fun. Nine (7.4%) responses reported no, they did not have fun participating in the beef skillathon.

Students responded "yes" or "no" if they were willing to participate in a beef skillathon again. One hundred thirteen (97.4%) stated they would be willing to participate in the skillathon again. Three (2.6%) beef participants responded negatively, saying they would not participate again if offered the opportunity.

Beef Skillathon participants were asked how many hours they spent preparing for the skillathon. Choices were 1 hour or less, 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours, 5 hours, 6 hours, 7 hours, or 8 hours or more. Forty-two (44.7%) had spent 1 hour or less preparing, 16 (17.0%) had prepared for 2 hours, 9 (9.6%) prepared for 3 hours, 8 (8.5%) reported 4 hours of preparation, 2 (2.1%) had prepared for 5 hours, 7 (7.4%) prepared for 6 hours, 4 (4.3%) reported 7 hours of preparation, and 6 (6.6%) stated that they had spent 8 hours or more preparing for the beef skillathon.

Methods of preparation for the beef skillathon were the subject of the next question. Students were asked to check all of the methods they used to prepare for the beef skillathon. Choices included: self-study, parents, volunteer leader, county workshop, 4-H Agent, Ag Teacher, another member, or other. Forty-eight (37.2%) replied that they used self study as a method of preparation, 37 (28.7%) stated parents helped them prepare, 37 (28.7%) were assisted by volunteer leaders, 30 (23.3%) had participated in a county workshop, 51 (39.5%) reported their 4-H agents helped, 21 (16.3%) were assisted by FFA advisors, 36 (27.9%) were helped by other members, and 10 (7.8%) stated other methods of preparation for the beef skillathon.

The eleventh question pertaining to characterization asked students to check all of the reason they participated in the beef skillathon. Choices included: skillathon awards, premier exhibitor awards, parent encouragement, agent/teacher encouragement, a good experience, and other. Thirty-nine (31.7%) marked skillathon as a reason for participation, 48 (39.0%) checked premier exhibitor awards, 58 (47.2%) were encouraged by parents, 51 (41.5%) received encouragement from agents and/or teachers, 67 (54.5%) participated in part because they thought it would be a good experience, and 16 (13.0%) stated other reasons for participation.

Students were asked to circle the main reason for participating in the beef skillathon. Choices for question 12 were the same as in question 11. Twenty (17.2%) participated to win skillathon awards, 22 (19.0%) participated to win premier exhibitor awards, 21 (18.1%) participated because of parent encouragement, 21 (18.1%) participated due to encouragement from agents and/or teachers, 29 (25%) participated

because it was a good experience, and 3 (2.6%) had other reasons listed as the main cause of participation.

Sheep Skillathon

The first question in the Sheep Skillathon participant survey asked respondents about their age. One hundred fifty-eight respondents answered the age question. The respondents reported that 2 (1.3%) were nine years old, 16 (10.1%) were ten years old, 23 (14.6%) were eleven years old, 21 (13.3%) were twelve years old, 32 (20.3%) were thirteen years old, 27 (17.1%) were fourteen years old, 16 (10.1%) were fifteen years old, 7 (4.4%) were sixteen years old, 9 (5.7%) were seventeen years old, 4 (2.5%) were eighteen years old, and 1 (0.6%) was nineteen years old.

One hundred fifty-six Sheep Skillathon participants reported their grade level in the next section. Eighteen (11.8%) were explorers or 4th graders, 45 (28.9%) were juniors in the 5th or 6th grades, 56 (35.9%) competed in the junior high division for 7th and 8th grade students, 23 (14.7%) were in the Senior Level I division for 9th and 10th grades, and 14 (9.0%) were Senior Level II or 11th and 12th grade students.

Next Sheep participants were asked about 4-H and FFA membership. One hundred fifty-eight responses were obtained. One hundred thirty-nine (88.0%) stated that they were 4-H members only, 3 (1.9%) replied that they were FFA members only, and 16 (10.1%) reported as being both 4-H and FFA members.

Sheep participants responses to the gender question stated that 70 (44.3%) were male and 88 (55.7%) were female.

The fifth question asked sheep participants to state the number of years they had participated in the Tennessee Sheep Exposition. One hundred four (68.9%) reported they

had participated for three years or less, 35 (23.1%) had participated between 4-6 years, and 12 (8.0%) had participated between 7 – 9 years.

The next question asked sheep participants how many times they had participated in a sheep skillathon. Fifty-three (34.4%) responded that 1998 was the first time they had participated in a sheep skillathon, 40 (26.0%) had participated twice, 59 (38.3%) had participated in three sheep skillathons, 1 (0.6%) had participated four times, no students (0.0%) had participated in five Sheep skillathons, and 1 (0.6%) had participated in six sheep skillathons.

Students were asked to reply yes or no to the question, did you have fun? One hundred forty-two (97.3 %) responded yes, they did have fun. Four (2.7%) responses reported no, they did not have fun participating in the sheep skillathon.

Students responded yes or no if they were willing to participate in a sheep skillathon again. One hundred thirty-nine (98.6%) stated they would be willing to participate in the skillathon again. Two (1.4%) sheep participants responded negatively, saying they would not participate again if offered the opportunity.

Sheep Skillathon participants were asked how many hours they spent preparing for the skillathon. Choices were 1 hour or less, 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours, 5 hours, 6 hours, 7 hours, or 8 hours or more. Forty-one (31.8%) had spent 1 hour or less preparing, 26 (20.2%) had prepared for 2 hours, 15 (11.6%) prepared for 3 hours, 12 (9.3%) reported 4 hours of preparation, 10 (7.8%) had prepared for 5 hours, 17 (13.2%) prepared for 6 hours, 1 (0.8%) reported 7 hours of preparation, and 7 (5.6%) stated that they had spent 8 hours or more preparing for the Sheep skillathon.

Method of preparation for the sheep skillathon was the subject of the next question. Students were asked to check all of the methods they used to prepare for the sheep skillathon. Choices included: self-study, parents, volunteer leader, county workshop, 4-H Agent, Ag Teacher, another member, or other. Eighty-eight (55.7%) replied that they used self study as a method of preparation, 63 (39.9%) stated parents helped them prepare, 43 (27.2%) were assisted by volunteer leaders, 52 (32.9%) had participated in a county workshop, 59 (37.3%) reported their 4-H agents helped, 17 (10.8%) were assisted by FFA advisors, 49 (31.0%) were helped by other members, and 14 (8.9%) stated other methods of preparation for the Sheep skillathon.

The eleventh question pertaining to characterization asked students to check all of the reason they participated in the sheep skillathon. Choices included: skillathon awards, premier exhibitor awards, parent encouragement, agent/teacher encouragement, a good experience, and other. Sixty (39.7%) marked skillathon awards as a reason for participation, 62 (41.1%) checked premier exhibitor awards, 68 (45.0%) were encouraged by parents, 71 (47.0%) received encouragement from agents and/or teachers, 96 (63.6%) participated in part because they thought it would be a good experience, 20 (13.3%) stated other reasons for participation.

Students were asked to circle the main reason for participating in the Sheep skillathon. Choices for question 12 were the same as in question 11. Fifteen (12.0%) participated to win skillathon awards, 22 (17.6%) participated to win premier exhibitor awards, 17 (13.6%) participated because of parent encouragement, 23 (18.4%) participated due to encouragement from agents and/or teachers, 42 (33.3%) participated

because it was a good experience, and 6 (4.8%) had other reasons listed as the main cause of participation.

Objective Two

The second objective called for the characterization of the present and past skillathon facilitators. Forty-seven respondents were characterized. The characterization data collected from skillathon facilitators is represented in Table 3. Skillathon facilitators were characterized by the number of times they had served as a facilitator. Fourteen (29.8%) reported serving once, 17 (36.2%) had served twice, 11 (23.4%) had served three times, 2 (4.3%) had served four times, 1 (2.1%) had served six times, 1 (2.1%) served seven times, and 1 (2.1%) respondent had served nine times as a facilitator.

Objective Three

The third objective was to characterize the 4-H agents and FFA advisors of past and present skillathon participants. Table 4 shows the data gathered for characterization of these respondents. Agents and teachers were characterized by if they had served as a facilitator, methods of student preparation, and average time spent preparing students for skillathons. Forty-seven agents and 25 FFA Advisors responded.

The first question asked how many times the agent/ teacher had participated as a facilitator. Eleven agents (23.4%) and 9 (36.0%) teachers had served as facilitators in a skillathon.

The second question asked agents/teachers how they prepared the students for skillathon. They could choose from the following options: encourage self study, assistance from volunteer leaders, county level skillathon workshops, project group meetings, in school class instruction, or other. Forty-one (87.2%) agents and 18 (75.0%) teachers encouraged

Table 3. Number of Times Individual Served as a Facilitator

Number of Times Served	Number (N=47)	Valid Percent
1	14	29.8%
2	17	36.2%
3	11	23.4%
4	2	4.3%
5	0	0.0%
6	1	2.1%
7	1	2.1%
8	0	0.0%
9	1	2.1%

Table 4. Selected Characteristics of Tennessee 4-H Agents and FFA Advisors.

Selected Characteristics	4-H Agents		FFA Advisors	
	Number (N = 47)*	Valid Percent	Number (N = 47)*	Valid Percent
Number that have participated as a facilitator	11	23.4	9	36.0
HOW STUDENTS ARE PREPARED FOR A SKILLATHON:				
Encourage self study	41	87.2	18	75.0
Assistance from volunteer leaders	29	61.7	6	25.0
County level skillathon workshops	21	44.7	5	20.8
Project group meetings	17	36.2	2	8.3
In school class instruction	3	6.4	18	75.0
Other methods	6	12.8	3	12.5

Average time 4-H agents reported spent on preparing students for skillathon = **9.385 hours**

Average time FFA advisors reported spent on preparing students for skillathon = **10.933 hours**

*Total number of participants polled was 47 4-H agents and 25 FFA Advisors, all questions were not answered by all participants, the valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

students to self-study. Twenty-nine (61.7%) agents and 6 (25.0%) teachers had assistance from volunteer leaders, 21 (44.7 %) agents and 5 (20.8%) teachers put on a county level workshop, 17 (36.2%) agents and 2 (8.3%) teachers prepared students during project group meetings, 3(6.4%) agents and 18 (75%) teachers used in school class instruction for preparation, and 6 (12.8%) agents and 3 (12.5%) teachers used other methods of student preparation.

The third question asks the average time agents and teachers spent preparing students for the skillathon. 4-H agents reported an average of 9.385 hours spent preparing for skillathon. FFA advisors reported an average of 10.933 hours spent preparing students for the skillathons.

Objective Four

The fourth objective was to determine the participants' perceptions of how the individual skillathon stations in Tennessee help increase their knowledge of a specific animal industry. Participants rated each station based on how much it increased their knowledge. Ratings were based on a Likert type scale. Participants chose from the following: None, A Little, Some, Quite A Bit, or A Lot. Table 5 represents the data collected from the beef and sheep participants concerning the individual stations.

