

Hilmar FFA



Dairy Exhibitor's Handbook

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose.....	Page 2
What You Should Know Before Buying a Dairy Project.....	Page 3
Getting Ready for Your Dairy Project.....	Page 3
Purchasing Your Animal.....	Page 4
Starting Off Right.....	Page 5
Feeding Your Dairy Project.....	Page 5
Halter Breaking and Leading Your Dairy Animal.....	Page 6
General Rules for Hilmar FFA Exhibitors.....	Page 9
Hilmar FFA Dairy Exhibitor Fair Rules.....	Page 11
Showmanship.....	Attachment
Supplies and Equipment.....	Attachment
Hoards Dairyman "Showmanship 101"	Attachment

PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to assist you in successfully raising a dairy cattle project. The information contained in the following pages will act as a guideline. It must be understood that this material is not the only information you will need to raise your animal, but it does cover the most common aspects of the project. Refer to this handbook often. Should any questions arise concerning your project, don't hesitate to contact your project advisor for help.

Good luck on your endeavor of raising a dairy project. With hard work and dedication, your project will be a success!

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE BUYING A DAIRY PROJECT

1. A dairy project can be a very exciting and rewarding experience or a very frustrating and discouraging project depending on the amount of time and energy you put into the project.
2. The duration of a dairy project can range from 6 months for a replacement heifer to a year-round project for breeding cattle. It is important that as much attention be given your project during the last months as is given during the first months.
3. Progress and change of a dairy project is slow and sometimes tedious. However, with patience and persistence, your time spent with your project will pay off. Consequently, any lapse in working with your animal, changes in the feeding schedule, etc. will slow progress down or even reverse it. Raising cattle is not a hit or miss proposition, you must be consistent in how you raise your animal. Achieving maximum results requires maximum input from you. In other words, you get out of your project what you put into it.
4. It is critical that a person understands that the animal will be dependent on you for every aspect of its well-being including feed, water, shelter, health, exercise, etc. You must be willing to provide for each of these areas on a daily basis for the duration of the project.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR DAIRY PROJECT

1. Have your pen properly prepared prior to receiving your dairy project. The pen should meet the following requirements:
 - A. It should be large enough to allow your animal to exercise. (Approximately 15' X 20' is adequate.)
 - B. Shade/shelter should be provided in the pen.
 - C. Adequate feeding and watering facilities must be provided.
 - D. The fencing should be free of loose wires, loose boards, protruding nails, etc. The floor should also be free of boards, wire, nails, etc.
 - E. It should be sturdy enough to prevent the animal from getting out and also provide some place to tie the animal when working with it.

2. You should purchase your feed, hay, and a trace mineral salt block 1 - 2 days prior to receiving your animal.

PURCHASING YOUR ANIMAL

1. There are different ways to purchase a dairy project. No one way is right or wrong. You need to determine what is best for you in terms of your budget and willingness to work with your animal. The most common ways of buying an animal are:
 - A. Purchasing your animal from a dairy. Usually the cost of the animal is less when purchased this way. However, the animal may not be halter broken, vaccinated or wormed. On the positive side, there is usually a set price and you are not in direct competition with others to buy the animal, and there may be a larger group of animals to select from.
 - B. Purchasing your animal through an auction. Usually the cost of the animal is greater when purchased this way. The positive points of purchasing this way are that the animal is probably halter broken, has been vaccinated and wormed, and usually started on grain. The downside of this type of purchase is that several people may be bidding against you for the animal which will raise the price, and these animals are usually groomed which can make them appear to look better than they really are.
2. You need to determine how much you can afford to spend on the initial cost of the animal. With time and patience, above average animals can be found for \$700 - \$800. Very high quality animals sold through an auction can cost upwards of \$1000 - \$2000 or more.
3. Which ever way you choose to purchase your animal, make sure that you consult with your project advisor prior to buying it. You must obtain a brand inspection and bill of sale from the seller, and registration papers for breeding animals. These papers must be presented to the fair upon arrival to be eligible to show and/or sell your animal.

STARTING OFF RIGHT

1. As soon as you get your animal home, it is imperative that you observe your animal closely for any signs of illness. Generally, if cattle are hauled a long distance, the chance of illness is greater than those hauled short distances. Signs to watch for include runny eyes and/or nose, droopy head, and inactivity. It will take a few days for the animal to acclimate itself to its new surroundings.
2. Your animal may not want to eat the first day or two. This is normal. However, if it is not eating by the third day, you should contact your advisor. To minimize the chance of digestive problems, start by feeding only free-choice oat hay for the first two days. On the third day, if it is eating regularly, start providing grain and cut back on the hay. (Refer to section on feeding for additional information.)
3. Halter breaking as early as possible is important. The quicker the animal can be gentled down through halter breaking and leading, the quicker it will start to gain weight at an acceptable rate. It is much easier to halter break and teach a smaller animal to lead than a larger one. **DON'T WAIT!**

FEEDING YOUR DAIRY PROJECT

1. Nutrition is the single most important aspect of raising a quality dairy project. Consistency is the key word when feeding cattle with regards to the type of feed, amount of feed, and feeding schedule. A proper feeding program can make the difference between a high quality animal and a poor quality animal.
2. One of the most overlooked elements of a good feeding program is water. The water your animal drinks should be fresh, clean, and cool at all times. Dirty or stagnant water can have an affect on the health of your animal. The water trough should be cleaned on a regular basis, preferably daily. A good rule of thumb on water is that if you wouldn't drink it, your animal probably wouldn't drink it either if given a choice.
3. Feed should be fed by **WEIGHT** and not by volume. Different feeds in the same container will weigh different amounts. A dairy animal should be fed an amount of feed equal to 2 - 3% of its body weight per day. For example, a 600 pound animal should be fed 12 - 18 pounds of feed per day. The actual amount will depend on the type of feed being fed.
4. Another critical aspect of a good feeding program is setting feeding times in the morning and evening and sticking to them. There should be no more than a 15 minute variation in feeding times from day to day. Drastic changes in the feeding times can have an adverse affect on your animal in terms of appetite and health.

5. Whenever a new feed or increase in feed is introduced, the change should be made gradually over a period of time. When you get your animal home, it should be fed free choice hay. A grower ration of grain can be started on the second or third day at the rate of two pounds fed in two equal feedings. Some animals will not eat the grain at first. If your animal does not start eating the grain by the second day of feeding it, contact your advisor.
6. Make sure that the animal is eating all the grain at each feeding. Feed that is not consumed by the next feeding should be removed and the amount fed should be reduced in proportion to the amount left over. Increase the amount any time the feed is completely consumed by the next feeding, but increases should be limited to one pound per day.
7. If your animal goes off feed for more than one day, contact your advisor immediately. Generally, lack of appetite is one of the first signs of illness. The sooner the illness is detected, the easier it is to treat.
8. It may be necessary to add a feed supplement to the ration. The supplement will help in increasing growth, appetite, feed efficiency, health, stress resistance, and hair coat growth. Check with your advisor before adding a supplement to your feeding program.

HALTER BREAKING AND LEADING YOUR DAIRY ANIMAL

1. There are many schools of thought on how to halter break cattle. Halter breaking can be grouped into two main categories: "Praise and reward" which reinforces positive actions or "Negative" which uses punishment to counter negative actions of the animal. The positive approach does not have the immediate impact of the other method, but over the course of time has a longer lasting and consistent effect on the animal. The key is to work quietly and consistently with your animal to minimize stress for you and the animal.
2. Halter breaking should start as soon as possible while the animal is still small. The animal must understand that you are in charge. You decide how it will walk, when it will stop, how it will stand, etc. Once an animal knows that it has the upper hand, it will take considerably more time to train it to do what you want.
3. The proper equipment is as important as technique. An adjustable rope halter made of 1/2" or 5/8" nylon with a long lead is best. It should be placed high on the face and close to the eyes to prevent slippage, give maximum control, and minimize possible injury to the animal.

4. If your animal has been halter broken prior to buying it, you can start tying it up immediately. If it has not been halter broken, let the animal drag the lead rope for two or three days. The animal will learn to "give" to the pressure as it repeatedly steps on the rope.
5. On the third or fourth day you need to begin tying up the animal. Always use a stick to snare the lead rope. Using the stick will make it easier and safer to pick up the rope. Tie the animal to a stout post at eye level about 12 inches away. Tying the animal higher or lower could cause injury to the spine or legs. Keep the animal tied for a short duration of 15 - 20 minutes the first few times. As soon as the animal "gives" to the halter or wears out, turn it loose. Release the animal calmly and don't let it jerk the rope from your hands. Creating a situation of early respect will be rewarded later.
6. Begin touching the animal as soon as possible with a show stick. Rubbing the animal with the show stick allows you to be further away and is less intimidating. Start touching the animal with your hands as soon as possible. Stand as close to it as you can. Be firm, but use slow, deliberate movements. The animal can sense whether you are calm or scared and will respond accordingly.
7. When teaching the animal to lead, a "pull, release, and reward" method works best. Apply gentle pressure on the lead rope to get the animal to move. Accept only a few steps as progress and reward by releasing pressure on the halter and speak to the animal. Voice reward is very important. Again, it is important to be calm and patient.
8. Rinse the animal with water as soon as it is controllable. Rinsing seems to take the rest of the fight out of the animal and will prevent some later kicking problems.
9. Following the initial halter breaking, always tie the animal with its head up high to teach it to stand with its head up and its legs under it properly. If possible when working with your animal, turn a radio on loudly near your animal. The loud music will help your animal become accustomed to noises that are common at fairs and shows.
10. Once the animal can be caught and led consistently, remove the halter after you are finished working with it. Until it is possible to do this, regularly check the halter to see that it is properly adjusted and not cutting into the animal's nose. A cut caused by the halter can go undetected for a long period of time, but is very painful for the animal and can easily become infected. By haltering the animal only when working with it will eliminate or greatly reduce the chance of this problem occurring.

11. Begin training your animal to stand properly. The time spent training the animal to stand correctly will pay off in the show ring.

12. It is important to work with your animal on a regular basis, not only to train it, but to exercise it as well. Never hit your animal. Animals respond better to trust than to fear, and will be more willing to work for you. Your animal will not learn how to lead and stand correctly on its own, you must teach it how.

GENERAL RULES FOR HILMAR FFA EXHIBITORS

1. Because of the importance of scholastic achievement the HHS Ag Dept requires its livestock exhibitors to maintain a satisfactory scholastic record in his/her Ag class. Therefore if any exhibitor fails to meet this requirement he/she may lose their show privileges.
2. All exhibitors are to follow the directions and advice given to them by the designated advisor for that species. The advisor's directions are to be followed for the whole length of time the project is eligible for show, and during the fairs when the project is being exhibited
3. FFA members are required to obtain their homework from all their teachers in advance of missing school for attending fairs.
4. All exhibitors are expected to transport their animals and tack to the fair unless other arrangements are made with the advisor.
5. All rules and regulations of Hilmar High School will apply to the students who participate at fairs, since showing is a school activity.
6. Each exhibitor must read and understand the rules and regulations in the Fair's Premium Book.
7. Where dormitories are provided, all FFA members must sleep in the dorm.
8. Where dormitories are not provided, these procedures should be followed for campsites or motels:
 - A. Los Banos Fair or Merced Fair - Exhibitors must complete a camp site reservation form obtained from the fair, in order to reserve a trailer site at the fair grounds. This form will include the names of the students residing in the trailer, the trailer license number, and the name of the adult who will be staying to chaperon these students.
 - B. Each exhibitor will receive prior permission from instructor.
 - C. Approved ADULT supervision is required from 6 PM to 7 AM.
9. Each exhibitor is required to be responsible for feeding, watering, grooming, and keeping an eye on his or her animals for the entire length of the fair.

