

My name is Madison Manuelito and I am 16 years old. I attend Kirtland Central High School in Kirtland, New Mexico as a sophomore. I also enjoy playing varsity soccer, golf, softball and basketball. My parents are Everett and Alicia Manuelito. I have one younger sister name, Tzeitel who is a Novice 4-H member. She has been so excited to finally participate as a 1st year Novice. Our family loves the values and knowledge 4-H teaches. We are an active family in our 4-H program here in San Juan County.

I am an active senior 4-H member of the Dreamweavers 4-H club. I have been apart of the 4-H program for the past nine years. I recently just finished my term as our San Juan County Council Reporter. Recently, I have turned in my application to run for the San Juan County Council Vice-President position for this new 4-H year. Finally, I recently accepted the secretary and treasurer position for my 4-H club. I enjoy the friendships I have made and 4-H opportunities I am encouraged to do. I also enjoy the support I receive from my 4-H club to participate at the club, district and state level.

The 4-H projects I enjoy the most are Market Lambs and Market Steers. I enjoy being outside, working with my animals and competing in livestock shows. I love seeing my show lambs and steers grow, learn and finally be shown.

From the beginning of my 4-H years, I have always showed lambs. I started 4-H showing lambs, because my paternal grandma encouraged my dad. My dad and uncles grew up showing 4-H pigs and steers. My paternal grandma bought and helped me train my first lamb when I was six years old. I then showed in the booster show at the Navajo Nation fair and won grand reserve. My paternal and maternal grandmas raise sheep for tradition and food. It wasn't as hard for me to transition to showing lambs.

This year, I did not purchased as many show animals as I normally would. I only purchased one lamb and steer to show, because my family didn't know if we would even have the fairs I participate in due to Covid-19. My parents agreed to these purchases because they figured if the pandemic got to the point we needed food, we could always process these livestock. My dad was also furloughed for several months and we were uncertain about Covid-19 sickness.

I also purchased two heifers because I have always wanted to start a cattle herd with my younger sister. One of the heifers I purchased was for the New Mexico State Fair Catch-It-Calf program. In 2019, I enter this competition and was awarded a monetary amount to go towards the purchase of a heifer. There was also the agreement I show this heifer in the NMSF the following year. I competed in the NMSF heifer show held virtually and received 7th place. Although you wouldn't think preparing for a virtual show would be that difficult, but it is still a lot of work! You still have to show as if you are going into the arena. I have dress for the video recording and my heifer has to also be washed, clipped and fitted. I'm glad I was able to purchase two heifers and finish my agreement with the NMSF Catch-It Calf program. I am looking forward to calves in spring of 2021.

Fortunately, regardless of the pandemic, I was able to compete with my lamb and market steer in the San Juan County Youth Livestock Show held in August. I didn't do that well though. I place

also showed them at the New Mexico State Fair in October. Justin was shown and sold at the Navajo Nation Fair in October. J.D. and April were then taken to the Northern Navajo Fair and sold there. I have been showing lambs since I was seven years old. I love showing and competing with my lambs. At seven I won grand reserve with my lamb project and worked to

achieve that level again over the years. This year I finally won grand reserve with April. It took eight years of hard work to finally get there again!

Although I have been showing lambs for many years, I am not an expert. I am always learning something new. Every year a new sickness pops up, or a new lesson to learn from. There is always more research and knowledge to gain.

This year, I dealt with mild diarrhea in my show lambs. This was most likely due to stress for my show lambs to new environments at the various shows. Another contributor to this problem was their reaction to the changes in new supplements. I spoke with my breeder and was told to give them a small amount of Pepto-Bismol. Fortunately, this worked. But I am still learning about different ways to help with lamb stress. I was given several suggestions such as including a hay bag, or using certain additives to help stress at shows.