The breeds station was the first subject for both beef and sheep participants. Participants rated the station based on how much it increased their knowledge of beef or sheep breeds. Eighteen (14.3%) beef and 9 (5.8%) sheep participants chose "None",

Table 5. 1998 Skillathon Participants Perceptions about Individual Skillathon Stations.

BEEF SKILLATHON PARTICIPANTS	Number*	Valid Percent	SHEEP SKILLATHON PARTICIPANTS	Number*	Valid Percent
The Breeds Station increased my knowledge:			**The Breeds Station increased my knowledge:**		
None	18	14.3	None	9	5.8
A Little	24	19.0	A Little	33	21.2
Some	37	29.4	Some	37	23.7
Quite A Bit	19	15.1	Quite A Bit	40	25.6
A Lot	28	22.2	A Lot	37	23.7
The Equipment Station increased my knowledge:			**The Anatomy and Sheep Judging Station increased my knowledge:**		
None	24	19.4	None	7	4.5
A Little	34	27.4	A Little	17	11.0
Some	27	21.8	Some	47	30.3
Quite A Bit	25	20.2	Quite A Bit	48	31.0
A Lot	14	11.3	A Lot	36	23.2
The Nutrition Station increased my knowledge:			**The Nutrition Station increased my knowledge:**		
None	9	7.2	None	2	1.3
A Little	16	12.8	A Little	22	14.2
Some	36	28.8	Some	48	31.0
Quite A Bit	34	27.2	Quite A Bit	47	30.3
A Lot	30	24.0	A Lot	36	23.2
The Meats Station increased my knowledge:			**The Meats Station increased my knowledge:**		
None	10	7.9	None	5	3.2
A Little	27	21.4	A Little	23	14.6
Some	29	23.0	Some	44	28.0
Quite A Bit	32	25.4	Quite A Bit	44	28.0
A Lot	28	22.2	A Lot	41	26.1
The Beef Quality Assurance Station increased my knowledge:			**The Sheep Quality Assurance Station increased my knowledge:**		
None	23	18.4	None	8	5.2
A Little	23	18.4	A Little	35	22.6
Some	32	25.6	Some	46	29.7
Quite A Bit	26	20.8	Quite A Bit	37	23.9
A Lot	21	16.8	A Lot	29	18.7

*Total number of participants polled was 129 Beef participants and 158 Sheep participants, all questions were not answered by all participants the valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

24 (19.0%) beef and 33 (21.2%) sheep participants chose “A Little”, 37 (29.4%) beef and 37 (23.7%) sheep participants selected “Some”, 19 (15.1%) beef and 40 (25.6%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 28 (22.2%) beef and 37 (23.7%) sheep participants chose “A Lot”.

The beef skillathon participants rated the equipment station next. Participants rated the station based on how much it increased their knowledge of equipment commonly used in the beef industry. Twenty-four (19.4%) beef participants chose “None”, 34 (27.4%) beef participants chose “A Little”, 27 (21.8%) beef participants selected “Some”, 25 (20.2%) beef participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 14 (11.3%) participants chose “A Lot”.

The second station the sheep skillathon participants rated was the anatomy and livestock judging station. Participants rated the station based on how much it increased their knowledge of sheep anatomy and evaluation. Seven (4.5%) sheep participants chose “None”, 17 (11.0%) sheep participants chose “A Little”, 47 (30.3%) sheep participants selected

“Some”, 48 (31.0%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 36 (23.2%) participants chose “A Lot”.

The nutrition station was the third subject for both beef and sheep participants. Participants rated the station based on how much it increased their knowledge of beef or sheep nutrition and feeds. Nine (7.2%) beef and 2 (1.3%) sheep participants chose “None”, 16 (12.8%) beef and 22 (14.2%) sheep participants chose “A Little”, 36 (28.8%) beef and 48 (31.0%) sheep participants selected “Some”, 34 (27.2%) beef and

47 (30.3%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 30 (24.0%) beef and 36 (23.2%) sheep participants chose “A Lot”.

The fourth station for both beef and sheep participants was the meats station. Participants rated the station based on how much it increased their knowledge of beef or sheep wholesale and retail cuts. Ten (7.9%) beef and 5 (3.2%) sheep participants chose “None”, 27 (21.4%) beef and 23 (14.6%) sheep participants chose “A Little”, 29 (23.0%) beef and 44 (28.0%) sheep participants selected “Some”, 32 (25.4%) beef and 44 (28.0%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 28 (22.2%) beef and 41 (26.1%) sheep participants chose “A Lot”.

The Beef/Sheep Quality Assurance station was the final station discussed for the beef and sheep participants. Participants rated the station based on how much it increased their knowledge of beef or sheep routine medical care. Twenty-three (18.4%) beef and 7 (5.2%) sheep participants chose “None”, 23 (18.4%) beef and 35 (22.6%)sheep participants chose “A Little”, 32 (25.6%) beef and 46 (29.7%) sheep participants selected “Some”, 26 (20.8%) beef and 37 (23.9%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 21 (16.8%) beef and 29 (18.7%) sheep participants chose “A Lot”.

Objective Five

The fifth objective of the study was to determine the level at which the current Tennessee Beef and Sheep Skillathons are meeting skillathon goals. The skillathon goals that data was collected for were:

a) To provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry.

b) To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

c) To help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication.

d) To increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult.

e) To develop greater responsibility for completing a project.

f) To provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments

This objective will be described by two different viewpoints, creating two subsections for the fifth objective in this chapter. The first subsection will focus on the youth or participants point of view. The second will describe the adults (facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors) opinions of the level in which goals are being met. Both groups were asked to rate skillathon goal achievement levels on a Likert type scale. Respondents selected from the following: None, A Little, Some, Quite A Bit, and A Lot.

Beef and Sheep Participants

Participants of the 1998 Beef and Sheep skillathons responded to seven questions concerning four of the six skillathon goals stated above and three life skill questions . Respondents were forced to choose from the Likert type scale discussed at the beginning of this section. Table 6 presents the data collected from the participant survey in this area.

Participants were first asked how much the skillathon increased their comfort in communicating with an adult. Thirty-six (28.8%) beef and 32 (20.4%) sheep participants chose "None", 28 (22.4%) beef and 47 (29.9%) sheep participants chose "A Little", 38 (30.4%) beef and 40 (25.5%) sheep participants selected "Some", 14(11.2%) beef and 24

Table 6. 1998 Beef and Sheep Skillathon Participants Perceptions about the Degree to which the Tennessee Skillathon is Meeting its Objectives and Developing Life Skills.

1998 Skillathon Objectives for participants	Beef Participants Number (N = 129)	Valid Percent*	Sheep Participants Number (N = 158)	Valid Percent*
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS				
To increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult.				
None36	28.8	32	20.4	
A Little	28	22.4	47	29.9
Some	38	30.4	40	25.5
Quite A Bit	14	11.2	24	15.3
A Lot	9	7.2	14	8.9
To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.				
None	11	8.8	8	5.1
A Little	25	20.0	27	17.2
Some	36	28.8	60	38.2
Quite A Bit	40	32.0	36	22.9
A Lot	13	10.4	26	16.6
To provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry				
None	7	5.5	2	1.3
A Little	9	7.1	13	8.3
Some	28	22.0	33	21.0
Quite A Bit	39	30.7	55	35.0
A Lot	44	34.6	54	34.4
To develop greater responsibility for completing a project.				
None	14	11.0	10	6.4
A Little	15	11.8	18	11.5
Some	39	30.7	44	28.0
Quite A Bit	33	26.0	41	26.1
A Lot	26	20.5	44	28.0
To provide the opportunity to make new friends				
None	29	23.0	17	10.8
A Little	33	26.2	40	25.5
Some	34	27.0	43	27.4
Quite A Bit	13	10.3	31	19.7
A Lot	17	13.5	26	16.6
To provide the opportunity to help other members				
None	27	21.6	21	13.5
A Little	42	33.6	54	24.6
Some	35	28.0	41	26.3
Quite A Bit	16	12.8	28	17.9
A Lot	5	4.0	12	7.7
To develop leadership skills				
None	62	48.4	48	31.2
A Little	29	22.7	36	23.4
Some	18	14.1	35	22.7
Quite A Bit	11	8.6	20	13.0
A Lot	8	6.3	15	9.7

*All questions were not answered by all participants. The valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

(15.3%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 9 (7.2%) beef and 14 (8.9%) sheep participants chose “A Lot”.

Participants rated the beef and sheep skillathons’ ability to help them develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Eleven (8.8%) beef and 8 (5.1%) sheep

The third question asked participants to rate the skillathon based on its ability to provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry. Seven (5.5%) beef and 2 (1.3%) sheep participants chose “None”, 9 (7.1%) beef and 13 (8.3%) sheep participants chose “A Little”, 28 (22.0%) beef and 33 (21.0%) sheep participants selected “Some”, 39 (30.7%) beef and 55 (35.0%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 44 (34.6%) beef and 54 (34.4%) sheep participants chose “A Lot”.

The fourth question asked participants to rate the skillathons’ ability to help them develop greater responsibility for completing a project. Fourteen (11.0%) beef and 10 (6.4%) sheep participants chose “None”, 15 (11.8%) beef and 18 (11.5%) sheep participants chose “A Little”, 39 (30.7%) beef and 44 (28.0%) sheep participants selected “Some”, 33 (26.0%) beef and 41 (26.1%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 26 (20.5%) beef and 44 (28.0%) sheep participants chose “A Lot”.

The fifth question asked the participants if the skillathon provided the opportunity to make new friends. Twenty-nine (23.0%) beef and 17 (10.8%) sheep participants chose “None”, 33 (26.2%) beef and 40 (25.5%) sheep participants chose “A Little”, 34 (27.0%) beef and 43 (27.4%) sheep participants selected “Some”, 13 (10.3%) beef and 31 (19.7%) sheep participants picked “Quite A Bit”, and 17 (13.5%) beef and 26 (16.6%) sheep participants chose “A Lot”.

Participants ranked the skillathons' ability to provide them with the opportunity to help other members in the sixth question. Twenty-seven (21.6%) beef and 21 (13.5%) sheep participants chose "None", 42 (33.6%) beef and 54 (24.6%) sheep participants chose "A Little", 35 (28.0%) beef and 41 (26.3%) sheep participants selected "Some", 16 (12.8%) beef and 28 (17.9%) sheep participants picked "Quite A Bit", and 5 (4.0%) beef and 12 (7.7%) sheep participants chose "A Lot".

The last question had participants rate the skillathons' ability to develop leadership skills in participants. Sixty-two (48.4%) beef and 48 (31.2%) sheep participants chose "None", 29 (22.7%) beef and 36 (23.4%) sheep participants chose "A Little", 18 (14.1%) beef and 35 (22.7%) sheep participants selected "Some", 11 (8.6%) beef and 20 (13.0%) sheep participants picked "Quite A Bit", and 8 (6.3%) beef and 15 (9.7%) sheep participants chose "A Lot".