10. Each exhibitor is required to serve barn duties as assigned and specified by the advisors.
11. All FFA exhibitors will be required to wear an official FFA uniform while showing their own animals or helping others.

FFA UNIFORMS

Boys- white slacks, white shirt, FFA tie and FFA jacket. Girls- white slacks, white shirt or blouse, FFA scarf and FFA jacket.

12. All FFA exhibitors are to attend the awards program at every fair.
13. Market animal exhibitors are required to write "Thank You Letters" to their buyers.
14. All exhibitors must attend assigned meetings by the designated Advisor unless prior arrangements have been made.
15. The advisor of any species will have the authority to take whatever disciplinary action necessary toward any student that fails to comply with the rules.
16. All exhibitors must remove their vehicles from the fairgrounds prior to 8AM unless approved by Advisor.

Please read these general rules and discuss them with your son or daughter. Sign and return this form to us, either by mail or send it back to school with your son or daughter. If you have any questions, please feel free to talk to any of the advisors.

Hilmar Agriculture Department
7807 Lander Ave.
Hilmar, CA 95324
Phone 667-8366

Parent's Signature: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

OUTLINE OF RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DAIRY EXHIBITORS AT THE FAIRS AND WHAT TO DO JUST PRIOR TO AND AT THE FAIR

1. Dairy cattle should be properly halter broke and washed thoroughly before arrival to the fair.
2. Exhibitors are expected to be at the fair for the purpose of preparing their animals to look their best for the show. It must be understood that this requires a great deal of time.
3. Bring sufficient grain and hay and beet pulp for one week.
4. Animals at the fair must be fed and watered as instructed by the Advisor.
5. Every dairy exhibitor must be at the dairy barn by 6 a.m. every morning.
6. All animals must be fed, watered, waste removed, and bedded down, with area clean by 8 a.m.
7. All milk cows should be milked at the appropriate and designated time.
8. Cattle should be checked throughout the day to assure they are watered regularly and that they are doing O.K.
9. On show day, every exhibitor is expected to stay for the entire show. All exhibitors should help each other and work together. Everyone is on barn duty all day on show day.
10. Every dairy exhibitor is required to show in showmanship.
11. Each dairy exhibitor must serve barn duty during the fair as assigned by the advisor. This includes being in the dairy barn to keep an eye on all the animals and keep the entire Hilmar area of barn clean in side and out.
12. You may also be asked to help with showing various group classes and chapter group.
13. All dairy exhibitors are required to be present at the awards ceremony.
14. Each exhibitor is expected to cooperate with a positive attitude.

15. Each exhibitor is expected to assist in the set up, and first bedding of the dairy exhibit. Exhibitors are also expected to assist in the final clean-up on the last day of the fair.
16. Any students exhibiting cows in milk, are responsible for their own milking equipment while at the fair.

If you have any questions concerning any aspects of the student livestock projects you may contact the Hilmar High School Agriculture Department at any time. Phone: 667-8366

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

Showmanship Essentials

*The purpose of showmanship
is to present your heifer or cow in the best possible way.*

Training

- Your heifer/cow **MUST** be well-trained
- Train your heifer to keep her head up; tie with head up (with supervision!) to begin
- Get her used to a chain halter **BEFORE** you get to the fair
- Remember safety
 - Do not tie your heifer to yourself!
 - Do not wrap the lead rope around your arm or wrist
 - Do not place any fingers in the ring of the halter
 - Remember proper placement of your hands—this will enable you to have more control and respond more quickly
- Practice makes perfect

Dairy Halter

- Round noseband, with chain chinstrap
- Black for Holsteins, brown for Jerseys

Fitting Essentials

- Well-clipped
- Topline done (leaders can help with this, but topline must be clean)
- Clean! Including between back legs, under elbows, behind poll, knees and hocks, etc.
- Inside of ears must be immaculate—use alcohol or baby wipes
- Switch combed and fluffed—no dandruff!
- Hooves polished or blackened
- Carry a damp towel and brush to the ring with you for last minute cleanups (leave these outside the ring)

Your Class

- Check your class number ahead of time—classes are normally posted
- Be prompt! Rushing gets you upset **AND** makes your animal upset
- Enter class going clockwise (head to the left when you enter the ring)—remember, your heifer/cow should always be between you and the judge
- Know some important facts about your heifer/cow
 - Birthdate
 - Class name
 - Sire, dam
 - Freshening and or due date
 - How much is your cow milking

Showing

- Begin showing as soon as you enter the ring
- Keep animal's head **UP**!

Showing (continued)

- Watch the judge at all times
 - BUT, glance at your animal often to make sure she looks good
 - Do NOT look for Mom, Dad, girlfriend, etc. in the crowd!
- Know where the judge is and what s/he is doing
- Be relaxed, but alert; smile!
- Keep pace with the other exhibitors
 - Do not crowd the animal in front of you—allow room for judge to walk between you and the animal in front of you
 - Do not walk so slowly that you hold up the show
- Follow directions of judge and ringmen
 - When you are asked to move to a different spot (for example, to the placing line), MOVE!
 - When the judge asks you to stop, set up your heifer immediately, but smoothly
- Lining up
 - When signaled to move into line, turn around smoothly and walk quickly (but smoothly) into line
 - Leave one foot or less between you and the heifer above you in line
 - The heifer/cow's front legs should be even and in line with other animals in line
- Rear legs must be set up correctly
 - Heifers—The rear leg toward the judge should be back
 - Cows—The rear leg toward the judge should be front
 - Setting up legs correctly is not enough...do not stretch out or bunch up your animal
- Always keep the animals between you and the judge
 - If the judge requests that you switch animals with other showman, circle around the outside of the ring to get to the animal you are required to lead; do not cut across the ring
 - Rotate around the left side of your animal so that the judge can always see the most of your animal (but never move past the center line)
- Do not stop showing until the after you have left the ring; don't make the judge regret his/her placing!

Troubleshooting

- ***Your heifer lies down***
 - Relax!
 - Quickly, but smoothly, loosen grip on halter and move to heifer's "downhill" side, give heifer her head and knee heifer in ribs
 - **Solution:** You should know when your heifer is thinking of lying down; keep her alert by jiggling head, moving a little more quickly, etc.
- ***Your heifer will not cooperate***
 - Push her head up a little higher than natural; or drop her head a little if she is fighting you
 - Turn heifer's head in the direction she is sidestepping
 - Hang on!
 - If you must move out of line because your heifer is uncooperative, circle around the BOTTOM of the class, never circle around the first place animal; or, better yet, circle in front of your space, return backwards through your space, circle around behind your space, and re-pull into line
 - **Solution:** Training! Also, be aware if your heifer could be coming into heat

Have Fun!

SHOW SUPPLIES

EQUIPMENT

HOSE
PISTOL GRIP NOZZLE
LIVESTOCK SOAP
SHOW BOX
WATER BUCKET
HARD BRISTLE BRUSH
SOFT BRISTLE BRUSH
FEED PAN
EXTRA ROPE HALTER
SHOW HALTER
WIRE HOOF BRUSH
BLANKET (SHEET)
LAWN CHAIR
OLD TOWELS
RAIN GEAR (WASHING)
LIVESTOCK FLY SPRAY
NECK ROPE

ALL EXHIBITORS MUST BE AT THE
FAIR BY 6 AM EACH MORNING

COLEMAN SHUTTLE SERVICE
5:15 AM

FEED AND STRAW

HAY (ALFALFA, OAT)
GRAIN
BEET PULP
STRAW - @ 1/2 BALE PER DAY PER HEAD
SHAVINGS

SHOW UNIFORM

FFA JACKET
WHITE PANTS
WHITE SHIRT
FFA TIE OR SCARF
BOOTS
BELT

REGISTRATION PAPERS.

DAIRY REPLACEMENT HEIFER PROJECT BUDGET

<u>ESTIMATED EXPENSES</u>	Los Banos (7 mo.)	Merced (21 mo.)	Stanislaus (7 mo.)
Cost of animal	\$1000.00	\$250.00	\$1000.00
Feed	210.00	650.00	210.00
Veterinary supplies	20.00	20.00	20.00
Breeding fees	-0-	30.00	-0-
Insurance	25.00	50.00	25.00
Rope halter	3.00	3.00	3.00
Show halter	35.00	35.00	35.00
Show equipment	20.00	20.00	20.00
Straw	<u>14.00</u>	<u>70.00</u>	<u>42.00</u>
Total Estimated Expenses	\$1327.00	\$1128.00	\$1355.00
<u>ESTIMATED RECEIPTS</u>			
Sale of heifer	\$1600.00	\$1600.00	\$1600.00
Estimated Receipts	\$1600.00	\$1600.00	\$1600.00
Estimated Expenses	<u>1327.00</u>	<u>1128.00</u>	<u>1355.00</u>
Estimated Net Profit	\$ 273.00	\$ 472.00	\$ 245.00

Find something to show!



Preparations for show day begin long before the lights are turned on above the tanbark. In fact, before selecting his grand champion while judging the 2001 International Holstein Show, Judge Michael Deaver said that breeders will begin preparing for next year's World Dairy Expo the following day; that showing really can be called a 365-day-a-year job. There are many steps to take long before show day.

Find something to show!

The first step is quite simply, find something to show! The best place to start is by looking for a calf that is born at the beginning of one of the four major show-

ring classes. They are:

- Spring calf** - Born between March 1 and May 31 of the show year.

- Winter calf** - Born anywhere from December 1 of the prior year through the end of February of the show year.

- Fall calf** - Born September 1 through November 30 of the prior year.

- Summer Yearling** - Born June 1 through August 31 of the prior year.

Each year calves progress through different classes as they grow in age. For example, a spring calf will become a spring yearling and then a Junior 2-year old and so forth. It is recommended that beginners start

with a smaller calf that will be easier to handle.

The search for most youth begins in the early spring through heifer pens and at consignment sales. There are more calves available for sale both publicly and privately in the spring than at any other time of the year. Many breeders spend time in the spring evaluating the calves born over the past year and often have some available for sale. The majority of these breeders like to see young people succeed and will often help a youth out with a reasonable price.

There are many sales catering to youth purchases, one of which is the Maryland Brown Swiss Calf Sale. According to sale chair Cindy Warner, a number of youth purchase 4-H projects at that sale and others like it.

"I can honestly say that close to 75 percent of our animals sold go into the hands of juniors. Junior success stories include Dylan Fry and Jacob Hushon, both of whom purchased a foundation animal and have bred an All-American daughter from our sale."

She went on to add: "The quality of pedigrees at our sale are top sale consignments, and the calf usually matches the pedigree. Our commission has always been 12 percent, and breeders don't mind paying it because they know it goes to support youth activities."

Others are able to select a calf

CALVES BORN at the beginning of classes (September, December, March, and June) give you an advantage over younger ones.



from their own heifer pens. Selecting show calves early in the spring requires a special talent or "eye". Dave Day, who along with his family are the owners of Tri Day Holsteins, can be described as one who has it.

He affirms that idea of a year-round effort by beginning his discussion of selecting show calves with mating decisions that produce the calf.

"Breed some cows to calve at the right time, that being the beginning of classes and give yourself the full ethical advantage of having a group to pick from born at the right time. Remember though, it is not impossible for calves born later to come on. In fact, several of our more prominent ones did just that."

For example, a calf born on December will have a 3-month advantage in growth over a calf born at the end of February. This will be easy to see early on when the two are shown as calves.

