

10 Tips for a better buyer's letter

Sara Keinath, [Michigan State University Extension](#) - July 25, 2014

Practicing good written communications contributes to a successful market livestock project.

As many youth prepare their market livestock for the fair season, one important aspect of a successful project is a well-written buyer's letter. This piece of communication is a crucial way to convey information to potential customers about your project and the auction, while also making a personal connection. Whether this is your first market project or you've been doing it for several years, [Michigan State University Extension](#) has some tips to help make your letter stand out.

1. **Plan ahead!** Send out letters well in advance of the auction so that buyers can make plans to come. In general a buyer's letter should go out at least one month before the auction.
2. **Personalize it.** Include a personal greeting to the potential buyer (ex: Dear Mr. Smith, Dear Ms. Jones or Dear Wayne County Farm Bureau.) Sometimes it is more appropriate to address it to a company or business, but make an effort to learn the specific names of people if you can.
3. **Tell a story.** Your letter should include the story of your product/project (how you chose the project, what care or feeding choices you made, what makes your product/project stand out) as well as information about you, such as your age, how many years you've been in 4-H or what your agribusiness project is supporting (college, next year's project, etc.). Help the buyer get to know you more by telling them a little bit about yourself. Answer questions such as:
What other animals do you raise?

What have you learned through 4-H?

What club and community are you a part of?

Why would you like buyers to come to the auction?

What are your long-term goals?

4. **Think of yourself as a business.** Include information on the “product” you are producing. What are they buying? What can they do with it? Why is it a good idea to buy a 4-H animal? What is the nutritional value?
5. **Market your opportunities.** Invite them to the auction. Clearly state the date, time and location of the auction. Include important details such as parking or admission information. Never pressure the prospective buyer into buying your animal – but rather encourage them to support 4-H youth of your county. Be positive!
6. **Have a customer service mindset.** If you are writing to previous customers, you can communicate appreciation of their past support, which may contribute to another sale. Remember, though, that even if they don’t end up purchasing your animal, getting more customers to the sale will benefit everyone.
7. **Meet and greet.** Invite the buyer to come early to meet you and see your animal(s). Keep your pens and animals “buyer-ready” (clean) at all times. Practice your business handshake and professional pitch ahead of time so you can make a good impression!
8. **Be creative.** Add something special that your buyer will remember about you. A picture of you and your animal, sample recipes or a quote are just a few examples. Share a personal story or memory from 4-H or from the auction. Consider adding a link to a YouTube video, blog or website with information about you and your animal.
9. **Spell check!** Your letter should be typed (but include a hand-written signature), use proper business letter structure and be proof-read by someone else. Grammar, spelling and punctuation matter!
10. **Safety first.** Reminder on personal information: always check with your parents before distributing information about yourself!

Writing buyer letters is a great way to raise awareness of your project and encourage potential buyers to attend the auction! If your letter is well-written and interesting, you will make a good impression on your customers. Check out the Michigan 4-H website for more resources and articles to help you with your project, including tips for creating an amazing record book!

This article was published by **Michigan State University Extension**. For more information, visit <https://extension.msu.edu>. To have a digest of information delivered straight to your email inbox, visit <https://extension.msu.edu/newsletters>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <https://extension.msu.edu/experts>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

extension.msu.edu

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeffrey W. Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. The 4-H Name and Emblem have special protections from Congress, protected by code 18 USC 707.