Facilitators, 4-H Agents, and FFA advisors

Present and past facilitators, 4-H agents, and Agriculture teachers rated the Tennessee skillathons' ability to meet the six skillathon goals. Respondents were forced to choose from the same Likert type scale the participants used. Results from this survey are represented in Table 7.

The adult respondents first rated the skillathon on its ability to provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry. Zero (0.0%) facilitators, 3 (6.5%) 4-H agents and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors chose "None", zero (0.0)

Table 7. Perceptions of the Level which Skillathon Goals are being Met as Perceived by Facilitators, 4-H Agents, and FFA Advisors

Skillathon Goals	Facilitators		4-H Agents		FFA Advisors	
	Number (N = 47)	Valid Percent*	Number (N = 47)	Valid Percent*	Number (N = 25)	Valid Percent*
To provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry:						
None	0	0.0	3	6.5	0	0.0
A Little	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Some	3	6.4	10	21.7	2	8.7
Quite A Bit	24	51.1	19	41.3	14	60.9
A Lot	20	42.6	14	30.4	7	30.4
To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills						
None	0	0.0	1	2.2	0	0.0
A Little	1	2.1	3	6.5	0	0.0
Some	13	27.7	13	28.3	6	26.1
Quite A Bit	22	46.8	22	47.8	14	60.9
A Lot	11	23.4	7	15.2	3	13.0
To help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication						
None	1	2.1	1	2.2	0	0.0
A Little	3	6.4	4	8.7	0	0.0
Some	9	19.1	16	34.8	3	13.0
Quite A Bit	23	48.9	18	39.1	14	60.9
A Lot	11	23.4	7	15.2	6	26.1
To increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult						
None	1	2.1	2	4.3	0	0.0
A Little	1	2.1	5	10.9	1	4.3
Some	11	23.4	15	32.6	3	13.0
Quite A Bit	23	48.9	17	37.0	14	60.9
A Lot	11	23.4	7	15.2	5	21.7
To develop greater responsibility for completing a project						
None	1	2.1	2	4.3	0	0.0
A Little	6	12.8	7	15.2	1	4.3
Some	10	21.3	10	21.7	6	26.1
Quite A Bit	20	42.6	16	34.8	13	56.5
A Lot	10	21.3	11	23.9	3	13.0
To provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments						
None	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
A Little	1	2.1	4	8.7	1	4.3
Some	8	17.0	11	23.9	2	8.7
Quite A Bit	16	34.0	12	26.1	10	43.5
A Lot	22	46.8	19	41.3	10	43.5

*All questions were not answered by all participants. The valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

facilitators, 4-H agents and FFA advisors picked “A Little”, 3 (6.4%) facilitators, 10 (21.7%) 4-H agents, and 2 (8.7%) selected “Some”, 24 (51.1%) facilitators, 19 (41.3%) 4-H agents, and 14 (60.9%) FFA advisors picked “Quite A Bit”, and 20 (42.6%) facilitators, 14 (30.4%) 4-H agents and 7 (30.4%) FFA advisors chose “A Lot”.

The second question asked the adults to rate the skillathon on its ability to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in participants. Zero (0.0%) facilitators, 1 (2.2%) 4-H agent and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors chose “None”, 1 (2.1%) facilitator, 3 (6.5%) 4-H agents and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors picked “A Little”, 13 (27.7%) facilitators, 13 (28.3%) 4-H agents, and 6 (26.1%) selected “Some”, 22 (46.8%) facilitators, 22 (47.8%) 4-H agents, and 14 (60.9%) FFA advisors picked “Quite A Bit”, and 11 (23.4%) facilitators, 7 (15.2%) 4-H agents and 3 (13.0%) FFA advisors chose “A Lot”.

The third question asked the adults to rate the skillathon on its ability to help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication. One (2.1%) facilitator, 1 (2.2%) 4-H agent and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors chose “None”, 3 (6.4%) facilitators, 4 (8.7%) 4-H agents and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors picked “A Little”, 9 (19.17%) facilitators, 16 (34.8%) 4-H agents, and 3 (13.0%) selected “Some”, 23 (48.9%) facilitators, 18 (39.1%) 4-H agents, and 14 (60.9%) FFA advisors picked “Quite A Bit”, and 11 (23.4%) facilitators, 7 (15.2%) 4-H agents and 6 (26.1%) FFA advisors chose “A Lot”.

The adults rated the skillathon on its ability increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult in the fourth question. One (2.1%) facilitator, 2 (4.3%) 4-H

agents and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors chose “None”, 1 (2.1%) facilitator, 5 (10.9%) 4-H agents and 1 (4.3%) FFA advisor picked “A Little”, 11 (23.4%) facilitators, 15 (32.6%) 4-H agents, and 3 (13.0%) selected “Some”, 23 (48.9%) facilitators, 17 (37.0%) 4-H agents, and 14 (60.9%) FFA advisors picked “Quite A Bit”, and 11 (23.4%) facilitators, 7 (15.2%) 4-H agents and 5 (21.7%) FFA advisors chose “A Lot”.

The fifth question asked the adults to rate the skillathon on its ability to develop greater responsibility for completing a project. One (2.1%) facilitator, 2 (4.3%) 4-H agents and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors chose “None”, 6 (12.8%) facilitators, 7 (15.2%) 4-H agents and 1 (4.3%) FFA advisor picked “A Little”, 10 (21.3%) facilitators, 10 (21.7%) 4-H agents, and 6 (26.1%) selected “Some”, 20 (42.6%) facilitators, 16 (34.8%) 4-H agents, and 13 (56.5%) FFA advisors picked “Quite A Bit”, and 10 (21.3%) facilitators, 11 (23.9%) 4-H agents and 3 (13.0%) FFA advisors chose “A Lot”.

The respondents rated the skillathon on its ability to provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments in the final question. None (0.0%) of the facilitators, 4-H agents and FFA advisors chose “None”, 1 (2.1%) facilitator, 4 (8.7%) 4-H agents and 1 (4.3%) FFA advisor picked “A Little”, 8 (17.0%) facilitators, 11 (23.9%) 4-H agents, and 2 (8.7%) selected “Some”, 16 (34.0%) facilitators, 12 (26.1%) 4-H agents, and 10 (43.5%) FFA advisors picked “Quite A Bit”, and 22 (46.8%) facilitators, 19 (41.3%) 4-H agents and 10 (43.5%) FFA advisors chose “A Lot”.

Objective 6

The sixth objective was to determine the appropriateness of recognition provided for award recipients. This objective was described by two different viewpoints, creating two subsections for the sixth objective in this chapter. The first subsection will focus on the youth or participants point of view. The participant responses are represented in Table 8. The second subsection will describe the adults (facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors) opinions of the type of awards that would be appropriate for each age group. The adult data is shown in Table 9.

Participants

Participants chose yes or no when answering if medallions are appropriate awards for the skillathon. Eighty-four (68.3%) beef and 108 (72.5%) sheep participants responded yes. Thirty-nine (31.7%) beef and 41 (27.5%) sheep participants answered no. The participants who did not feel that medallions were appropriate for skillathon were asked to choose a different type of award. They selected from the following: plaque, trophy, ribbons, equipment, duffel bag, pullover/jacket, gift certificate, or other. Six (15.4%) beef and 6 (15.0%) sheep participants chose plaque, 5 (12.8%) beef and 10 (25.0%) sheep participants picked trophy, 1 (2.6%) beef and 2 (5.0%) sheep participants selected ribbons, 3 (7.7%) beef and 1 (2.5%) sheep participants chose silver trays, 12 (30.7%) beef and 16 (40.0%) sheep participants picked equipment, 6 (15.4%) beef and 3 (7.5%) sheep participants selected duffel bag, and 6 (15.4%) beef and 2 (5.0%) sheep participants chose other types of awards.

Table 8. 1998 Skillathon Participants Perceptions about the Appropriateness of the Awards for the Skillathon and Premier Exhibitor Programs

	Beef Participants		Sheep Participants	
	Number (N = 129)	**Valid Percent***	**Number (N= 158)**	**Valid Percent***
Are Medallions appropriate awards for the skillathon:				
Yes	84	68.3	108	72.5
No	39	31.7	41	27.5
What type of award would be more appropriate for the skillathon:				
Plaque	6	15.4	6	15.0
Trophy	5	12.8	10	25.0
Ribbons	1	2.6	2	5.0
Silver Tray	3	7.7	1	2.5
Equipment	12	30.7	16	40.0
Duffel Bag	6	15.4	3	7.5
Other	6	15.4	2	5.0
Are Medallions appropriate awards for the Premier Exhibitor:				
Yes	71	57.7	98	66.7
No	52	42.3	49	33.3
What type of award would be more appropriate for the Premier Exhibitor:				
Plaque	7	15.5	7	14.9
Trophy	6	13.3	11	23.4
Ribbons	3	6.7	1	2.1
Equipment	7	15.5	13	27.7
Duffel Bag	3	6.7	3	6.4
Pullover/Jacket	11	24.4	7	14.9
Gift Certificate	3	6.7	1	2.1
Other	5	11.2	4	8.5

*Total number of participants polled was 129 Beef participants and 158 Sheep participants, all questions were not answered by all participants.

Table 9. 1998 Facilitators, 4-H Agents, and FFA Advisors Perceptions about the Appropriateness of the Awards for the Skillathon and Premier Exhibitor

	Facilitators		4-H Agents		FFA Advisors	
	Number (47)	Valid Percent*	Number (47)	Valid Percent*	Number (25)	Valid Percent*
What types of awards would be appropriate for the Explorer skillathon (Check all that apply):						
Plaques/Trophies	32	71.1	30	66.7	15	68.2
Trophy Buckle	6	13.3	5	11.1	3	13.6
Silver Tray	0	0	1	2.2	0	0.0
Equipment	25	55.6	24	53.3	6	27.3
Embroidered apparel	15	33.3	14	31.1	6	27.3
Medallions	19	42.2	19	42.2	5	22.7
Scholarship	4	8.9	6	13.3	0	0.0
Other	7	15.6	4	8.9	0	0.0
What types of awards would be appropriate for the Junior skillathon (Check all that apply):						
Plaques/Trophies	29	64.4	26	57.8	13	59.1
Trophy Buckle	8	17.0	8	17.8	3	13.6
Silver Tray	1	2.2	2	4.4	0	0.0
Equipment	29	64.4	25	55.6	10	45.5
Embroidered apparel	16	35.6	12	26.7	5	22.7
Medallions	17	37.8	21	44.7	5	22.7
Scholarship	4	8.9	6	13.3	0	0.0
Other	7	15.6	4	8.9	0	0.0
What types of awards would be appropriate for the Jr. High skillathon (Check all that apply):						
Plaques/Trophies	26	57.8	22	48.9	10	45.5
Trophy Buckle	16	35.6	17	37.8	8	36.4
Silver Tray	4	8.9	5	11.1	1	4.5
Equipment	28	62.2	27	60.0	10	45.5
Embroidered apparel	21	46.7	18	40.0	8	36.4
Medallions	17	37.8	15	33.3	2	9.1
Scholarship	5	11.1	7	15.6	0	0.0
Other	7	15.6	5	11.1	0	0.0
What types of awards would be appropriate for the Senior Level I skillathon (Check all that apply):						
Plaques/Trophies	25	55.6	17	37.8	10	45.5
Trophy Buckle	20	44.4	19	42.2	7	31.8
Silver Tray	9	20.0	11	24.4	1	4.5
Equipment	16	35.6	19	42.2	4	18.2
Embroidered apparel	16	35.6	20	44.4	10	45.5
Medallions	13	28.9	13	28.9	3	13.6
Scholarship	22	48.9	26	57.8	7	31.8
Other	8	17.8	4	8.9	0	0.0
What types of awards would be appropriate for the Senior Level II skillathon (Check all that apply):						
Plaques/Trophies	24	53.3	18	40.0	10	45.5
Trophy Buckle	20	44.4	18	40.0	7	31.8
Silver Tray	13	28.9	11	24.4	2	9.1
Equipment	13	28.9.	15	33.3	5	22.7
Embroidered apparel	16	35.6	18	40.0	6	27.3
Medallions	13	28.9	13	28.9	3	13.6
Scholarship	35	77.8	35	77.8	18	81.8
Other	5	11.1	2	4.4	0	0.0

*All questions were not answered by all participants. The valid percent represents the percent of those responding to each question.