Day also adds the mating is as important, if not more, than

when the calf is born. "Genetics play a huge role in the growth of calves, not only speed of growth but in end frame size. This difference can be as much as 10 inches between the high production bulls and the show calf bulls, so the differences in height assert themselves early in life, as early as the first couple of months.

"Make sure her pedigree says it is likely that she will be a show animal. If her pedigree doesn't include bulls or cows with show winning legacy, it isn't likely to happen. The Net Merit bulls, on average, won't make many big time show calves," he says.

Evaluating bulls for a show mating should also include looking at linear traits, especially stature and dairy character. Just like any other mating, the most important step to take is to evaluate the female being bred and choose a bull that will correct some of her faults.

Day also acknowledges that there is always temptation for

breeders to "play" with birth dates or misrepresent the age of the calf. His advice simply put: "Don't play with birth dates. People who play with birth dates are quickly identified when their yearlings don't return as well-grown heifers with a size advantage. This hurts their credibility and merchandising potential."

Dot your i's and cross your t's

One of the last things to remember at this stage in the year is paperwork and entries. In most states, animals must be transferred to the youth to compete in 4-H, FFA, and youth breed shows. For many states, this must be done by the end of

How To PICK A GOOD ONE!



Show veteran Dave Day offers some tips on picking a show-winning calf.

SIZE

- The bigger calves are going to win most of the time.

STYLE

- A sharp front end and shoulder;
- A long sweep to the rib;
- A clean head and neck;
- A square rump and neat tail setting.

FEET AND LEGS

- Sound and correct;
- Movement should be free and easy.

NOTE: These are just a start. For more information on selecting cattle and evaluating traits, you can refer to Hoard's Dairyman Judging Guide book.

CALF SALES, such as the Mid-Atlantic Brown Swiss Calf Sale, pictured below, are excellent ways for youth to purchase top quality 4-H projects for a reasonable price.



April or May. Be sure to check with your extension office so your show season doesn't get derailed before it even begins.

According to Karen Jones from Holstein USA, time for transfers can also vary. "It can take anywhere from 15 to 25 days for a transfer to return to the youth once it is mailed in," she said. "That length of time is based on volume which increases as spring heads into summer. So it's a good idea to get yours in as early as you can!"

Costs for transfers can range from \$5 to \$20. Most animals purchased through consignment sales will have the paperwork and cost taken care of by the sales staff. If a show date is close to the sale date, be sure to let the sales staff know about it so they can

send the paperwork in right away.

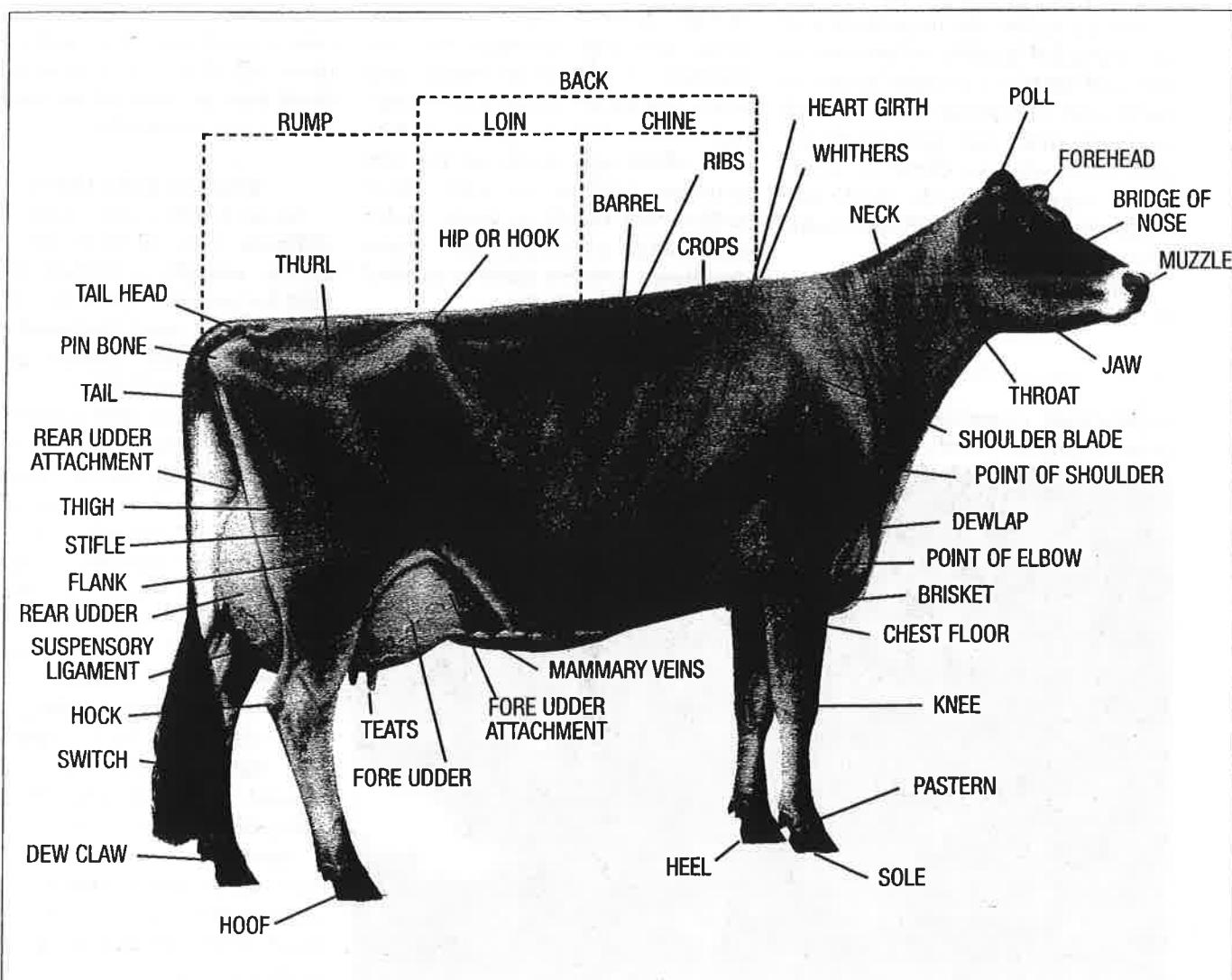
It is also a good idea to sit down early in the year and decide which shows you want to attend. This will make sure that you meet early entry deadlines and don't have to pay late penalties. Most show entries are due several months before the show runs, so it is important to begin looking for entry forms. These can be obtained by calling the fair office or, in many cases, can be found on-line.

Leasing may be an option.

In some states and with some breeds, purchasing a calf may not be necessary. Many states now allow calves to be leased to youth, provided that youth does not come from a farm nor own any other cattle.

Agreements are usually drawn up on forms and signed by both the leaser and the lessee and/or their parents. These forms make sure that both parties are in agreement as to who will provide care, pay breeding and health costs, and cover feed bills. The contract should also include where the calf will be housed, which shows and events she will attend, and a note on insurance or how injury and death will be handled.

Lease agreements can be very successful and are an excellent way to introduce non-farm neighbors to the dairy industry. Communication is key and by being open throughout the agreement, it should lead to a pleasant experience for everyone involved.



Feed for maximum growth

Feeding a show heifer is one of the most important parts of achieving success in the show-ring. Since all calves are born relatively the same size, it is how you care for them once they arrive that will separate you from the rest in the show-ring.

We all know the importance of getting good quality colostrum in the calf within a couple hours of birth and providing the calf with a clean, draft-free pen to lie in. But what else is there to know about raising calves that can compete at shows and take home blue ribbons?

Small groups are important as it will reduce competition for

feed. "We used a headlock system with a stall between each calf to feed them individually so we could control condition and push calves at different rates," Holstein breeder Dave Day describes.

"But don't forget the simple things either. Make sure the pens are big enough for the number of calves in them, and allow adequate bunk and watering space. Try to group calves with same-age peers, as putting younger heifers in with older heifers will result in lower water and hay consumption when dominant heifers have a noticeable size advantage.



"Good management cannot be substituted. It starts at birth and is really the sum of a lot of little things done right."

Those little things include keeping calves clean, as dirty calves do not grow. Air quality is very important as is proper hoof trimming and care. Growing calves need exercise, and getting them off of concrete and letting them run outside when possible is also recommended.

What to feed them.

Show heifers are often fed a different type of feed on many farms, usually a higher-protein feed to promote growth. "A feed should first and foremost meet the nutritional needs of the heifers," Day explains.

He points out that calves grow the fastest when they are under 3 months of age, so meeting their needs then is the easiest way to achieve rapid growth. He recommends large amounts of quality whole milk or a high-quality milk replacer. It is important to point out that this does not include unpasteurized mastitis waste milk. Not only is feeding waste milk to calves bad biosecurity, but the diseases that may be passed on could severely stunt the growth of your calf.

However, research has shown that waste milk that has been pasteurized can promote growth faster than calves grown on milk replacer. The drawback is that

INDIVIDUAL CARE and attention to details are extremely important when trying to raise top-notch show calves.



pasteurizers are not cheap and require labor and skill to run.

What is accelerated feeding?

Milk replacers fed to show calves should be formulated with milk proteins, not plant proteins. Recent work done at Cornell and the University of Illinois have explored ways to grow calves faster or what they call "accelerated calf raising."

Milk replacer in an accelerated calf raising program should contain 28 percent crude protein and 15 to 20 percent fat, depending on the level of environmental stress such as heat, overcrowding and so forth. The program recommends feeding 2 to 3 pounds of powder per day in a more concentrated solution (14 to 17 percent solids).

This "new" idea is the same way breeders have been raising top show calves for years. The trials have found that calves will gain 2 to 3 pounds per day prior to weaning. It is important to note that this is frame growth, not fattening. They have found it to be the best way for maximizing calf growth.

The benefits of this system are that calves grow faster and can be weaned earlier. Then downside is that the cost is higher, roughly \$50 per calf.

Calves should be fed a calf starter that is 20 to 22 percent protein on a feed tag basis. Start with small amounts and work up to 5 or 6 pounds a day. They

should be consuming at least 2 pounds a day before being weaned.

Once calves are weaned, the Days feed a normal 18 to 22 percent calf grain and begin mixing that with a 40 percent protein pellet or soybean meal.

Eventually, the calves should be completely off the calf starter, within a few months of weaning. This is to prevent them from getting too heavy.

Should we feed hay?

The Days are not as critical of quality of hay. Dave says, "The number one criteria is that they eat it and lots of it!" Large amounts of hay are necessary for proper rib development in the calves. He recommends feeding grass hay.

Corn silage is a no-no, if it can be avoided. "Energy is not a large need of a growing heifer, so hold back the corn silage to none. High protein is necessary to grow large, competitive heifers," Dave adds.

He is quick to point out that this information is important for more than just producers hoping to raise show heifers. "I think it is important for our youth programs to properly instruct kids how to grow their calves, as almost all of the knowledge gained applies to growing large-frame replacement heifers that can calve and come into the milk string at 18 to 22 months."

THINKING ABOUT ACCELERATED FEEDING?



