

Atwater High School Agriculture Department

Atwater FFA

PO Box 835 / 2201 Fruitland Ave
Atwater, CA 95301

209-357-6025 (office) / 209-357-6067 (fax)

www.AtwaterFFA.org



May 20, 2024

Dear Atwater FFA Supporter,

As we have every year, numerous students engage in the experience and responsibility of raising and showing livestock at the Merced County Fair. For most of our students, this is a "first time" experience. It is an opportunity for them to take on responsibility, be held accountable for that responsibility, and experience the positive return of their time, effort, and financial investment throughout the experience.

This year we had twenty-six students take on the opportunity to raise a market hog project for the fair. Students purchased their projects in February. Of the twenty-six students, twelve kept their projects at Arnold Farm. The opportunity to have a facility available with the generosity of the Arnold family is the only opportunity for our students to engage and participate in the experience as it provides them the facility to house their project. Costs continue to go up in terms of the required investment (\$950-\$1000) for a "beginner" swine project and many of our students take out an FFA project loan through Travis Credit Union.

Many of our chapter's project pigs were young in age when purchased in February (55lb average) and we faced a health challenge in late February/March similar to other farms/facilities in the state. We had two choices - #1 return the pigs and eliminate/limit the number of students participating, or #2 "Go for it" and try our best to get the pigs to the 200 lb minimum weight required for students to sell at the auction. We went with #2. The time and efforts of our students put forth towards the health and well-being of the animals resulted in them bringing them back to normal health, however the combination of their age and weight caused the delay in growth to where we will have 3-4 pigs fall short of the 200 lb required minimum weight for the fair which takes away their opportunity for them to show and sell their project through the livestock auction.

We are looking for any businesses or individuals that are willing and interested in supporting those students through the purchase of their pig to have processed (Atwater FFA will take care of the logistics) prior to the fair, donate to Atwater FFA towards any of the student's financial investment, or support the group as a whole to help cover student investments "as needed". All support/donations can still be utilized as a tax write-off as "Atwater FFA" is a registered non-profit organization. The students in need (light weight pigs) are Eric Villalobos, Briana Mendoza, and Shayla Dominguez. Alyssa Colores is the fourth student, however we are 50-50 in her pig making weight.

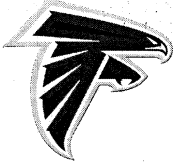
Attached is a form if interested in purchasing a pig to have processed or to support financially towards the/each student's project expense invoice to cover their loans and expenses.

All of these students put forth 100% effort. While unfortunate, there are situations in life where things don't go as planned. We are focused on supporting these students. They will remain participants in helping/assisting at the fair. We want this to be a learning situation towards next year's opportunity. We appreciated your consideration and support!

Sincerely,

Dave Gossman

Atwater FFA Swine Advisor



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2024 Atwater FFA Merced County Fair Swine Project Donation Form

Federal Tax ID # is 77-0572114

“YES! I would like to support Atwater FFA and the 3-4 students unable to show/sell their swine projects at the 2024 Merced County Fair Livestock Auction due to their projects not making weight”

- I am interested in purchasing one of the light weight pigs (180-195lbs) through Atwater FFA with a donation of: \$_____. Student's name - _____

(Student's investment and Atwater FFA's cost of the butcher is \$1000. Customer is responsible for costs associated with Sanders Meats in Turlock. Atwater FFA will confirm logistics regarding processing)

- Please put the donation towards (student's name): _____

- Please put the \$_____ donation towards the “group” of students in need of support for their projects

Contact/Business Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail - _____

Please complete this form and attach/mail/return with your donation or you can hand deliver to Dave Gossman at the Merced County fairgrounds (Atwater FFA Swine Barn)

(Make check payable to “Atwater FFA” and mail to:

Atwater High School FFA
PO Box 835
Atwater, CA 95301



For more information, please contact Dave Gossman at 209-357-6025 or dgossman@muhsd.org