Participants chose yes or no when answering if medallions are appropriate awards for premier exhibitor. Seventy-one (57.7%) beef and 98 (66.7%) sheep participants responded yes. Fifty-two (42.3%) beef and 49 (33.3%) sheep participants answered no.

The participants who did not feel that medallions were appropriate for premier exhibitor were asked to choose a different type of award. They selected from the following: plaque, trophy, ribbons, equipment, duffel bag, pullover/jacket, gift certificate, or other. Seven (15.5%) beef and 7 (14.9%) sheep participants chose plaque, 6 (13.3%) beef and 11 (23.4%) sheep participants picked trophy, 3 (6.7%) beef and 1 (2.1%) sheep participants selected ribbons, 7 (15.5%) beef and 13 (27.5%) sheep participants chose equipment, 3 (6.7%) beef and 3 (6.4%) sheep participants picked duffel bag, 11 (22.4%) beef and 7 (14.9%) sheep participants selected pullover/jacket, 3 (6.7%) beef and 1 (2.1%) sheep participants chose gift certificate, and 5 (11.2%) beef and 4 (8.5%) sheep participants selected other types of awards.

Facilitators, 4-H Agents, and FFA advisors

The adults were asked to check all appropriate awards for Explorers, Juniors, Junior High, Senior Level I, and Senior Level II for the skillathon and premier exhibitor categories. The adults selected from the following: plaques/trophies, trophy buckle, silver tray, equipment, embroidered apparel, medallions, scholarship, and other.

The first question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Explorer skillathon. Thirty-two (71.1%) facilitators, 30 (66.7%) 4-H agents, and 15 (68.2%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 6 (13.3) facilitators, 5 (11.1%) 4-H agents, and 3 (13.6%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, zero (0.0%) facilitators, 1 (2.2%) 4-H agent,

and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 25 (55.6%) facilitators, 24 (53.3%) 4-H agents, and 6 (27.3%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 15 (33.3%) facilitators, 14 (31.1%) 4-H agents and 6 (27.3%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 19 (42.2%) facilitators, 19 (42.2%) 4-H agents, and 5 (22.7%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 4 (8.9%) facilitators, 6 (13.3%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 7 (15.6%) facilitators, 4 (8.9%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The second question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Junior skillathon. Twenty-nine (64.4%) facilitators, 26 (57.8%) 4-H agents, and 13 (59.1%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 8 (17.8) facilitators, 8 (17.8%) 4-H agents, and 3 (13.6%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 1 (2.2%) facilitators, 2 (4.4%) 4-H agent, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 29 (64.4%) facilitators, 25 (55.6%) 4-H agents, and 10 (45.5%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 16 (35.6%) facilitators, 12 (26.7%) 4-H agents and 5 (22.7%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 17 (37.8%) facilitators, 21 (44.7%) 4-H agents, and 5 (22.7%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 4 (8.9%) facilitators, 6 (13.3%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 7 (15.6%) facilitators, 4 (8.9%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The third question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Junior High skillathon. Twenty-six (57.8%) facilitators, 22 (48.9%) 4-H agents, and 10 (45.5%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 16 (35.6%) facilitators, 17 (37.8%) 4-H agents, and 8 (36.4%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 4 (8.9%) facilitators, 5 (11.1%) 4-H agent,

and 1 (4.5%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 28 (62.2%) facilitators, 27 (60.0%) 4-H agents, and 10 (45.5%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 21 (46.7%) facilitators, 18 (40.0%) 4-H agents and 8 (36.4%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 17 (37.8%) facilitators, 15 (33.3%) 4-H agents, and 2 (9.1%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 5 (11.1%) facilitators, 7 (15.6%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 7 (15.6%) facilitators, 5 (11.1%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The fourth question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Senior Level I skillathon. Twenty-five (55.6%) facilitators, 17 (37.8%) 4-H agents, and 10 (45.5%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 20 (44.4) facilitators, 19 (42.2%) 4-H agents, and 7 (31.8%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 9 (20.0%) facilitators, 11 (24.4%) 4-H agent, and 1 (4.5%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 16 (35.6%) facilitators, 19 (42.2%) 4-H agents, and 4 (18.2%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 16 (35.6%) facilitators, 20 (44.4%) 4-H agents and 10 (45.5%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 13 (28.9%) facilitators, 13 (28.9%) 4-H agents, and 3 (13.6%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 22 (48.9%) facilitators, 26 (57.8%) 4-H agents, and 7 (31.8%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 8 (17.8%) facilitators, 4 (8.9%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The fifth question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Senior Level II skillathon. Twenty-four (53.3%) facilitators, 18 (40.0%) 4-H agents, and 10 (45.5%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 20 (44.4) facilitators, 18 (40.0%) 4-H agents, and 7 (31.8%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 13 (28.9%) facilitators, 11

(24.4%) 4-H agent, and 2 (9.1%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 13 (28.9%) facilitators, 15 (33.3%) 4-H agents, and 5 (22.7%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 16 (35.6%) facilitators, 18 (40.0%) 4-H agents and 6 (27.3%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 13 (28.9%) facilitators, 13 (28.9%) 4-H agents, and 3 (13.6%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 35 (77.8%) facilitators, 35 (77.8%) 4-H agents, and 18 (81.8%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 5 (11.1%) facilitators, 2 (4.4%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The sixth question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Explorer premier exhibitor. Thirty-one (70.5%) facilitators, 29 (67.4%) 4-H agents, and 16 (76.2%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 10 (22.7) facilitators, 6 (14.0%) 4-H agents, and 3 (14.3%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 3 (6.8%) facilitators, 1 (2.3%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 28 (63.6%) facilitators, 19 (44.2%) 4-H agents, and 2 (9.5%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 21 (47.7%) facilitators, 12 (27.9%) 4-H agents and 4 (19.0%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 15 (34.1%) facilitators, 20 (46.5%) 4-H agents, and 5 (23.8%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 3 (6.8%) facilitators, 7 (16.3%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 6 (12.8%) facilitators, 9 (20.9%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The seventh question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Junior premier exhibitor. Twenty-five (56.8%) facilitators, 24 (55.8%) 4-H agents, and 14 (66.7%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 19 (43.2) facilitators, 11 (25.6%) 4-H agents, and 4 (19.0%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 8 (12.8%) facilitators, 2

(4.7%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 28 (63.6%) facilitators, 23 (53.5%) 4-H agents, and 7 (33.3%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 21 (47.7%) facilitators, 14 (32.6%) 4-H agents and 4 (19.0%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 17 (38.6%) facilitators, 19 (44.2%) 4-H agents, and 5 (23.8%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 9 (20.5%) facilitators, 7 (16.3%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 6 (13.6%) facilitators, 9 (20.9%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The eighth question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Junior High premier exhibitor. Twenty-five (56.8%) facilitators, 18 (41.9%) 4-H agents, and 12 (57.1%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 19 (43.2%) facilitators, 24 (55.8%) 4-H agents, and 8 (38.1%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 6 (13.6%) facilitators, 7 (16.3%) 4-H agent, and 2 (9.5%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 28 (63.6%) facilitators, 21 (48.8%) 4-H agents, and 9 (42.9%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 21 (47.7%) facilitators, 19 (44.2%) 4-H agents and 6 (28.6%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 17 (38.6%) facilitators, 16 (37.2%) 4-H agents, and 3 (14.3%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 9 (20.5%) facilitators, 12 (27.9%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 6 (13.6%) facilitators, 8 (18.6%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The ninth question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Senior Level I premier exhibitor. Twenty-three (52.3%) facilitators, 15 (34.9%) 4-H agents, and 11 (52.4%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 22 (50.0) facilitators, 18 (41.9%) 4-H agents, and 7 (33.3%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 12 (27.3%) facilitators, 9

(20.9%) 4-H agent, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 14 (31.8%) facilitators, 13 (30.2%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 17 (38.6%) facilitators, 17 (39.5%) 4-H agents and 11 (52.4%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 15 (34.1%) facilitators, 14 (32.6%) 4-H agents, and 2 (9.5%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 34 (77.3%) facilitators, 36 (83.7%) 4-H agents, and 12 (57.1%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 6 (13.6%) facilitators, 6 (14.0%) 4-H agents, and zero (0.0%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

The tenth question asked the adults to select appropriate awards for the Senior Level II premier exhibitor. Twenty-two (50.0%) facilitators, 14 (32.6%) 4-H agents, and 11 (52.4%) FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies, 20 (45.5) facilitators, 15 (34.9%) 4-H agents, and 8 (38.1%) FFA advisors picked trophy buckle, 15 (34.1%) facilitators, 11 (25.6%) 4-H agent, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors selected silver tray, 12 (27.3%) facilitators, 9 (20.9%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors recommended equipment, 15 (34.1%) facilitators, 14 (32.6%) 4-H agents and 6 (28.6%) FFA advisors chose embroidered apparel, 15 (34.1%) facilitators, 15 (34.9%) 4-H agents, and 3 (14.3%) FFA advisors picked medallions, 39 (88.6%) facilitators, 40 (93.0%) 4-H agents, and 18 (85.7%) FFA advisors selected scholarship, and 6 (13.6%) facilitators, 6 (14.0%) 4-H agents, and 1 (4.8%) FFA advisors recommend other types of awards.

Objective Seven

Objective seven describes the differences of perceptions regarding skillathon goals between facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors. Data collected for Table 7 will be used to determine these differences.

The first goal of a skillathon is to provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry. The facilitators and the FFA advisors had over 90% of their responses in the "Quite A Bit" and "A Lot" categories. The 4-H agents only had 71.7% responding in these categories. 21.7% of the 4-H agents rated this goal as "Some" and 6.5% rated it "None". The facilitators and FFA advisors had no one to select the "None" category.

The second goal measured the Tennessee skillathon's ability to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in participants. No substantial differences of opinion were found in regard to this goal. All of the adult groups had the highest number of responses in the "Quite A Bit" category.