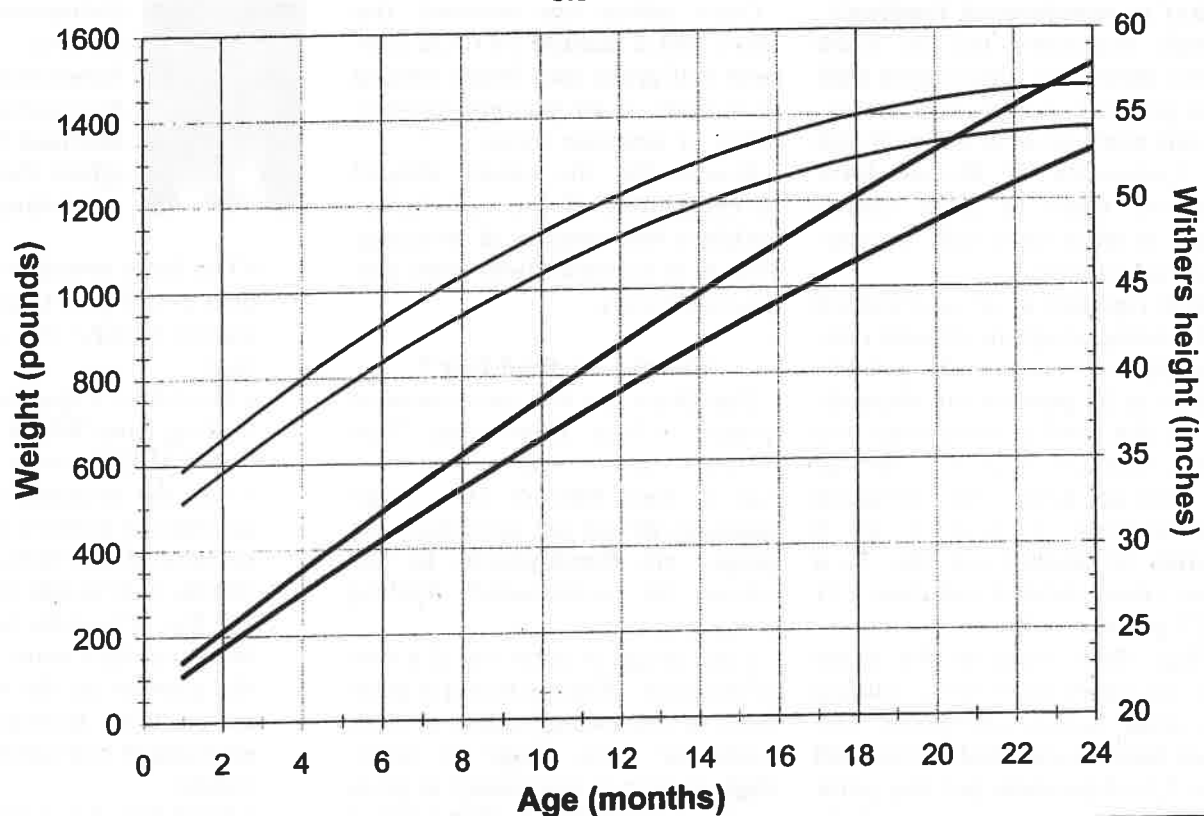
*University of
Illinois
Extension
Specialist
Michael Hutjens
offers these
guidelines.*

- For large breed heifers, feed 2-1/2 quarts per feeding for WEEK ONE (twice a day).
- Feed 3 to 4 quarts per feeding from WEEK TWO to WEANING (twice a day).
- Cap the maximum amount of powder to 2 percent of calf birth weight (90-lb. calf would receive 1.8 lbs. of powder per day). Maintain this same level of the powder as the calf grows, don't increase it, to encourage calf starter intake.
- Feed 3 to 4 quarts once a day for the week of weaning to stimulate starter intake (2 lbs. per day prior to weaning).
- Water must be available free choice at all times starting at DAY TWO.
- Calves over 14 days of age on a traditional program should not be switched to an accelerated program.



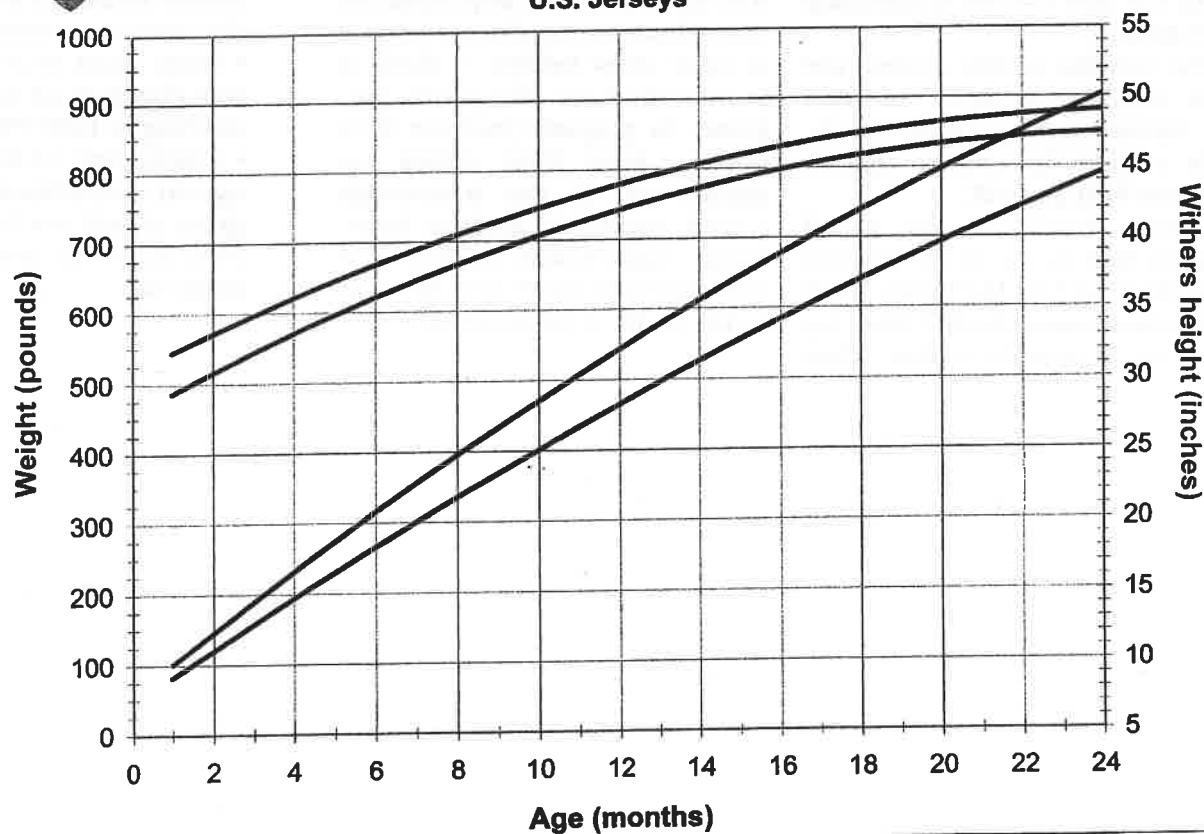
Weight and Withers Height by Month of Age

U.S. Holsteins



Weight and Withers Height by Month of Age

U.S. Jerseys



PLOT YOUR HEIFER'S GROWTH on these charts from Penn State: for her age, determine whether your heifer falls within an acceptable range. The lower curve for weight and height represents the lowest accepted standard for an animal of that age. Standards are shown for Holsteins (above) and Jerseys.

It's halter breaking time!



One of the most important aspects of working with a heifer is just to spend time with your project. This will include feeding her, brushing her, and the often dreadful halter breaking. Halter breaking a heifer can be one of the most challenging tasks to a young 4-H'er. The calf is often much heavier than they are, and the stubbornness of the calf combined with a lack of patience by the leader can bring about disastrous results.

Patience is certainly the most important aspect of halter breaking an animal. Some heifers are just naturally more stubborn

than others and will require some extra time to learn. It is best to start working with a calf when it is as young as possible. This will allow her to grow up interacting with people. It is also best to tie the heifer up on a halter for an hour or two to allow her to get over the initial fighting stage of the first time on the halter. By doing this, she will get used to the halter, and you will save yourself some aggravation. Don't leave her tied up in the hot sun, though. Make sure she is tied in a shaded, well-ventilated area.

While she is tied up, it is a good idea to remain with her. Brushing your heifer is a good

way to get her used to people touching her and will brighten her coat at the same time. Make sure to ask for help if you are a younger member or just learning.

Once she has calmed down and is comfortable interacting with you, slowly untie and begin to walk her around. Begin by simply walking her and getting her to respond to the halter. Sudden movements should be avoided and any loud noise as well, if possible.

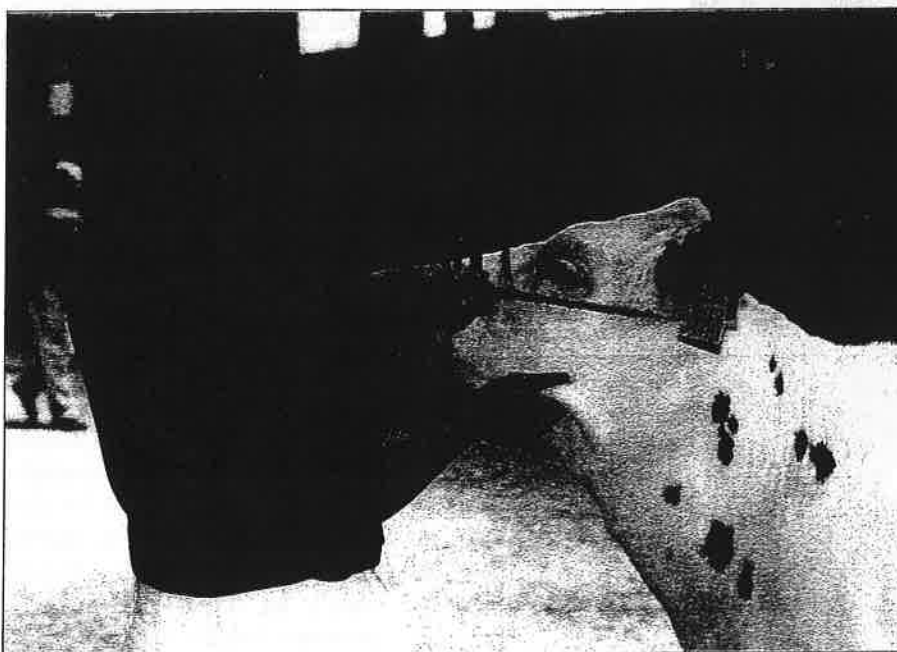
Use a nylon or rope halter first instead of the leather show halter. Nylon halters work best because they won't swell when they get wet.

At first, you may just want to walk her around the pen, so if she gets away from you she can't go too far. Once she moves without trying to run you over, try walking her outside the pen on a flat, open surface. Just about every calf can be halter broke with the right amount of patience and care.

Getting ready for the ring.

Once she has mastered the basic halter breaking, then begin to practice as if in the show-ring. Remember, the most important thing is to present the calf so she looks her best. There is no recipe that will fit everyone, but there are several constants from calf to calf.

SOME CALVES need to have their throats held, such as this white calf.



First off, when she's in the show-ring, you both will be walking clockwise in a circle. Likely you will be either walking backwards or at the side, whichever is most comfortable for you.

The calf's head should be held high, but not so high that it makes her back look weak. This is especially important if you are working with a Brown Swiss. Have someone else hold the head so you can see the effect raising and lowering it has on how the calf looks. Make it a point to walk her very slowly, with even steps. Train her so she won't make large steps. The product should be the two of you moving together in a good rhythm.

Tricks of the trade.

Once you feel comfortable



HOLD THE HEAD high and practice leading without looking at your calf all the time. This will teach good habits to both you and her.

moving the calf, you should practice backing and setting up. Youth that win showmanship contests usually have heifers that will back up with ease.