Another important lesson I learned, weigh your lambs often! In all the years I've shown, I've never had a lamb weigh more than 132 lbs at San Juan County Fair. This year, I purchase a bigger boned lamb, J.D. He ended up weighing more than 140 lbs and was the biggest lamb in the SJC Lamb Barn! I am currently looking for a livestock scale to help me better manage their weight. Another reason for increased weight, is not using the smaller 11.5 oz coffee can when measuring feed like I had in the past. I ended up using a 30.5 oz metal can to measure feed. With the larger coffee can, I guessed at the amount of an 11.5 oz can. Much later, I finally measured with an 11.5 oz can, and found it to be almost double what I have fed in the past!

I did not label that my 11.5 oz cans were for my lambs. Simple, but an important and hard lessons learned are the importance of 11.5 oz metal coffee cans, labeling them, and putting them away in my show box at the end of season. I suspect my grandma threw them away

thinking they were trash. I've also found it has become more difficult to find the metal coffee cans, especially since my family does not drink coffee.

Then, I had to learn how to hold weight back for J.D. and April. It is more difficult and expensive, than if I had just started monitoring target weight from the beginning. To hold weight, my lambs were fed less and were forced to feel as though they are were starving. They were fed everyday in the am and pm. Many times, it was hard not to be tempted to give them more feed. Also, I had to increase our exercise a lot! I spent more time running them down our lane than I have in the past years. Several lamb judges complimented their shape and muscle. Finally, my fed bill increased significantly, because I had to add expensive supplements to help with this weight control.

This year, I also fed my lambs wet feed. In all these years, I had always been afraid to wet feed. I didn't know how to do it and no one would tell me. I finally found someone who was willing to tell me how to do it. About a month before my last lamb show, I decided to give it a try. With J.D., I felt like he could handle this new change. So I added some water and he ate it all. A few days past of doing this, I filled his feed with half water. J.D. still ate his feed with no issues. Finally, I filled water past his feed. Not only did he not have any issues, he seemed to enjoy it and ate much faster. April took a little longer in her transition, but she grew to enjoy it. The benefits of wet feed, I am told is to help with dehydration and making it so the lambs have are harder time picking out added supplements or feed pieces. For me, it had the benefit of them eating faster. In October, after J.D. and April were sold, they began choking. Fortunately, they survived that episode! For me, I panicked and did not know what to do. I walk them around and that seemed to help. Later, I spoke with the person who taught me how to wet feed. She told me that this happens sometimes if they eat too fast. Next year, I was told if my lambs are fast eaters,

I should put a large rock in their feeder to help them slow down. If they do choke again, I need to rub their throat to help dislodge and work the food down. Finally, she said she would show me a maneuver to use when these do not work. I am nervous about trying to wet feed again. I plan to do more research and talk to more lamb exhibitors about their experiences. Hopefully, they will be willing to share.

Next, I wanted to share I had the courage to try clipping my own lamb's leg hair. Before a show, I would often ask an adult to clip my lamb's leg hair while I watched. This caused me great stress, because it was often left till the end and took more time than expected. This year, I watched an adult clip once at an earlier show and decided to try it at the next three shows. I was afraid to make a mistake, but I did not want to rely on anyone. It was also my first time using a blending blade. Although, I am certain I still have more progress to be made in this area, I am happy to say I clipped my own lamb's leg hair at several shows. Next year, I will have someone more experience look it over and critique. Then, I will make the adjustments. I also plan to experiment with "hairspray" and leg paint. Finally, I plan on starting a leg hair management program and working for better leg hair.

Lastly, I wanted to share in the recent years it has been harder to let my show lambs go when sold. I don't know why, maybe, because I am older? I work harder to train them. I know the many hours of early mornings and late evenings with them to get results. They know me, depend on me and I am responsible for them. They were cared for well.

At the final show for the year, my family thanked J.D. and April for being apart of our lives and for helping us finally win grand reserve and being first in class. On the last day of the fair, my lambs were put in a large livestock trailer with many other sold lambs. As they were

driven off, J.D. and April ran toward the back of the trailer and called out for me. It was hard to let them go. I miss them.