The third goal is to help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication. The facilitators and 4-H agents had responses in each of the five categories. The FFA advisors only had responses in the top three categories of "Some", "Quite A Bit", and "A Lot". 87% of the FFA advisors rated the Tennessee skillathon as either "Quite A Bit" or "A Lot" in comparison to the 72.3% of facilitators and 52.2% of 4-H agents responding to the same categories.

The fourth goal is to increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult. Once again, the FFA advisors have rated the Tennessee skillathon's ability to meet this goal much higher than the other groups. Eighty-two and six tenths percent of the FFA advisors ranked the Tennessee skillathon in the top two categories of "Quite A Bit" and "A Lot", while only 72.3% of facilitators and 52.2% of 4-H agents ranked the Tennessee skillathon in these categories.

The fifth goal is to develop greater responsibility for completing a project. No substantial differences of opinion were found in regard to this goal. All of the survey groups chose "Quite A Bit" as the most popular answer.

The sixth and final goal is to provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments. Facilitators and FFA advisors had over 80% of respondents reporting in the top two categories of "Quite A Bit" and "A Lot". 4-H agents had only 67.4% responding in these categories.

Chapter V
Summary of Major Findings

Need for the Study

The Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service has adopted a variation of Ohio's Premier Market Exhibitor competition. This type of project is designed to provide a medium for teaching and developing life skills and project skills. The original design for this program includes several goals concerning the accomplishments and recognition of participating youth. The Premier Exhibitor Recognition Program currently used in Tennessee has not yet undergone an official evaluation to see if these goals are being met.

Purpose of the Study

The study primarily focused on the skillathon's ability to meet educational objectives as well as an evaluation of the award recognition for participants. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Characterize the participants of the 1998 Beef and Sheep skillathons.
2. Characterize the present and past skillathon facilitators.
3. Characterize the 4-H agents and FFA advisors of past and present skillathon participants.
4. To determine the participants' perceptions of how the individual skillathon stations in Tennessee help increase their knowledge of a specific animal industry.
5. Determine the level of which the following skillathon goals are met:
    a) To provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry.

b) To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

c) To help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication.

d) To increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult.

e) To develop greater responsibility for completing a project.

f) To provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments.

6. Determine the appropriateness of recognition provided for award recipients.
7. Describe the differences of perceptions regarding skillathon goals between facilitators, 4-H agents and FFA Advisors.
8.

Review of Literature

A review of literature showed that the National 4-H organization tries to make educational experiences focus on developing positive self-esteem, leadership skills, decision making, citizenship, and other life skills (1). In order to meet the needs of an ever-changing world, 4-H has also broadened its programming opportunities and delivery methods.

Traditional Animal Science projects are designed to give members the opportunity to master leadership skills. Research at New Mexico State University indicates livestock shows and judging contests were among the number one contributors to leadership development in 4-H (Seevers 1995). However, Livestock shows have

developed a poor image. Highly publicized cheating incidents and claims of animal cruelty by animal rights activists have weakened public support of livestock shows.

In order to shift the focus of livestock shows back to education, Tennessee implemented a skillathon and premier exhibitor system similar to Ohio's Premier Market Exhibitor program. The Tennessee Premier Exhibitor Award is made up of three divisions: skillathon, showmanship, and the animal score. Each of these divisions can earn participants up to one hundred points. There are currently five Premier Exhibitor age divisions in Tennessee. Premier Exhibitor awards are presented to the following age groups:

6. Explorer – 4th grade
7. Junior – 5th and 6th grades
8. Junior High – 7th and 8th grades
9. Senior Level I – 9th and 10th grades
10. Senior Level II – 11th and 12th grades

The skillathon portion of the premier exhibitor award allows 4-H or FFA members the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge in "a fun, hands on" environment (Black et al 76). A skillathon focuses on increasing the participants' knowledge of a single animal industry. The facilitators offer the correct answers at the completion of each station to help insure that the skillathon is a learning experience. The participant's relationship with the facilitator helps increase his or her communication skills and gives participants the opportunity to interact one on one with an adult. Finally, the abilities covered by the skillathon are to be reflective of those skills needed by participants to successfully complete their respective livestock projects. These characteristics allow the skillathon to provide the basis for learning life skills as well as subject matter.

Tennessee expanded the boundaries of the traditional livestock program to counteract the claims that youth livestock shows are producing champion livestock at the cost of the exhibitor's integrity and education. Premier Exhibitor and Skillathon awards shifted attention to the youth's achievement. Together, these new additions have added to the sense of fair, educational competition traditionally associated with youth livestock shows.

Methodology

Design of the Study

Secondary data was obtained from a survey completed by the 1998 skillathon participants. These data were used to determine the youths' view of the effectiveness of the skillathon. Surveys were also sent in1998 to facilitators and the 4-H agents and the FFA advisors of past and present Premier Exhibitor participants.

Instrumentation

Participants of the 1998 Beef and Sheep skillathons were asked to voluntarily complete the survey as they finished the skillathon. One hundred twenty-nine Beef skillathon participants and 158 Sheep skillathon participants completed the survey.

A list of 56 present and past facilitators was obtained from the skillathon program director, Dr. Dwight Loveday. Forty-seven (84%) surveys were returned in time for data analysis. This group was characterized by the number of times they had served as a facilitator. Closed-ended questions determined the degree in which skillathon goals were met by the Tennessee skillathon system.

Surveys were mailed to 70 4-H agents and 65 FFA advisors. Forty-seven (67%) 4-H agents and 25 (39%) FFA advisors returned surveys. These groups were

characterized by their answers to open-ended questions concerning the number of times served as a facilitator, and the amount of time and method used to prepare their club members for skillathons. Closed-ended questions determined the degree in which skillathon goals were met by the Tennessee skillathon system.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS for Windows release 8.0. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the findings.

Major Findings

The first objective was to characterize the participants of the 1998 Beef and Sheep skillathons. Ages of the beef participants ranged from 10-19 years of age, the majority of beef participants were between12-15 years old. The larger portion of Sheep participants were between 11 – 15 years, but respondents varied from ages 9 – 19. The greatest percentage of beef and sheep participants was in the Junior High grade level (7th –8th). An overwhelming majority of respondents in both categories were 4-H members only. Males made up the majority of beef respondents, while females outnumbered the males in the sheep participants. The greatest percentage of beef and sheep participants had shown at EXPO for 3 or less years. Beef participants most frequently reported that they had competed in the skillathon twice, while most sheep participants had competed three times. Over 90% of both beef and sheep participants reported that they had fun and were willing to participate in the skillathon again. The largest portion of both sets of participants selected 1 hour or less skillathon preparation time and most used self-study

as a method of preparation. "A good experience" was the reason most beef and sheep participants gave for participating in the skillathon.

The second objective characterized the present and past facilitators according to the number of times they had served as a facilitator. Answers ranged from 1-9. The majority of respondents, however, had served as a facilitator twice.

The third objective characterized the 4-H agents and FFA advisors of past and present skillathon participants. These groups were characterized by the number that had served as a facilitator, method of student preparation for the skillathon, and the average time spent preparing students for the skillathon. Eleven 4-H agents and nine FFA advisors responded that they had served as a skillathon facilitator. The majority of agents chose "encouraged self-study" as the most popular method of student preparation. The FFA advisors selected "encouraged self-study" and "In school class instruction" with the same frequency to form the larger portion of their responses. 4-H agents spent 9.385 hours on average preparing students for the skillathon. The average time reported that FFA advisors spent on preparing students for skillathon was 10.933 hours.

The fourth objective was to determine the participants' perceptions of how the individual skillathon stations in Tennessee help increase the knowledge of a specific animal industry. The majority of beef participants reported the breeds station increased their knowledge "Some", while most sheep participants thought it increased their knowledge "Quite A Bit". The equipment station increased the knowledge of most beef participants "A Little". The anatomy and sheep judging station increased the majority of sheep participants knowledge "Quite A Bit". The largest percentage of beef and sheep

participants reported the nutrition station increased their knowledge "Some". Beef participants most frequently felt the meats station increased their knowledge "Quite A Bit", while the sheep participants were evenly split between "Some" and "Quite A Bit" for the most frequent answer. The Quality Assurance station was most often rated "Some" for increasing knowledge for both beef and sheep participants.

Objective five was to determine the level to which the following skillathon goals were met:

a) To provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry.
b) To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
c) To help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication.
d) To increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult.
e) To develop greater responsibility for completing a project.
f) To provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments.

The majority of beef participants reported that the skillathon enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry "A Lot", while most sheep participants rated it as "Quite A Bit". Critical thinking and problems solving skills are enhanced by the skillathon "Quite A Bit" according to most beef participants and "Some" by the majority of sheep respondents. Most beef participants chose "Some" and the majority of sheep participants selected "A Little" to describe the level that the skillathon increases the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult. The larger portion of beef participants answered that the skillathon helped develop greater responsibility for completing a project "Some". The majority of sheep participants were split between "Some" and "A Lot", with 28% responding in both categories.

In contrast, the majority of the adults surveyed were in agreement on every category. Facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors most frequently recorded "Quite A Bit" when asked to what degree does the skillathon provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry. The majority of adults in each group selected "Quite A Bit" to describe the level in which the skillathon develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills in participants. "Quite A Bit" was also the most popular choice of the adult groups when they rated the skillathon's ability to help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication. The majority of facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors responded "Quite A Bit" when asked about the skillathon's ability to increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult. The largest percentage of all the adult groups reported that the skillathon developed greater responsibility for completing a project "Quite A Bit". Finally, facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors all most frequently recorded "A Lot" when rating the skillathon's ability to provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments.

Objective six was to determine the appropriateness of recognition provided for award recipients. The majority of beef and sheep participants responded yes when asked if the current awards (medallions) were appropriate for the skillathon. The greatest percentage of beef and sheep participants that selected no thought equipment would be a more appropriate award for the skillathon. A smaller percentage, but still the majority of beef and sheep participants chose yes, that medallions were appropriate awards for the premier exhibitor. A pullover/jacket was the most popular choice of beef participants

who answered no, while the majority of sheep participants reported that equipment would be more appropriate for the premier exhibitor.

The adults were surveyed over the appropriateness of awards in a different manner. They chose all awards they thought would be appropriate from a list. The majority of facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies as the most appropriate award for the Explorer skillathon. Plaques/Trophies was the popular choice for 4-H agents and FFA advisors for the Junior skillathon, while the majority of facilitators were split between plaques/trophies and equipment. Most facilitators and 4-H agents picked equipment as the appropriate award for the Junior High skillathon. The greatest percent of FFA advisors were evenly split between plaques/trophies and equipment for the Junior High skillathon awards. Facilitators most frequently picked Plaques/trophies as appropriate awards for the Senior Level I skillathon. Most 4-H agents chose scholarship as an appropriate Senior Level I skillathon award. The majority of FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies and embroidered apparel with the greatest frequency for Senior Level I skillathon awards. The largest percentage of facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors all chose scholarship as the appropriate award for the Senior Level II skillathon.