Setting up the heifer is another important activity in the show-ring. Calves are judged first when they are moving, but in the end, are placed on how they stand in line. Most important is that the calf looks her best. So don't have her too stretched out or the back feet together.

There are other tricks that leaders can employ to make their calf look its best. Some calves may need to have their throat held when they are in the ring. This practice helps make the head look more clean and dairy. The easiest way is to hold skin below the jaw in your right hand while you hold the halter with the left. Ask a parent or older member if your heif-

er needs her throat held.

Other calves may need to have their back touched down if they are roached. Or she may need a little push underneath the barrel if the exact opposite is true and she is weak in her back. If she holds her tail up, you may need to push it back down. These tactics will help make the calf look its best but may not be necessary for many calves. Once again, ask an experienced show person for help.

Give her time.

Teaching calves to lead takes a lot of patience. Most cattle will take several hours of practice and training to become comfortable leading. It's best to try and make it a routine by doing it every day. This way, both she and you won't forget the good habits from the day before.

If you have an extra shed or pen, another strategy that may help is to tie heifers separate from their group pen. Find a well-ventilated, cool spot, and make a small bedding pack. You'll want to tie her low to the ground and make sure to leave enough rope so she can move and lie down. If you decide to try this, make sure that you walk her to water, and don't let her run. Remember, practice makes perfect!

PRACTICE LEADING as if you were in the ring by going in a clockwise direction.



Practice makes perfect for fitting



Once your heifer is walking and moving like a show winner, it's time to fit her and make her look her best. Fitting a heifer is an art. And, like all other forms of art, it takes time, practice, and patience. The first thing to remember is that even the best fitters started somewhere and made some mistakes.

Maryland's Chris Hill has been fitting cattle for over 20 years and is one of the most respected fitters in the country. He admitted that he made a lot of "messes" practicing and perfecting the art of cattle fitting. He also said

that he learned a lot by walking around shows and observing what other people were doing.

In fact, one of the best ways to learn is to watch, or even work with, someone who has experience fitting. Many of the best fitters have spent literally hundreds of hours honing their skills.

Once you are ready to try, don't be afraid to make mistakes and take it slow. It's best to practice clipping on some heifers at home that you don't plan to show. This will allow you to become more comfortable with the clippers before starting on a

heifer you plan on showing where a mistake might really cost you. Plus, it's a great way to cool them down during the summer heat.

Preparation is important.

It's important to prepare for clipping even before you get your equipment out. You should wash all the cattle first, as clipping a dirty heifer will dull the blades. Make sure she is dry before you start, too.

The clippers should be well oiled before starting. Make sure to have plenty of extra cord, as you don't want to worry about stretching the cord while you are clipping. An extension cord is a good idea in most cases.

Where you clip is also important. The floor should not be slippery as this will scare the heifer. Make sure other distractions like other animals in the pen are taken care of as well.

You should also try to get any heifer you plan to clip accustomed to being on a halter and around people. The noise of the clippers will probably scare her at first, so be careful. Make sure an experienced parent or older member is able to help you the first couple times that you do it.

The most important thing to remember is that you can take more hair off, but you can't put it back on. Fitting a heifer can be frustrating, but the satisfaction of a job well done is worth it!

FITTING AND SHOWING CONTESTS are held at many shows across the country and are a good way to test your skills.



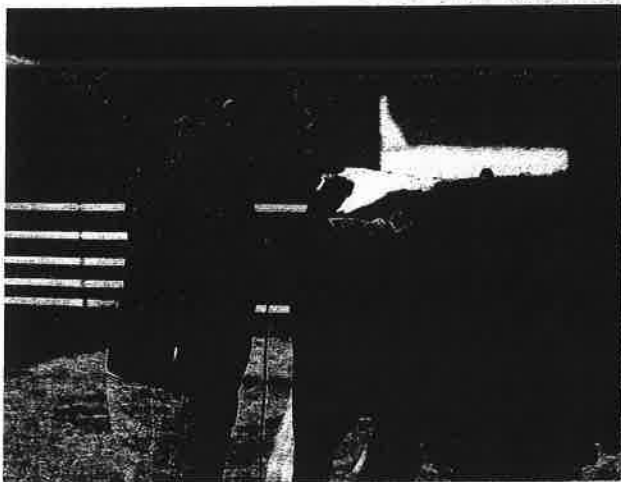
The art of fitting



Start with the tail. This will give the heifer time to adjust to the clippers and you an easy place to start. Start clipping about 2 or 3 inches above the long hair of the switch, and stop about the same distance from the vulva. This will leave hair to blend with the topline. You want to clip against the lay of the hair. Don't forget to trim the hairs around the vulva.



Next, move to the body. Keep the clippers flat against the body so you don't cut her. You'll want to clip up towards the top of her back. Make sure to leave about 2 to 3 inches of hair on both sides. This will be blended and shaped into the topline.



While you're clipping, the most important thing is to take long, steady strokes going against the lay of the hair. Short, quick strokes make the hair look choppy and also leave distracting clipper marks. You may have to run the clippers with the hair to smooth out any lines. Washing a heifer may remove them as well, so start before show day.



When you move to the belly, it's usually easiest to just shave all the hair off. Some more experienced fitters will leave it longer and then blend it into the body of the calf. This takes practice but can make the calf look deeper. You may also want to consider using plucking blades on the belly as well since they leave the hair longer than regular blades.



Trim hair off the legs. This will make her look cleaner and flatter in the bone. Be careful around the hocks, as this is an important place to get all the hair, which can be hard to do. Make sure to clip the inside of the legs all the way up to the belly. Don't forget the front legs, especially the knees.



You may need to turn the clippers in different directions to get all the hair. Try different methods, and see what works. Remember to try and make long strokes, and keep the clippers as flat against the bone as much as possible. You may also need to pull the skin back to make it easier.



One of the hardest places to get all the hair is right next to the hoof. Again, take it slow and hold the clippers in different directions. She may be more likely to kick while you are working on the hind legs, so be careful. Placing your hand on her hip or thigh can help keep her calm.



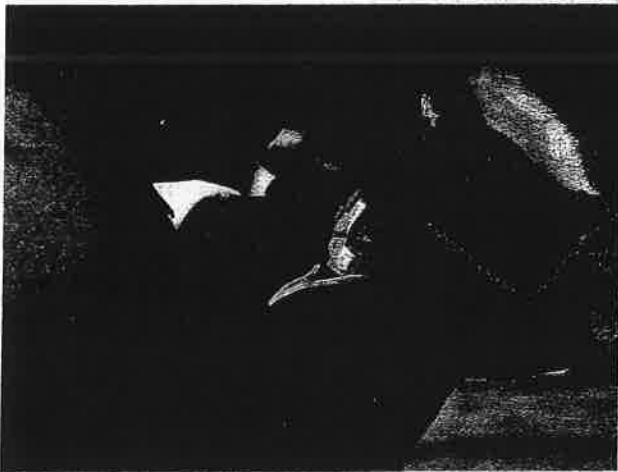
Once you think you've done everything except the head, go back over the heifer and look for spots you may have missed. You'll probably want to brush her down first to get the loose hair out of the way. Look behind the point of elbow, the underbelly, the insides of the legs, and right above the hooves. You may have to pull the skin out to get behind the elbow.



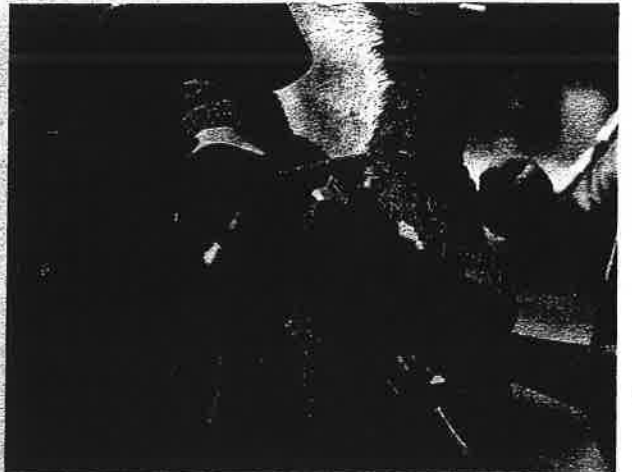
Clipping the head can be a challenge, which is why you might want to save it until the end. Most heifers will fight, so make sure you have someone to help. Start by clipping up the brisket and throat. You'll want to pull on the skin to make it easier. This will get her used to the sound of the clippers so close to her head.



You'll notice the hair swirls, so be prepared to clip in several different directions. As before, clip against the lay of the hair. You may want to watch an experienced person do it a couple times.



The ears are another important place to clip tightly. Make sure to clip all the hair, both on the inside and outside of the ears. You may want to use a smaller clipper or surgical blades to make the ears look cleaner.



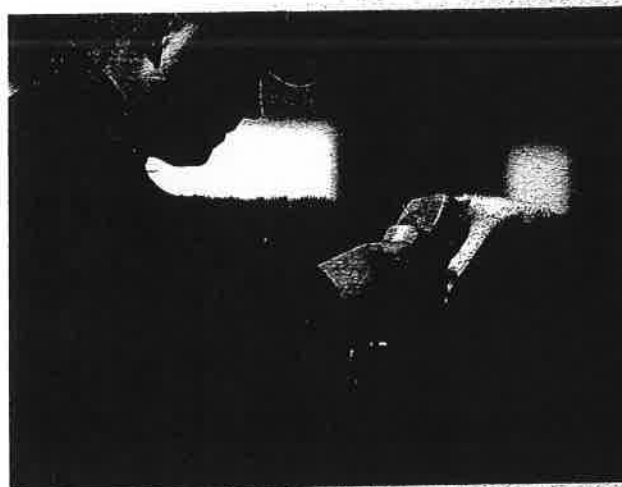
The last place to check is under the halter. This hair is hard to see and easy to forget. A clipping chute or headlock can help. It will take time and patience, but make sure to get it all.



After you have mastered the basic steps, start working on the topline. Use a hair dryer and a brush or comb with parallel teeth to stand the hair up. As with the clippers, go against the hair to make it stand. While a normal hair dryer will work fine, it will be much easier with a livestock model that is much hotter.



Hold the dryer at an angle so most of the heat is going into the brush. At this point, you may want to put on some rosin topline powder to help make the hair stand up.



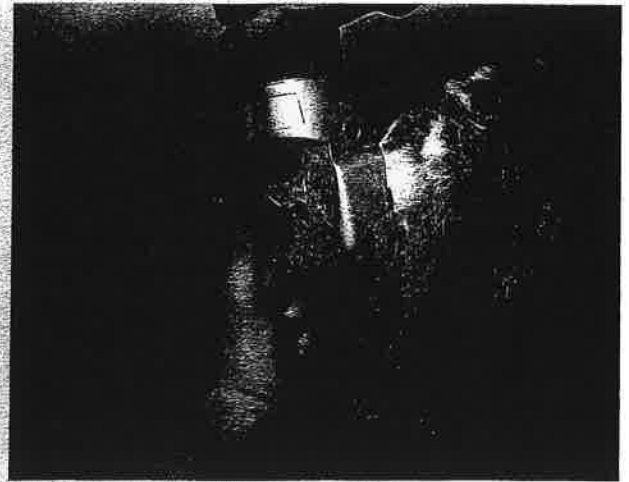
Before finishing the shoulders, tie the heifer's head up at the level you will hold it in the show-ring. Slowly, clip against the hair you left for the topline, taking it up to a point. You want to blend the hair from the shoulders, not cut it off leaving a mohawk. Clipping a topline takes a great deal of practice, so don't be afraid to make a mistake. Just take your time.