This year, I was able to finance my purchase of market lambs, because I was able to save money from last year's lamb sales. Also, I am able to work with a local feed store that allows me to purchase items on credit. With this year's sale, I will have to pay them back. It is still not easy to pay for it all, because there is always something that needs to be paid. These include: health certificates for each show, hauling permits in-state and out-of-state, show registration fees, exhibitor/family entrance fees, showmanship fees, RV camping or hotel stay, a new tire for livestock trailer, gas to get to shows, food while at shows and veterinarian bills. These other fees are a necessary part of the market lamb project and often end up costing more than the show lamb. I pay for these other items with left over money from last year's show and my allowance. My parents also help pay for these things.

My favorite activity was taking my lambs to New Mexico State Fair. For years, I have asked to show at NMSF, but was always told by my parents, "Maybe next year". This year, I finally got that chance. It was challenging, because it was my first time there and the extra cost of adding another show. I had also heard about the negative stories from other exhibitors who had shown there. These stories included, people not being friendly or helpful and not making weight. Even though I was apprehensive, I was also excited to finally be able to try. It was one of the goals I set for myself this year.

I took J.D. and April and even though I didn't make sale, I got to experience this next level of competition. I received help for the Declaration of Weight from the lamb barn superintendent. I was also able to keep their weight in check, because of the scales available everywhere. I also had the help of a San Juan County Leader and FFA advisor who happened to

be there too! The process was much easier just seeing her there. People were friendly and we had fun times. I plan on showing at New Mexico State Fair next year! I am happy I met this goal.

4-H has taught me many important lessons. It has helped me to be a better person and leader. San Juan County and my 4-H club have provided me with many leadership opportunities. This year, I was elected to take over the 4-H club reporter position. It is the first elected position I have held in my club. I was not as effective as I had hoped, but I have many ideas to improve and hope to hold another elected position in the coming 4-H year.

Being an active 4-H member of my club means volunteering monthly and helping in the community. This year, I was chaired the service groups, “Donations for Vet Clinics” and “Tractor Supply Promotion”. I was responsible to setting up meeting times, sending out reminders, gathering supplies and being the contact person.

Now that I am a senior 4-H member, I also had the opportunity to attend Senior Leadership Retreat held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was a fun experience, because I networked with other 4-H senior members from around the state. I learned about different careers and practical knowledge reminders such as time management and self care. One career I learned about was at the state forensic science site and what that means. They talked about the livestock being tested and finding the causes of death from around the state. While we were there, they were testing several sheep for the Scrapie disease. They also showed us the incinerator that was used to discard of them once the testing was done. I found this very interesting and consider this a possible career choice. I would not have known about this career had I not attended SLR.

Another leadership opportunity was applying for and being selected to be a Youth Get Away Counselor-in-Training. I was sent an YGA CIT information binder. I studied and learned about what was expected of me and different ways of dealing with people. I learned for a YGA CIT leader, there are many rules. The main rule I took from this was putting the participants first. One example from this binder was participants ate first. If they ran out, as a leader I go without. Another was that it was not about our experience, but the participant's experience.

Further, I was taught at our orientation what leadership means and tasks to be a leader to YGA participants. Then for the first time, I was responsible for twenty-eight 4-H novice members! I also had to bunk in a room with three 4-H novices. I had to make sure my group was safe, went to bed and woke up on time. I also had to make sure my group was on time to the different activities, encouraged participation and stayed on the necessary task. It was quite the leadership learning experience.

When I reflect on the many years I have been apart of 4-H, I feel blessed to have had all these opportunities and experiences. I am happy to be apart of the 4-H program. 4-H has given me so much and influenced me in many positive ways. I know about handwork, dedication, endurance, patience, the importance of research, practicing, goal setting and having courage to complete my goal. I also know about failure, learning from mistakes and trying again. Other values learned are sportsmanship, confidence building, knowledge, skills and friendships. 4-H has helped make me who I am. I believe I am a better person because of 4-H.