The majority of facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors chose plaques/trophies with greatest frequency for appropriate awards for the Explorer and Junior premier exhibitors. Most facilitators and 4-H agents chose equipment for the Junior High premier exhibitor. The majority of FFA advisors selected plaques/trophies as the appropriate

Junior High premier exhibitor award. The majority of all three groups chose scholarship as the appropriate award for the Senior Level I and Senior Level II premier exhibitors.

The seventh and final objective was to describe the differences of perceptions regarding skillathon goals between facilitators, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors.

The first goal of a skillathon is to provide a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry. The facilitators and the FFA advisors had over 90% of their responses in the "Quite A Bit" and "A Lot" categories. The 4-H agents only had 71.7% responding in these categories. Twenty-one and seven tenths percent of 4-H agents rated this goal as "Some" and 6.5% rated it "None". The facilitators and FFA advisors had no one to select the "None" category.

The second goal measures the Tennessee skillathon's ability to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in participants. No substantial differences of opinion were found in regard to this goal.

The third goal is to help members gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication. The facilitators and 4-H agents had responses in each of the five categories. The FFA advisors only had responses in the top three categories of "Some", "Quite A Bit", and "A Lot". Eighty-seven percent of the FFA advisors rated the Tennessee skillathon as either "Quite A Bit" or "A Lot" in comparison to the 72.3% of facilitators and 52.2% of 4-H agents responding to the same categories.

The fourth goal is to increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult. Once again, the FFA advisors have rated the Tennessee skillathon's ability to meet this goal much higher than the other groups. Eighty-two and six tenths percent of the

FFA advisors ranked the Tennessee skillathon in the top two categories of "Quite A Bit" and "A Lot", while only 72.3% of facilitators and 52.2% of 4-H agents ranked the Tennessee skillathon in these categories.

The fifth goal is to develop greater responsibility for completing a project. No substantial differences of opinion were found in regard to this goal.

The sixth and final goal is to provide additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments. Facilitators and FFA advisors had over 80% of respondents reporting in the top two categories of "Quite A Bit" and "A Lot". 4-H agents had only 67.4% responding in these categories.

Implications

Tennessee livestock exhibitors are excited about the skillathon. Over 90% of beef and sheep participants thought the skillathon was fun and were willing to participate again. The exhibitors list many reasons for participation, but most compete because they feel the skillathon is a good experience. Livestock exhibitors are not participating in this event just to win awards. A good learning experience was by far the most frequently recorded answer on the open-ended question, "What one thing did you like most about the skillathon?" The skillathon is providing a learning laboratory that is educational and fun for participants.

Participants did have several complaints when asked what they disliked most about the skillathon. Both beef and sheep participants disliked the long lines and the amount of time it took to participate. Those who did not have fun were critical of the long lines and the shortage of facilitators to man the stations. The beef participants

disliked the meats station the most, while the sheep participants reserved most of their negative comments for the wool evaluation.

When asked, does the skillathon provided a learning laboratory that enhance their knowledge of the beef industry, the majority of beef participants marked "A Lot". However, when asked the amount individual skillathon stations increase knowledge, the majority fell below the rating given to the overall in every category. "Some" was the most recorded response when describing the learning value of each individual station. This suggests that the beef participants misconstrued the overall knowledge enhancement provided by the skillathon. The sheep participants also gave the overall skillathon a higher rating than their individual station ratings would indicated. Ironically, the participants felt they learned the most at the stations they disliked the most, meats for beef participants, and wool evaluation for sheep participants. This indicates that exhibitors have a general lack of knowledge concerning the end processing points of the livestock industry. The meats and wool stations go beyond the showring and focus on the end products that make the livestock industry profitable. The stations the exhibitors have the least knowledge about are not necessarily fun, but the most valuable in educational experience.

Although everyone was in agreement that the skillathon is a learning experience, preparation for the skillathon is not a priority of exhibitors, 4-H agents, or FFA advisors. The majority of exhibitors studied one hour or less. Agents and FFA advisors reported that they spent an average of 10 hours preparing exhibitors for the skillathon in a year's time. The most popular method of preparation quoted by all three groups was self-study.

The skillathon is a hands-on learning laboratory that forces participants to make decisions and solve problems in a pressure type situation. All groups surveyed supported this theory with the majority answering in the upper half of the Likert scale when rating the skillathon goal to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The participants' negative view of the skillathon's ability to develop leadership skills is in sharp contrast to the adults' high opinion of the skillathon for developing self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication. The method of participation forces exhibitors to speak and answer questions from the facilitators, possibly increasing communication skills. Correct answers should increase self-confidence, but incorrect answers or entering the competition unprepared could lower an individual's self-confidence.

There was a marked difference of opinion between the adults and youth surveyed on the skillathon goal to increase the comfort of youth in communicating with an adult. The adults all rate this high on the Likert scale while beef participants answered "some" and sheep participants selected "A Little". The success of meeting this goal is dependent upon the facilitator. Comments were made about rudeness and poor explanations from a few facilitators. The lack of personnel and long lines could contribute to short-tempered or frazzled facilitators, resulting in a negative experience between the adult and participant.

The general knowledge of the specific animal industry taught in the skillathon increased the exhibitors' knowledge and understanding of the beef or sheep project they

were completing. This knowledge helped exhibitors to more successfully complete their respective projects as evidenced by the responses from the youth and adult surveys.

The skillathon and premier exhibitor program have provided additional opportunities to recognize youth for their accomplishments. There is a difference of opinion on what the actual awards should be. The youth are content with medallions for both categories, but would like to see the overall winner of the skillathon receive equipment and the overall winner of the premier exhibitor win a pullover/jacket. Medallions were one of the least favorite awards of the adult groups surveyed. Plaques, trophies, and equipment were the popular choices for the skillathon and premier exhibitor for Explorers, Juniors, and Junior High exhibitors. Adults most frequently requested scholarships be given to the Senior Level I and Senior Level II winners. The most notable factor concerning awards was both adults and exhibitors thought the skillathon and premier exhibitor winners deserved equal recognition. The skillathon is 1/3 of the determining factors of the premier exhibitor yet the groups surveyed reported winning the skillathon was as much or more prestigious than the premier exhibitor award.

The facilitators and 4-H agents created the majority of adult respondents. FFA advisors were the smallest of the surveyed populations. The advisors and FFA members exhibited poor participation numbers in this project. As a group the FFA advisors were very impressed with the quality of the skillathon. Facilitators and 4-H agents were slightly more critical of the skillathon's ability to achieve its goals. This indicates that the deeper the population was involved they were more likely to point out the program's flaws.

Recommendations for Program Improvement

The skillathon was successful at increasing participants' knowledge of a specific animal industry. The stations should be modified each year in order to keep participant interest and increase the educational value of the skillathon. The senior level should cover the entire span of the industry. Senior stations could have marketing activities, yield grade questions, feeder calf grading, and buying scenarios using data and pictures. The wool evaluation station is a great example of how the skillathon helps members learn about the whole spectrum of an animal industry, not just the showring. This station was rated one of the highest for increasing knowledge, despite the criticisms of market lamb exhibitors de-emphasizing the importance of wool quality in relation to their project.

Many of the learning experiences provided by the skillathon are dependent upon the facilitators. Students learn when the facilitators correct their mistakes. The rapport between the facilitator and participant is key in accomplishing the skillathon goals of helping members gain self-confidence and increase communication skills. Comments from the facilitator surveys show that not all facilitators understand this part of their task. A short orientation before the skillathon begins explaining the responsibilities of the facilitators could help correct this problem.

Rude or short-tempered facilitators could also be contributed to the complaint participation takes too long. Too few facilitators and a short time frame for participation seem to be the contributing factors to the problem. Lengthening the time frame for participation would help correct this problem.

Surveys indicated the overall winners of the skillathon did not receive enough recognition. Most felt that the skillathon was of equal importance as the premier exhibitor award. Since the exhibitors and adults involved viewed the categories as equals, my recommendations for awards will be the same for each category. Equipment would make popular and useful awards for Explorers, Juniors, and Junior High members. Equipment would not be ideal for senior members. This age group will, for the most part, already have all the equipment needed to complete the project. Scholarships were the popular choice among the adults surveyed for senior winners. If monies are available, scholarships are an appropriate award for this age group. However, the promise of a scholarship is not a motivating factor to a participant who does not plan to go to college or technical school. An award such as a director's chair or some type of embroidered apparel would give the winner recognition continuous recognition for their accomplishments. This type of award in combination with a scholarship would assist in motivation and recruitment for the skillathon and premier exhibitor programs.

Participants, 4-H agents, and FFA advisors all expressed a desire to know how every student ranked in the skillathon before EXPO is over. A list of eleventh place through last could be displayed as soon as possible after the skillathon is closed. The last four digits of participants' social security numbers or pre-assigned contestant numbers could be used to protect the exhibitors' identities. The top ten contestants could be listed in a random order, helping ensure that winners are present for the awards presentation without taking away all the suspense.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study was completed in the early stages of program implementation. A follow-up study should be administered to identify any changes of opinions or program improvements that may emerge later on. Research could also track the accomplishments of participants after they graduate high school and determine if the skillathon and premier exhibitor program had developed life skill in the participants that led to success later in life.

Very few FFA members participated in these events. A study could be conducted to discover the reasons for low FFA participation in livestock shows and the skillathon.

Most of the participants had only shown at EXPO three years or less. Why were there such a low percentage of participants that had shown for 7 – 9 years? Research should focus on why students discontinue participation and if the skillathon and premier exhibitor programs increase the length of time members are willing to participate in the program.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Tennessee Junior Livestock Exposition
Beef Events
Skillathon Evaluation
July 13-16, 1998

1. Your current age ____ 2. Grade you just completed ____ 3. Home County

4. Are you a FFA member____ and/or a 4-H member ____ 5. Male _____ or Female

6. How many years have you shown at Expo?*(include this year)* ___

7. How many times have you participated in the beef skillathon?*(include this year)*

8. How did you prepare for the beef skillathon?(*please check all that apply*)

A. ___ self study (reading a book, for example)
B. ___ parents helped you prepare
C. ___ assistance from volunteer leader
D. ___ skillathon workshops at the county level
E. ___ assistance from 4-H agent
F. ___ assistance from Ag teacher
G. ___ assistance from another 4-H or FFA member
H. ___ other: _____

9. How much time did you spend preparing for the beef skillathon? Include all of the time spent in the preparations you marked in question 8. (*check ONLY one*)

__ None ___ 1 hour ___ 2 hours ___3 hours ___4 hours ___ 5 hours ___ 6 hours ___other

10. How much do you feel that participating in the beef skillathon has improved (*please circle the best answer foreach*)

A. your ability to speak to adults?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
B. your decision making skills?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
C. your general knowledge of the beef industry?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
D. your ability to complete the beef project?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot

To what degree do you feel that your preparation and participation in the beef skillathon has allowed you the opportunity to (*please circle the best answer for each*)

A. make new friends?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
B. help other members prepare for the skillathon?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
C. improve your leadership skills?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot

If so, how?