To keep your hand steady, you might want to rest the clippers on your finger. The goal is to make the heifer look even and angular, so you may want to look at her from behind to see which side needs more hair taken off. Be careful, as hair that's clipped off is gone. Experiment with holding the clippers at different angles.



Throughout the process, you might want to brush her off and blow the hair up again to see what it looks like. Finishing the topline means making the heifer look straight across the top when the judge looks at her from the side. Use your hand to steady the clippers. Blend the standing hair into the body of the heifer.



You may want to trim hair on a heifer with high pins pretty close. Your objective is a straight, level topline. At the tailhead, you want a level-looking rump. Clean out the hair on both sides of the tailhead.



Here she is, the finished product. Fitting a heifer can be frustrating and it takes a lot of practice and training. However, there is nothing like a job well done!

There's work to be done at the fair

With your heifer or cow looking her best after your clip job, it's time to pack and get to the fair! There are several steps to take before leaving for the fair that will make your life much easier once you get there. Cattle need to be washed and clipped, hay and straw packed, and supplies need to be gathered.

No matter how big your show string is, there are certain supplies that should be packed, including hay, feed, buckets, chairs and a show box.

The show box is the crown jewel of packing. Show boxes come in all shapes, sizes, and

styles and often double as a chair or a table for playing cards. A list of common show supplies appears on the next page. You may not need all of these items, but most are valuable to have on show day. Ask an adult or experienced member for help in deciding what you need.

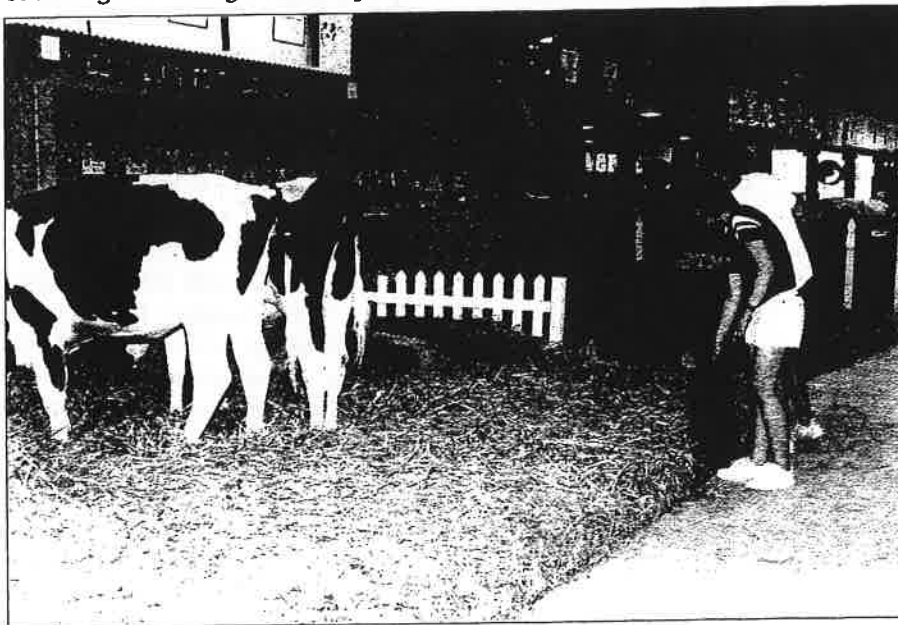
Feeding is one of the most important tasks to ensure a successful show day. Heifers can usually be kept on the same feed as at home. Make sure to pack enough feed for the number of days you will be gone. It's also best to pack several different kinds of hay if you have access to it. Keep feeding the rougher,

long-stem hay when you get there, but keep some nice alfalfa or grass hay in reserve for closer to show day.

Cows present a different challenge. The most important thing is to prevent her from dropping in milk production. Cows are creatures of habit, and taking them to a show may cause stress and a drop-off in production.

You may have to change their feeding before the show. Many cows are fed a TMR at home, but it can often be difficult to get fresh TMR at the show each day. As a result, you may want to feed her a grain and beet pulp mix at home a few weeks before the show to prepare her for the change. Work with a nutritionist or parent to determine how to best switch her feed for a show. As with heifers, be sure and pack at least a bale or two of hay per day for each cow.

PACKING THE STRAW against a straight board leaves the pack with an even edge. Shavings can help, as well.



Packing up to leave.

Before you leave, it's important to offer cattle water before loading them on the truck. If possible, try to feed at regular times and keep as much of the normal routine as possible.

Milking cows should be milked before traveling. NEVER truck a cow that is full of milk a long distance. If the trip will be longer than 12 to 14 hours, you may need to stop along the trip and find a place to milk.

SHOWBOX CHECKLIST



Fitting and grooming

- ___ Clear magic
- ___ Black magic
- ___ Fly spray
- ___ Show shine spray
- ___ White powder
- ___ Touch-up paint
- ___ Soft brush
- ___ Tail comb
- ___ Top comb or brush
- ___ Clippers
- ___ Oil
- ___ WD-40 (adhesive remover)
- ___ Clipper lubricant
- ___ Rosin topline powder
- ___ Blower
- ___ Hand dryer
- ___ Soap
- ___ Scrub brush
- ___ Curry comb
- ___ Hose
- ___ Hose nozzle
- ___ Wash suit

Feed and bedding

- ___ Feed scoop
- ___ Feed tubs
- ___ Buckets
- ___ Hay
- ___ Straw
- ___ Feed

Animal health

- ___ B12
- ___ Oxytocin
- ___ Appetite stimulant
- ___ Pill gun

Miscellaneous

- ___ Extra rope halter
- ___ Show halters
- ___ Cow neck ties
- ___ Harness
- ___ Fans
- ___ Water filter
- ___ Milk pail/pump
- ___ Wagon
- ___ Wheelbarrow
- ___ Broom/rake
- ___ Block
- ___ Shovel
- ___ Chairs
- ___ Decorations
- ___ Staple gun/staples
- ___ Scissors
- ___ Tape
- ___ Lightbulb
- ___ Plug adapter
- ___ Electric plug bar
- ___ Grooming chute
- ___ Pitchfork

Once you arrive at the show, be sure you have health papers handy. Many shows will not even allow cattle to be unloaded until health charts are inspected and certified. If this is the case, having the papers ready when it's your turn for check-in is important. This is especially true in hot, humid weather when cattle need to be unloaded as soon as possible.

Find a safe, unslippery place to unload. It should be easiest to move them on a halter since they should be comfortable leading by now. Depending on the weather, you may want to head straight to the washrack to clean them up or begin constructing the bedding pack.

Building a pack.

Keep in mind the goal of showing is to make your animal look her best. That is important not only in the show-ring but in the barn before and after the show, as well. The bedding for the cattle, or pack, can help in making animals look their best.

A common number of straw bales are two to three per head to start a pack and then a bale for each day at the fair. Those numbers depend on the size of your bales and the age of your cattle. You may also want several bags of wood shavings for the pack.

Take the straw you brought to start with, and shake it out, removing all clumps. Mix in shavings, keeping them towards the back where most of the moisture will be. Using a pitchfork, pack it tightly.

You should make the pack 2 to 4 feet longer than your calf, allowing her room to move and lie. Using extra straw and shavings will ensure the pack stays

dry and the cattle look their best. The result should be a soft, firm surface that is neat and comfortable for the cattle.

Taking it one more step.

While everyone at the show shakes out straw for their cattle, others put on their best display in hopes of capturing a herdsmanship award. The criteria for these awards vary from fair to fair, but the ideals remain the same. The cattle must be kept clean, the area around them organized, and a display should be educational and attractive.

The Wisconsin State Fair holds a herdsmanship competition among county herds during the youth portion of the fair. Steve Fronk from Barron County, WI, is one of the leaders of that county's 4-H group that exhibits every year. Fronk organizes a group of about 25 youth and 33 head of cattle. He explains that they begin planning their exhibit several months before the show and try to tie the display to the theme of the fair.

Barron County has traditionally done very well in herdsmanship competition, including winning top honors in 2003. When asked why, Fronk says the youth consider it a matter of pride.

"How we keep our cattle and

our display is really a reflection of the care we take of our farms at home. We view it that way, and I think the public does, too. Not only is there a tradition in this county, but there is a pride among our youth in what they do and how they look."

Fronk says the most important step in herdsmanship is keeping the cattle and area clean. "We have someone watching the cattle at all times, constantly sweeping the aisles and straightening the pack." He also adds that using a heavy amount of shavings at a one-to-one ratio with the straw helps the pack maintain its form.

Fair time should also include washing your heifer every day. This will brighten her coat as well as remove any dust or dirt that gathers throughout the day. Even though she may appear clean, it is best to give her a good scrubbing. This is especially true of light-colored cattle that seem to get cleaner the more times they are washed.

Focus your scrubbing on the heifer's topline. Topline hair is very fine and difficult to fit. By getting it as clean as possible, you will make your job of standing and straightening the hair much easier.

There are a variety of soaps

available, both livestock specific and commercial dish soaps. Many of the popular dish soaps will work fine on cattle. However, be sure to find one that doesn't irritate the heifer's skin.

The hooves can be difficult to clean, as well. A wire brush works well to loosen the dirt and manure. A plastic brush can be effective for cleaning topline. Don't forget to clean the tail (which may need to be soaked), ears, and scrub the underbelly. Most of the hard-to-reach places are the first ones a judge will check when you get into the ring. Taking extra time to do a good job may land you several spots higher in the final placing.

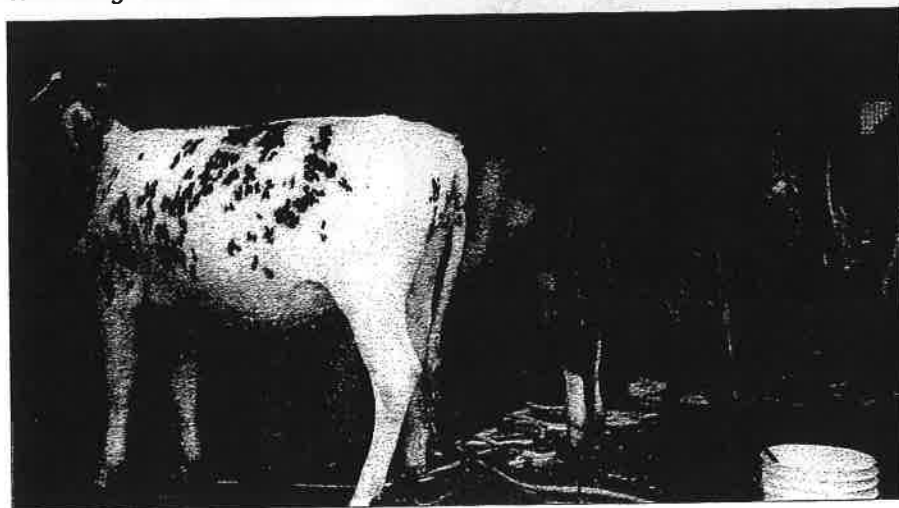
Replace dirty and wet bedding with fresh straw and shavings every day. Make sure to pull out the refused hay, as well. Your heifer should be ready to eat once she comes back from the wash rack, so use this time to get some fresh hay into her.

If it's your first time.

For first-timers, one of the best ways to learn is to work with someone who has shown before. One way to do this is to "tie in" with them.

Tying in allows you to work side-by-side with an experienced showperson so that you can learn how to prepare for a show. An important step to take when talking to someone about tying in is to answer questions such as who will bring supplies or how will labor be split up? How about trucking? Will there be any additional costs? Tying in is a great way to learn and help another exhibitor out. Answering these questions before arriving at the show can make everyone happier with the arrangement.

WASHING YOUR CATTLE every day is important, whether or not they look dirty. This will remove dust and brighten the coat.



Getting ready for the ring



Getting ready for the ring takes time and planning. Your hard work and summer sweat can easily go down the drain if you don't plan for show day and make sure all details are taken care of. Grab your whites, and get to the fair. It's show day!

Cows need to be bagged.

If you are showing a lactating cow, there are several more steps to take to get her ready for the ring. Remember, the judge will only see her once, so you want her looking her best. And for that to happen, her udder needs to look its best.

A cow should be "bagged" to have a certain amount of milk in her udder. For every cow that amount will be different; some will need more milk (which takes more time) than others. To figure out how long you need to bag your cow, observe how her udder looks 8, 10, 12 and 14 hours after her last milking.

There are several key areas of the udder to evaluate as you look at it. First, does it look full? The udder should come very high and wide in the rear udder attachment. The rear quarters should also look full and have an attractive curvature as you

look at the cow from the side.

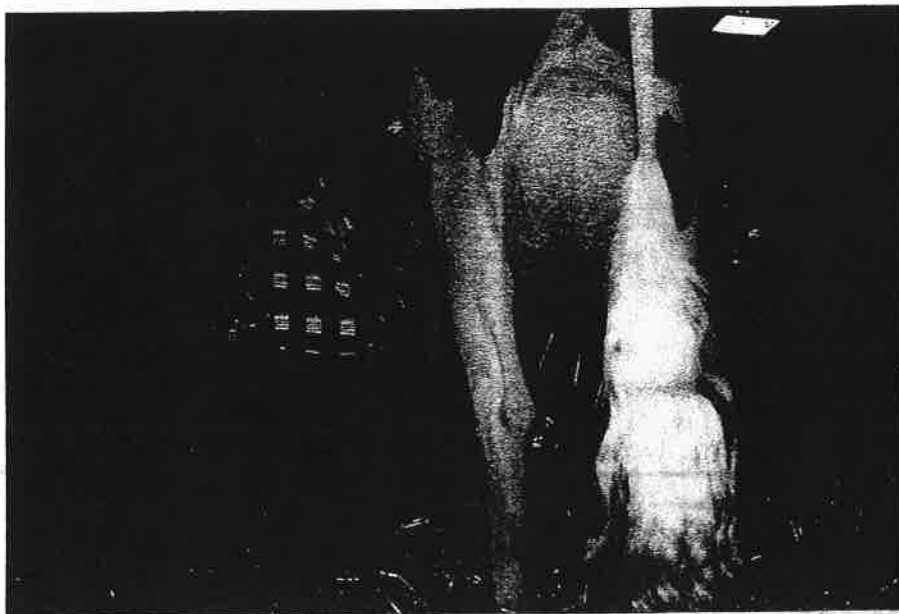
Second, how does the fore udder look? The key to bagging cows is to find a balance where the rear udder is high and wide but the fore udder is not bulging. Too much milk in nearly every cow will make the fore udder look loose and poorly attached. Make sure the fore udder looks snug.

Finally, the udder cleft (or median suspensory ligament) should look strong. This also means teats should be hanging straight to the ground. As the udder gets too full, the udder cleft will weaken and the teats will begin to strut: make sure this doesn't happen to your cow.

You may find that the quarters will need to be bagged with different amounts of milk to look balanced. Most often, the fore udder will need to have less milk in it than the rear udder. If that's the case, plan accordingly. However, if you decide to use this strategy, make sure the differences aren't too great or you may end up with an udder that tilts one direction or another.

Once you know how much milk will be needed in each quarter, you'll need to find out a good estimate of what time your cow will be entering the ring. Most shows will have a set time to start 2-year-old classes, so find out what the schedule is and plan from that.

BAGGING COWS TAKES time and practice. Observe how your cow looks with different amounts of milk in her udder before deciding.



For example, if you determine that you need 12 hours of milk in the fore udder of your 3-year-old, and 14 hours of milk in her rear udder, and the two-year old class is scheduled for 12:30 p.m., you should try to have her bagged for around 12:45. (This of course depends on how many 2-year-olds there are). That means that she should be milked at 10:45 the night before. The fore udder should then be remilked two hours later at 12:45 a.m.

Before calling it a night, you'll want to make sure that your cattle have plenty of hay to eat overnight. The more hay they eat the night before the show, the more likely it will translate into depth of body for show day. Try to feed some longer-stemmed hay such as timothy or oat hay and save the good grassy hay for show morning. A drink of water might help as well.

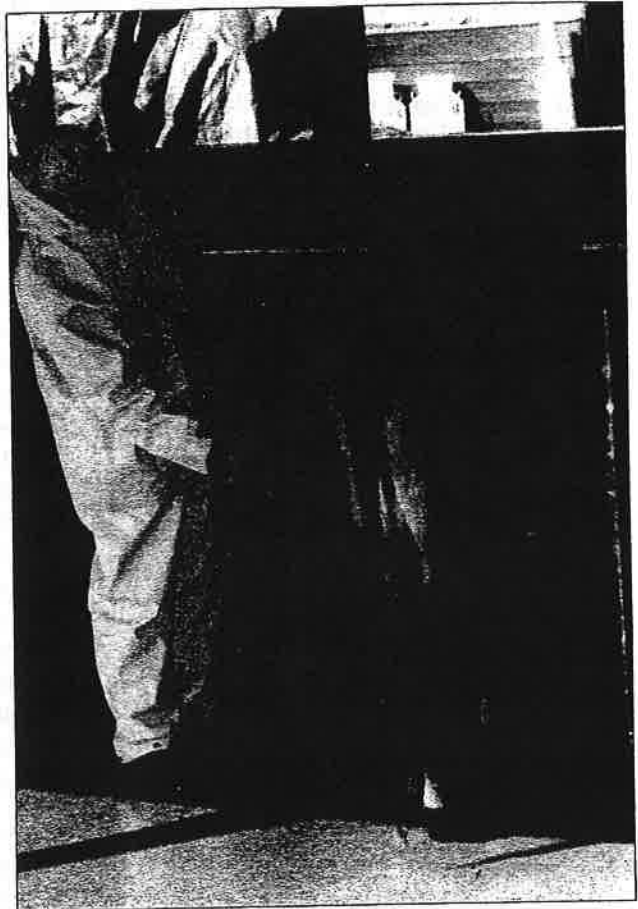
Get out of bed!

The first step of the day is to get to the fair and wash your heifer. This may not seem like the most pleasant job in the early morning, but it is very important to get your day off on the right foot. You should try to have her washed at least 4 to 5 hours before the show is scheduled to start. This will allow her time to

dry and make sure you aren't having to rush on the final preparations.

When you are washing, make sure to focus on the topline. As mentioned previously, it is very important to have clean hair to work with. You should also focus on the hard-to-reach areas. Give a good scrubbing to the underbelly and also between the legs. Make sure any brown spots are cleaned. Scrub the hooves until they are spotless. These are all areas where the judges will look when judging showmanship. And don't forget the head and tail, either!

This is also the time to clean out the animals' bedding and make sure the pack is fresh. Clean all the moisture out of the pack, even if you have to dig down to get to it. The last thing you want is to see your



THIS TIME when you are washing, make sure to pay extra attention to cleaning the topline.

hard work in the wash rack ruined because of manure in the pack.

When you bring her back to the pack, have a pan of feed for her to eat. Cattle are usually hungry when they return from washing, so now is a good time to get her to start eating. Feed her less than you normally would, as you want her to keep eating up until close to showtime. At this point, someone should be watching her at all times.

Just like clipping, show day feeding, or filling, is also an art. Beet pulp is a feed that show veterans rely on to add depth to their cattle. It is usually fed damp. Getting your heifer to eat a lot of it may be a challenge, especially if the taste is new to her. You may want to try her on it at home first. About 2 to 3 hours before showtime, you

USE A a touch-up spray to cover any spots that you may have missed while you were washing. Apply just a little at a time and be careful.



should really start giving it to her, as much as she will eat.

Feed her small amounts of it at a time, and mix a little grain with the beet pulp if you have to. Unless your heifer is a little heavy or thick boned, you'll probably want her to eat all she can. Once she quits eating the beet pulp, offer some of the high-quality hay you've had in reserve.

You'll want to be very careful in giving her water. Beet pulp will expand with water, so giving her too much may cause her to have a pot belly. Give just a couple sips through the morning. She can be offered a little right before going to the ring, but make sure an older member is watching and tells you when to stop.

Touch up before showtime.

As time grows closer to your

class, it's time to start getting ready. Make sure you are wearing proper show clothes. You'll want to consult the rulebook for what is allowed, but in most cases all-white shirt and pants works best. Hard soled shoes (not sneakers or tennis shoes) are also the most appropriate. You'll want to make sure there are no logos or names on your shirt if you're in a 4-H show.

Give yourself enough time to finish the topline. The process is the same as we discussed in earlier chapters. Make sure to use some adhesive to make it stand hard. Try some powder to cover up white spots that aren't completely clean. Touch-up spray paint may work on other colors, but make sure to go easy on it and apply only a little at a time. You'll also want to comb the tail switch out by holding it upside

down and combing the hair out. This will make it puffy.

Clean the ears out with a paper towel with a little rubbing alcohol on it. Make sure the hooves are clean and shine. For Jerseys or Brown Swiss, you can paint them with black paint. For a final touch, apply an oil or show spray, and brush it in with a soft brush. You may also want to use a fly spray, especially on the legs and underbelly. Be careful not to use too much. The judge doesn't want an oily hand after touching your heifer.

Once you hear your class called, it's time to get down to the ring. Make sure you are paying attention to the announcements and you don't miss it. If you're having trouble hearing the public address system, let the fair staff know about it in advance.

You should use a leather halter in the ring, preferably one with a rounded nose. Holsteins should be shown in black halters with a silver or gold chain. Having someone follow you with a bucket or tub filled with straw to catch manure is also a good idea. This is more important for those showing cows.

Finally, don't be late to the ring. Remember, the show will go on whether you are there or not.

LEAVE EARLY so that you don't have to rush to the ring. If you have a cow, find someone to follow you with a pail to catch manure



It's show time!



Once it's time to go into the ring, you and your heifer should be looking your best. Start showing her as you go into the ring. You should be holding at the head with your left hand. Walk backwards or at the side, whichever is most comfortable. Keep enough distance between you and the animal in front of you to allow the judge to get a full look at your heifer. Move at a relatively slow and steady pace. If it's your first time showing, you'll probably want to watch a class or two before yours to get the hang of it.

It's important to maintain eye contact with the judge, but don't stare and lose track of your heifer. Remember to smile, as you should be having fun. Try to ignore noises outside the ring, as well as the distraction of friends

and family who are watching.

If the judge likes your heifer, he may look at her several times and keep coming back to her as you walk around the ring. This is why it is so important to watch the judge as well as show your animal to your best ability the entire time you are in the ring.

The judge uses hand signals to place the cattle. If you aren't paying attention, you could miss one and lose several placings.