12. To what degree do you feel that the beef skillathon increased your knowledge in the following subjects: (*please circle the best answer for each*)

A. Identification & Selection of Breeds of Beef	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
B. Identification of Beef Body Parts & Judging	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
C. Identification of Feeds & Nutrition	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
D. Identification of Retail & Wholesale Cuts	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
E. Quality Assurance/Animal Health Practices	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot

13. Why did you participate in the beef skillathon?(*please check all that apply*)

A. ___ skillathon awards
B. ___ to compete for premier exhibitor
C. ___ encouraged by parents
D. ___ encouraged by 4-H agents or Ag teacher
E. ___ I thought it would be a good experience
F. ___ other: _____

13a. Circle the letter (in question 13) of the main reason you participated in the skillathon.

14. Did you have FUN???? ___YES ___ NO
If no, why not?

15. If offered the opportunity, would you participate in the beef skillathon again? __ YES __ NO

16. Medallions are currently awarded to the top 5 individuals in the beef skillathon, do you feel these awards are appropriate?

___ YES ___ NO ***If you checked NO, please check the award you feel would be most appropriate.*****(CHECK ONLY ONE)**

A. ___ plaque
B. ___ trophy
C. ___ ribbons
D. ___ silver trays/platters
E. ___ equipment (show halters, show sticks, combs, etc.)
F. ___ embroidered duffle bag
G. ___ other: _____

17. Medallions are currently awarded to the top 5 individuals in the Premier Exhibitor division, do you feel these awards are appropriate?(please note that the overall winner receives an additional award) ___ YES ___ NO

If you checked NO, please check the award you feel would be most appropriate.**(CHECK ONLY ONE)**

A. ___ plaque
B. ___ trophy
C. ___ ribbons
D. ___ silver trays/platters
E. ___ equipment (show halters, show sticks, combs, etc)
F. ___ embroidered duffle bag
G. ___ embroidered pullover or jacket
H. ___ gift certificates (health products, semen, etc)
I. ___ other: _____

18. What did you like the most about the beef skillathon?

19. What one thing did you dislike most about the beef skillathon?

20. What changes or improvements would you suggest for the beef skillathon?

Tennessee Junior Livestock Exposition
Sheep Events
Skillathon Evaluation
July 22-23, 1998

1. Your current age ____ 2. Grade you just completed ____ 3. Home County

4. Are you a FFA member____ and/or a 4-H member ____ 5. Male _____ or Female _____

6. How many years have you shown at Expo?*(include this year)* ___

7. How many times have you participated in the sheep skillathon?*(include this year)*

8. How did you prepare for the sheep skillathon?(*please check all that apply*)

A. ___ self study (reading a book, for example)
B. ___ parents helped you prepare
C. ___ assistance from volunteer leader
D. ___ skillathon workshops at the county level
E. ___ assistance from 4-H agent
F. ___ assistance from Ag teacher
G. ___ assistance from another 4-H or FFA member
H. ___ other: _____

9. How much time did you spend preparing for the sheep skillathon? Include all of the time spent in the preparations you marked in question 8. (*check ONLY one*)

__ None ___ 1 hour ___ 2 hours ___3 hours ___4 hours___ 5 hours___ 6 hours __ other _ hours

10. How much do you feel that participating in the sheep skillathon has improved (*please circle the best answer for each*)

A. your ability to speak to adults?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
B. your decision making skills?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
C. your general knowledge of the sheep industry?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
D. your ability to complete the sheep project?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot

`o what degree do you feel that your preparation and participation in the sheep skillathon has allowed you the opportunity to (*please circle the best answer for each*)

A. make new friends?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
B. help other members prepare for the skillathon?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
C. improve your leadership skills? If so, how?	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot

12. To what degree do you feel that the sheep skillathon increased your knowledge in the following subjects: (*please circle the best answer for each*)

A. Identification & Selection of Breeds of Sheep	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
B. Identification of Sheep Body Parts & Judging	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
C. Identification of Feeds & Nutrition	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
D. Identification of Retail & Wholesale Cuts	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot
E. Quality Assurance/Animal Health Practices	none	a little	some	quite a bit	a lot

13. Why did you participate in the sheep skillathon?(*please check all that apply*)

A. ___ skillathon awards
B. ___ to compete for premier exhibitor
C. ___ encouraged by parents
D. ___ encouraged by 4-H agents or Ag teacher
E. ___ I thought it would be a good experience
F. ___ other: _____

13a. Circle the letter (in question 13) of the main reason you participated in the skillathon.

14. Did you have FUN???? ___YES ___ NO
If no, why not?

15. If offered the opportunity, would you participate in the sheep skillathon again? ___ YES ___ NO

16. Medallions are currently awarded to the top 5 individuals in the sheep skillathon, do you feel the awards are

appropriate? ___ YES ___ NO

***If you checked NO, please check the award you feel would be most appropriate.*(CHECK ONLY ONE)**

A. ___ plaque
B. ___ trophy
C. ___ ribbons
D. ___ silver trays/platters
E. ___ equipment (show halters, show stick combs, etc.)
F. ___ embroidered duffle bag
G. ___ other: _____

17. Medallions are currently awarded to the top 5 individuals in the Premier Exhibitor division, do y feel these

awards are appropriate?(please note that the overall winner receives an additional award) ___ YES ___ NO

***If you checked NO, please check the award you feel would be most appropriate.*(CHECK ONLY ONE)**

A. ___ plaque
B. ___ trophy
C. ___ ribbons
D. ___ silver trays/platters
E. ___ equipment (show halters, show sticks, combs, etc)
F. ___ embroidered duffle bag
G. ___ embroidered pullover or jacket
H. ___ gift certificates (health products, semen, etc)
I. ___ other: _____

18. What did you like the most about the sheep skillathon?

19. What one thing did you dislike most about the sheep skillathon?

Presently, the Premier Exhibitor awards are as follows:

Beef Heifer and Market Steer
Senior Level II - $1,000 Post-High School Scholarship
Senior Level I - $500 Post-High School Scholarship
Junior High - $250 Post-High School Scholarship
Junior - $150 Savings Bond
Explorer - $100 Savings Bond

Breeding Ewe and Market Lamb
Senior Level II - $1,000 Huse and Irene Martin Scholarship
Senior Level I - $500 Huse and Irene Martin Scholarship
Junior High – Belt Buckle by the Tennessee Sheep Producers Assoc.
Junior–Trimming Stand by the Tennessee Sheep Producers Assoc.
Explorer - $100 Gift Certificate for the purchase of next year's market lamb or a breeding sheep

In addition to these awards, medallions are awarded to the top individuals in each
age division for Premier Exhibitor.

8. Which of the following awards do you feel would be appropriate for the top individuals in each age group for the **Premier Exhibitor** competition. (*Please check all that apply*)

	Explorer	Junior	Jr. High	Senior I	Senior II
A. plaques/trophies					
B. trophy buckle					
C. silver trays					
D. equipment					
E. embroidered apparel					
F. medallions					
G. scholarships					
H. Other:_____					

Additional Comments:

Thank you for your time and assistance!
Please return forms by September 4, 1998

_____

Evaluation of Tennessee's Premier Exhibitor Recognition Program

Part I

1. Are you a(n): *(Please check all that apply)*

   _____ 4-H agent

   _____ agricultural education teacher

   _____ facilitator (skillathon)

2. How many times have you served as a facilitator for a skillathon?_

Part II (Agents and Teachers only)

3. How did you prepare your students for the beef /sheep skillathon? (*Please check all that apply*)

   1. _____ encouraged self study

   2. _____ assistance from volunteer leaders

   3. _____ skillathon workshops at the county level

   D. _____ project group meetings

   E. _____ in-school class instruction

   F. _____ other: _____

4. How much time did **you** spend preparing your students for the beef /sheep skillathon? *(Total number of hours)*

Part III

A skillathon is designed to meet the six objectives listed below. Please circle the number that you feel best represents the degree of which the beef or sheep skillathons are meeting these objectives.

Key: 1 = none; 2= a little; 3 = some; 4 = quite a bit; 5 = a lot

5. To what degree do you feel that preparing for and participating in the skillathon has allowed students the opportunity to: (P*lease circle the best answer for each)*

a) participate in a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry. 1 2 3 4
Comments or suggestion for improvements:

b) develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills 1 2 3 4
Comments or suggestion for improvements:

3) gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication. 1 2 3 4
Comments or suggestion for improvements:

d) increase their comfort in communicating with an adult. 1 2 3 4
Comments or suggestion for improvements:

e) develop greater responsibility for completing a project. 1 2 3 4 5
Comments or suggestion for improvements:

f) be recognized for their accomplishments. 1 2 3 4 5
Comments or suggestion for improvements:

6. What changes or improvements would you suggest for the beef or sheep skillathon?

Part IV

7. Which of the following awards do you feel would be appropriate for the top individuals in each age group for the **skillathon**. (*Please check all that apply*)

	Explorer	Junior	Jr. High	Senior I	Senior II
A. plaques/trophies					
B. trophy buckle					
C. silver trays					
D. equipment					
E. embroidered apparel					
F. medallions					
G. scholarships					
H. Other:_____					

Additional Comments:

-over-

Appendix B

Beef Events Thematic Analysis

1. How did you prepare for the Beef skillathon?

- Learned by watching others

2. Why did you participate in the beef skillathon?

- Parents made me
- I was bored
- I was forced

3. What award do you feel would be most appropriate for the skillathon?

- Money llll

4. **What award do you feel is most appropriate for the Premier Exhibitor?**

- Give away stuff that you can use
- Money llllll

5. What did you like most about the beef skillathon?

- Learning Experience lllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllll
- Breeds Station lllllllllllllllllllllll
- Feeds Station lllllllllll
- It is fun llllllll
- Medicine/Quality Assurance llllll
- Making friends/meeting new people lllll
- Meats Station lllll
- Challenging lll
- Anatomy ID ll
- Awards
- Competition
- Something to do
- Quick

6. What one thing did you dislike most about the beef skillathon?

- Meat ID lllllllllllllllllllll
- Took too long lllllllllllllllll
- Missing questions llllllll
- Feed Station lllllll
- Medicine/Quality Assurance llllll
- Too Hard ll
- Time frame allowed for participation ll
- Anatomy ID ll
- Cheating by other contestants
- Did not know what to expect

- Breeds Station
- There are not enough volunteers
- Not enough variety
- Not enough instructions
- Studying for skillathon
- Tricky questions
- Not enough help from 4-H agent

7. What changes or improvements would you suggest for the beef skillathon?

- Add more questions/Use different material for stations from year to year lllllllllll
- Speed it up llllllll
- Need more hours available for participation lllll
- Time limit on tables lllll
- Add more lines for each division lll