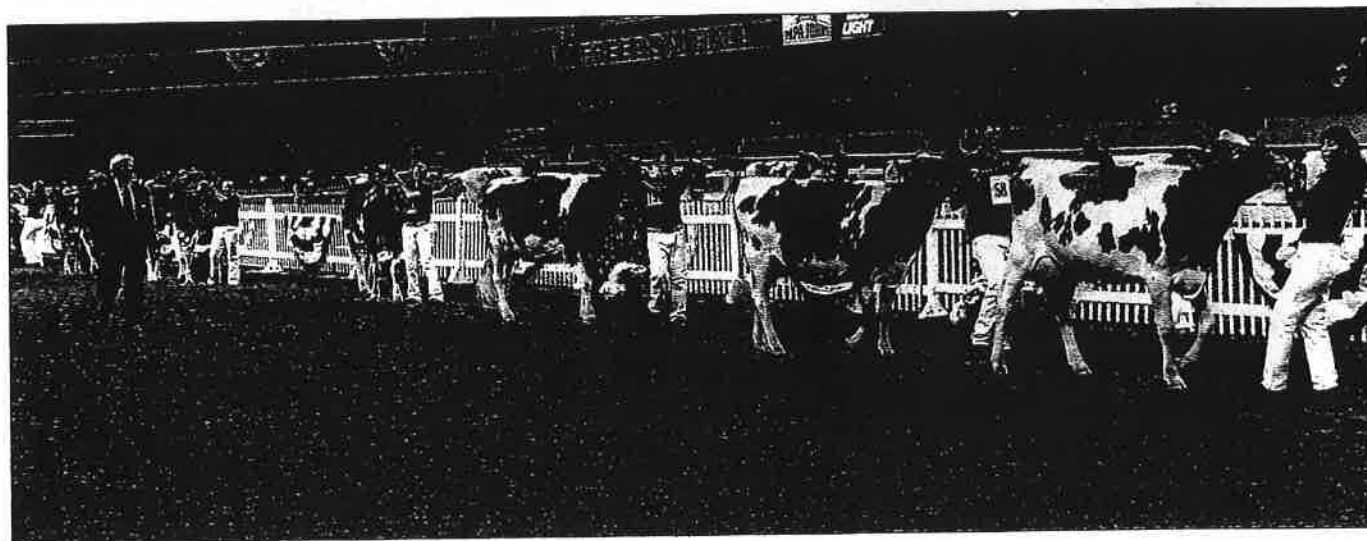
Once you have been called into line, continue walking, but at a slightly quicker pace. Don't race to get there as the judge often watches heifers walk into line. Look for the ringman who should direct you how to line up. Start to walk backwards once you get close to your spot, watching the back legs. Once they look how you want them to,

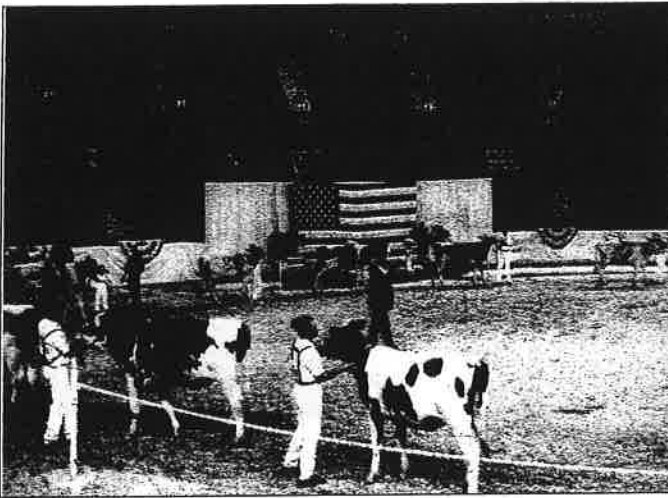
stop. Remember, the front feet should be side by side. For a heifer, the rear leg closest to the judge should be back. The opposite is true for a cow.

Make sure to leave space so the judge can see down the side of your heifer — but not too much, or the judge may be tempted to place another between you and the one beside you. As the judge moves from side to side, switch the back legs so the judge always gets the best look at your heifer.

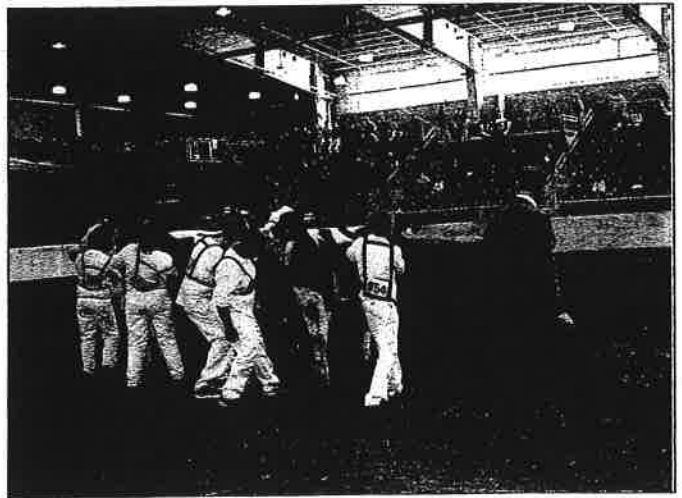
Continue to watch your heifer as well, and make sure she doesn't move her feet. If she becomes restless, you may need to circle her around the line. As you come back in, take a wide turn and bring her back into line straight.

Once the judge has evaluated the cattle in line, they will begin





AS YOU CIRCLE THE RING clockwise, pay attention to the judge so you don't miss his signals.



AS THE JUDGE MOVES to your other side, don't forget to switch the back legs.

placing by hand signals. Again it is very important to pay attention and not miss yours. Continue showing until you are placed into the final line-up, as the judge may change the placing right up until the last minute before the ribbons are handed out.

When the class is over, the first thing to remember is not to

BONNIE AYARS, along with her husband John, were the first husband/wife team to judge at World Dairy Expo.



quit. From the time you leave the barn until your heifer is back in her stall, it's important to pay attention. Keep showing her until you have left the ring.

As you walk back to the barn, hold her head up high. Many judges and other dairy farmers go to watch shows, so you never know who may be watching. Additionally, safety is very important as you walk back to the barn. Avoid any wet, steep or smooth surfaces. Avoid gravel when you can, as well. If the show is over, milk out lactating cows to relieve stress on their udders. You'll also want to wash out topline with soap and an adhesive-remover.

Before loading up to head home, try and allow your cattle a little time to rest. This is most important if you are showing milking cows or have to travel a long distance home. Showing can be very tiring for cows of all sizes and allowing them to rest is better for their health.

Tips from a judge.

Bonnie Ayars is a familiar name to the show-ring, especially to those in the Guernsey breed. She has judged shows across the country and was one of the judges of the senior show-

manship contest at the 2003 World Dairy Expo. Ayars says the first thing she looks for is the same no matter how old the showperson is.

"I like to see enthusiasm from both the big and young kids. For older kids, it's focused but pleasant. For the younger ones, big smiles. It's been my experience that a good attitude in the ring means a good work ethic at home," she says.

The first warning she gives is to make sure you've worked enough with your heifer at home. "Anticipate the unexpected in the show-ring, especially with the noise and people. I hear kids tell me all the time, 'She didn't do this at home.' That's fine, but you need to prepare for anything in the ring."

Bonnie points out that every judge is looking for something different. However, she stresses that she likes to see the leader and the calf blend together. "Poise is fundamental for both the leader and the animal. Everything should look effortless and as tailored as possible. That's a sign the calf has been worked with."

In a showmanship contest, you really need to be on your toes. You may be asked ques-

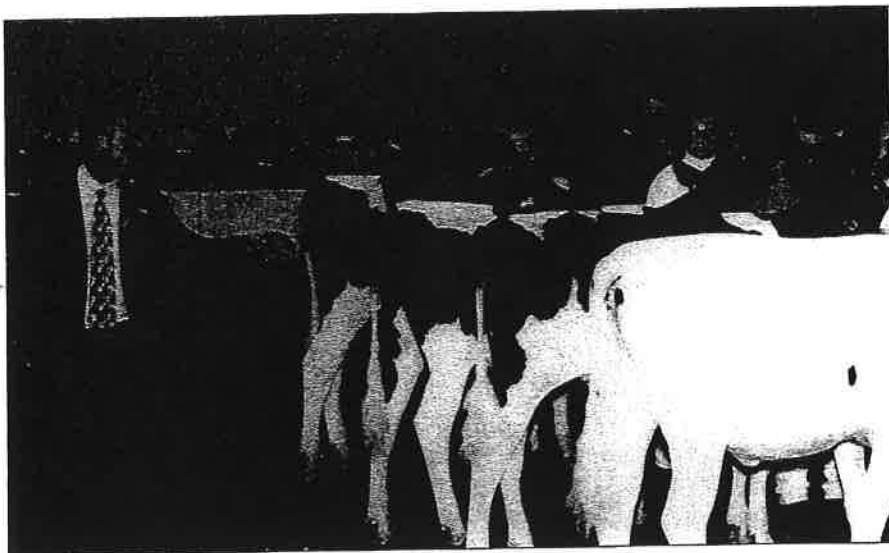
tions about the sire, dam, or pedigree of your calf. You could be asked to evaluate, or how you would improve your heifer. You might be asked to start and stop several times or back her up in line. You might even be asked to lead another animal in the class.

Bonnie says she enjoys judging showmanship because it levels the playing field for everyone. "Even if you don't have a super animal, you can still show her off and win the showmanship class." Here are some items she points out that often need improving for youth:

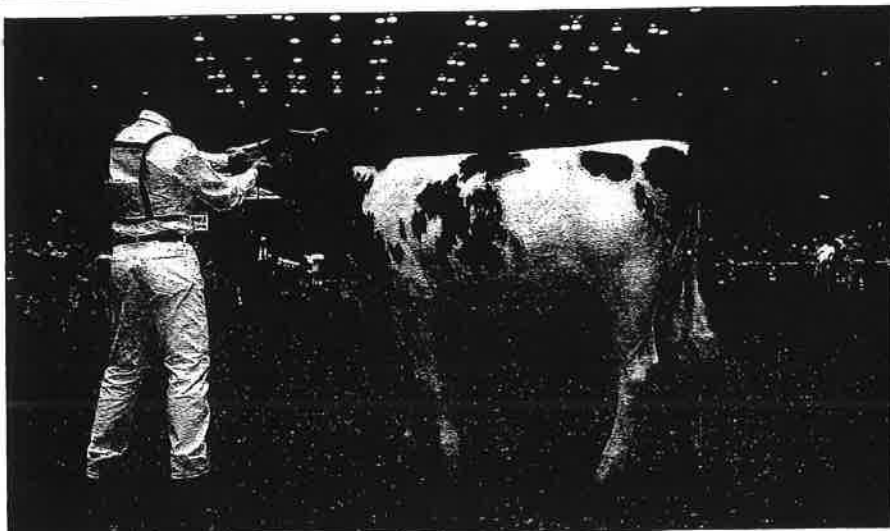
- Staring at the judge. You should give equal time to the judge and to your calf.
- Overreacting if a heifer misbehaves. The heifer acting up won't hurt you; it's your reaction that could. Relax, and quietly calm her down.
- Not setting her up quick enough. A well-trained heifer will set up very quickly.
- Show-ring attire. You should be dressed professionally with comfortable fitting clothes that complement, not distract from, the animal.

Bonnie concludes with a reminder that sportsmanship is important in showing, as well. "It is in your favor to listen to a judge's reasons with an open mind. If the result isn't as you want it to be, that's fine. But don't quit or look unprofessional while you are in the ring.

"You are never too young or too old to learn about being a professional. Watch the big guys, and look for ways to improve. They reached the top because of experience, good teachers and enthusiasm. And, no matter what, don't stop showing until you are out of the ring."



THE JUDGE WILL SIGNAL with hand motions in the ring. Pay attention so you don't miss them!



REMEMBER THE TIPS from earlier in the book. Hold the head high, watch the judge, and hold throat if it needs it.



CHECKING FOR DIRTY EARS is one way that showmanship judges sort out competitors in a showmanship class.