7. What changes or improvements would you suggest for the beef skillathon? (conitinued)

- Make it easier lll
- Need more hands-on activities
- Need more volunteers
- Should be a requirement to participate
- Need study guide
- Better meats pictures
- Make this a group activity
- Premier Exhibitor should not be affected by skillathon
- Take the Medicine station out
- Have less feeds to choose from
- Have more breeds to ID
- Need nicer volunteers
- Needs to be more challenging, we are only being tested on what we already know
- Give hints at stations
- Need more equipment ID
- Make it a multiple choice test
- Make it easier for explorers
- Add a station that tests if you know the correct way to show a calf
- Add station for beef selection

8. How does the beef skillathon improve your leadership abilities?

- Improves speaking skills ll

9. Why did you not have fun?

- The person on the number 5 table was disrespectful
- The skillathon is not made to be fun
- It took too long

Sheep Events Thematic Analysis

1. **How did you prepare for the sheep skillathon?**
   - Participated in District Contest ll
   - Group study ll
   - 4-H Books

2. **Why did you participate in the sheep skillathon?**
   - Something to do
   - To learn more
   - County awards
   - I was forced
   - Fun

3. **What award do you feel would be most appropriate for the skillathon?**
   - Money
   - Scholarships

4. **What award do you feel is most appropriate for the Premier Exhibitor?**
   - Money
   - Scholarships

5. **What did you like most about the sheep skillathon?**
   - Learning lllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllll
   - Breed Station lllllllllllllll
   - Making Friends llllllllll
   - Feed Station llllllllll
   - Meat ID lllllllll
   - Wool Station llllll
   - The Medication station llllll
   - Fun to see how much I know lllllll
   - Everything lllll
   - Challenging lllll
   - The adults treated us like we were people and if we had a problem they would help. lllll
   - Nice people llll
   - Awards llll
   - Helps in Premier Exhibitor lll
   - Variety of Stations ll
   - I was well prepared ll
   - Body parts ID ll
   - Anything that was just identification
   - Easy

- Getting to rest between stations
- Helps improve my self-esteem

6. What one thing did you dislike most about the sheep skillathon?

- Wool Station lllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllll
- Lines move too slow lllllllllllllllll
- Meat ID lllllllllllll
- Breed Station lllllllllll
- Too Long lllllll
- Feed station llllll
- Hard llllll
- Some facilitators did not explain your incorrect answers ll
- Unorganized
- Too easy
- I do not have enough time to complete the skillathon.
- Repetitious from the previous year
- Anatomy ID
- Need to have more equipment ID
- The adult facilitators should not know any of the kids participating
- Studying
- I didn't get all of the answers right
- Hard to prepare for
- Medicines were to easy
- Medication
- Takes away free time
- The pressure

7. What changes or improvements would you suggest for the sheep skillathon?

- Speed it up lllllllllllll
- More Equipment ID llllllll
- Have more than one of the same station to speed it up llllll
- Do not have Wool ID llllll
- Make it easier lllll
- Add more stations lllll
- Make it harder lll
- Provide a study guide to the agents , so we can practice lll
- Have more volunteers to speed it up ll
- Take out the breed ID station ll
- Increase the time frame to participate. ll
- Impose time limits on the stations
- Post scores
- Use actual meat cuts instead of pictures

- Have less questions
- ID of sheep body parts
- Make the skillathon count for more in the Premier Exhibitor Contest
- Make it multiple choice
- Award scholarships with medallions
- Less identification materials
- Awards should be different
- Commercial ewe participants should compete with the market lamb exhibitors instead of registered.
- Use a wider variety of breeds
- Too cold
- Market lamb exhibitors should not be required to participate in the wool station
- Change the stations each year
- I wish the 4-H agents would study with their counties
- Better photos for Columbias and Corriedales
- Use live sheep instead of pictures for breed ID
- Do a better job of explaining mistakes
- You should have to know what a tool does, not just its name
- Each district should be required to have a skillathon
- Make medicine part harder
- Only have one person in room at a time
- Set it up with a pretest and a final test
- Keep having this every year

8. How does the sheep skillathon improve your leadership abilities?

- Abilities increased by helping others prepare for skillathon lllllllllll
- Helps us to be a good sport
- Improve communication skills
- Provides a reason to help others

9. Why did you not have fun?

- Takes too long to complete ll

Facilitator Thematic Evaluation

a) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to participate in a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry.

- Students are not prepared for contest

b) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

- More questions written or oral regarding application of knowledge
- Current activities are based on memorization
- Need an advertising station

c) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication.

- Tell the participants if they are right or wrong, but do not correct them
- Require a formal presentation by each participant

d) Comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to increase their comfort in communicating with an adult.

- Let Senior participants facilitate for younger members, since they may not intimidate them as much
- Not viewed as a high priority of this program
- This event definitely helps participants communicate with adults

e) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to develop greater responsibility for completing a project.

- Some students are prepared for this event, others are not
- Could be improved by greater recognition for skillathon

f) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to be recognized for their accomplishments.

- The more awards the better
- Market lamb participants should get as much recognition as breeding ewe participants
- Kids do this for fun, not necessarily for awards
- There is not near enough recognition
- The recognition is helpful

g) What changes or improvements would you suggest for the beef or sheep skillathon?

- Shorten amount of time at each station lll
- Revise stations annually ll
- Encourage everyone to participate ll
- Let Senior participants facilitate for younger members, since they may not intimidate them as much
- Need a better computer program for recording scores
- Clear written instructions for the volunteers
- A station for clipper use and set-up
- This should be mandatory for anyone participating in the show
- Do not give skillathon awards at end of Expo, they should be given at a larger crowd
- Restructure scholarship money for students not attending college
- Scheduling is a problem for participants
- Recognition for anyone who gets 90% or better on skillathon
- Provide situation scenarios to prevent memorization
- Delete some of the skillathon stations
- Have separate stations set up for market lambs and market ewes
- The scores should be posted before the presentation (use social security numbers)
- Use more difficult stations
- Commercial ewes should be in a separate category instead of being lumped in with the breeding ewes
- A red award for showmanship should not automatically be given 80 points. The score should be allowed to fluctuate from 80 – 90 points
- Needs better organization of events
- Need a group decision making/ team activity
- Reduce the amount of participants in line at a time
- Have time limits on each station
- Add a live animal evaluation

h) Comments for Skillathon awards.

- Give equipment
- Give Scholarships only
- Give exhibitors a choice of awards
- Give a scholarship to a camp (ex. Beef camp at MTSU)
- Gift Certificates

i) Comments for Premier exhibitor awards

- Gift Certificates lll
- Savings Bonds ll
- Trips ll
- Animal placing should count less in the premier exhibitor contest

- Cash
- Give a general scholarship that is not to a specific school
- Need to recognize a larger number of kids
- Bigger awards for Premier Exhibitor and Lesser awards for skillathon
- This is the best thing that has happened to Expo in 15 years
- Give scholarships only
- Give a scholarship to a camp (ex. Beef camp at MTSU)
- A project animal

4-H Agents Thematic Evaluation

b) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to participate in a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry.

- Seniors should be tested on current issues in the animal industry

c) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

- More ration formulations
- More ADG problems

c) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication.

- Use a written test with the younger participants.
- Hold interviews with the older participants.

d) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to increase their comfort in communicating with an adult.

- Depends on the facilitator. If a facilitator is unfriendly the participant could be intimidated
- In the 1998 Sheep Skillathon several participants did not feel that the facilitators were not giving enough feedback to make this an educational experience

e) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to develop greater responsibility for completing a project.

- Very little follow through with completion of records on their project

f) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to be recognized for their accomplishments.

- Many 4-Hers refuse to participate regardless of how many times I asked. The recognition program needs to motivate students to participate
- Post results of all participants in the skillathon

g) What changes or improvements would you suggest for the beef or sheep skillathon?

- Provide specific guidelines and training materials for agents lllllllll
- This is a great program llll
- Post all of the skillathon scores at Expo ll
- Increase time frame available for participation in skillathon
- Savings bonds
- Certificates towards animal purchases
- Use this format with 4-H programs other than animal shows
- Beef Expo awards need to be given out when there is a bigger audience
- Recruit more students to participate
- Be more organized when entering students names/grades
- Start awards program at announced times (not earlier or later)
- Keep information current and up to date
- Make sure all participants are shown the correct answers
- Drop meat ID
- Add section on economics or herd management
- Add more stations
- Needs a better marketing program. We need to "sell" the skillathon and its benefits to the parents and participants.
- This program should help overcome parents doing a lot of the work and passing along their knowledge to the youngsters.

h) Comments for Skillathon awards.

- Certificates towards animal purchases lll
- Savings bonds ll
- No scholarships, give cash awards instead. Not all students attend college. ll
- No savings bonds, they have extremely poor returns
- Give different awards to different age levels (give them something new to strive for)
- Ribbons
- Gift Certificates
- The younger participants like the medallions, but the older ones would like a change
- Embroidered apparel would be great for older kids
- Monetary awards would encourage better preparation and participation
- Why not use bowls (e.g. Dairy & Horse)
- Scholarship to any school they want to attend (not just UT)

i) Comments for Premier exhibitor awards

- Savings Bonds lll
- Scholarship to any school they want to attend (not just UT) ll
- Certificates toward purchase of animal ll
- No scholarships, give cash awards instead. Not all students attend college. ll
- No savings bonds, they have extremely poor returns
- Give different awards to different age levels (give them something new to strive for)
- Monetary awards

FFA Advisor Thematic Evaluation

a) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to participate in a learning laboratory that enhances knowledge of a specific animal industry.

b) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

c) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to gain self-confidence and skill in interpersonal communication.

d) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to increase their comfort in communicating with an adult.

e) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to develop greater responsibility for completing a project.

- This helps to expand projects without student expense

f) comments or suggestion for improvements for: Tennessee skillathons allow students the opportunity to be recognized for their accomplishments.

- Need more attention in media circles (not just ag media)

g) What changes or improvements would you suggest for the beef or sheep skillathon?

- More production knowledge
- Encourage participation from non-traditional students
- Allow adults to view skillathon after it is over
- Post skillathon results before awards ceremony
- Recognize the top ten in each division
- Use different sources for the test (ex. OSU breed Id)
- It should not take 2 ½ hours to participate in this event
- Increase difficulty level for seniors (ration balancing problem)

h) Comments for Skillathon awards.

- If funding is available any or all
- Do not like the medallions

i) Comments for Premier exhibitor awards

- If funding is available any or all
- Gift certificate toward purchase of animal
- Do not like medallions

j) Prepared participants by:

- Sheep conference

Vita

Kathryn Stephens Ingram was born on May 24, 2974 to Johnny L. Stephens and Theresa Smith Stephens of Madisonville, Tennessee. She attended elementary school in Madisonville and graduated from Madisonville High School in May 1992.

She attended Hiwassee College for two years before transferring to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the fall of 1994. In the spring of 1997 she received B.S. degrees in Animal Science and Agriculture and Extension Education. In the Fall of 1997 she began a graduate assistantship with the Department of Agriculture and Extension Education.

She has been employed with the McMinn County Board of Education since July of 1999 as an agriculture education teacher. She was married to Robert Mitchell Ingram on June 17, 2000. She was blessed by the birth of her son, John Mitchell Ingram on January 2, 2003.