

SHOW RING READY

A Beginner's Guide to Showing Dairy Cattle



NZ Dairy Breeds Federation



jersey^{NZ}

Introduction

Working with dairy cattle and preparing them for a show can be an extremely rewarding and fun experience, teaching young people many valuable lessons and skills that can be applied to all areas of their life. Responsibility, patience, self-confidence, teamwork, sportsmanship, problem-solving and organisational skills are just a few things youth will gain throughout their project work. This workbook is designed to serve as a guide for youth, parents and dairy leaders who are invested in learning the basic skills associated with caring for and exhibiting dairy cattle at shows.



Table of Contents

- 4 Selecting your project animal
- 5 Caring for your show animal
 - Keeping records
 - Housing
 - Nutrition
 - Animal health
- 8 Preparing for the show
 - Equipment
 - Beginning halter training
 - Washing
 - Fitting your animal
 - Completing show entries
- 19 At the show
 - Arriving at the show and herdsmanship
 - What to expect at the show
 - Showmanship
 - NZ Dairy Breeds Federation recommended showmanship guidelines
 - Final preparations on show day
- 29 After the show
- 30 Resources and activities
 - Growth standard recommendations for Holstein heifers
 - Dairy project budget worksheet
 - Example show sign

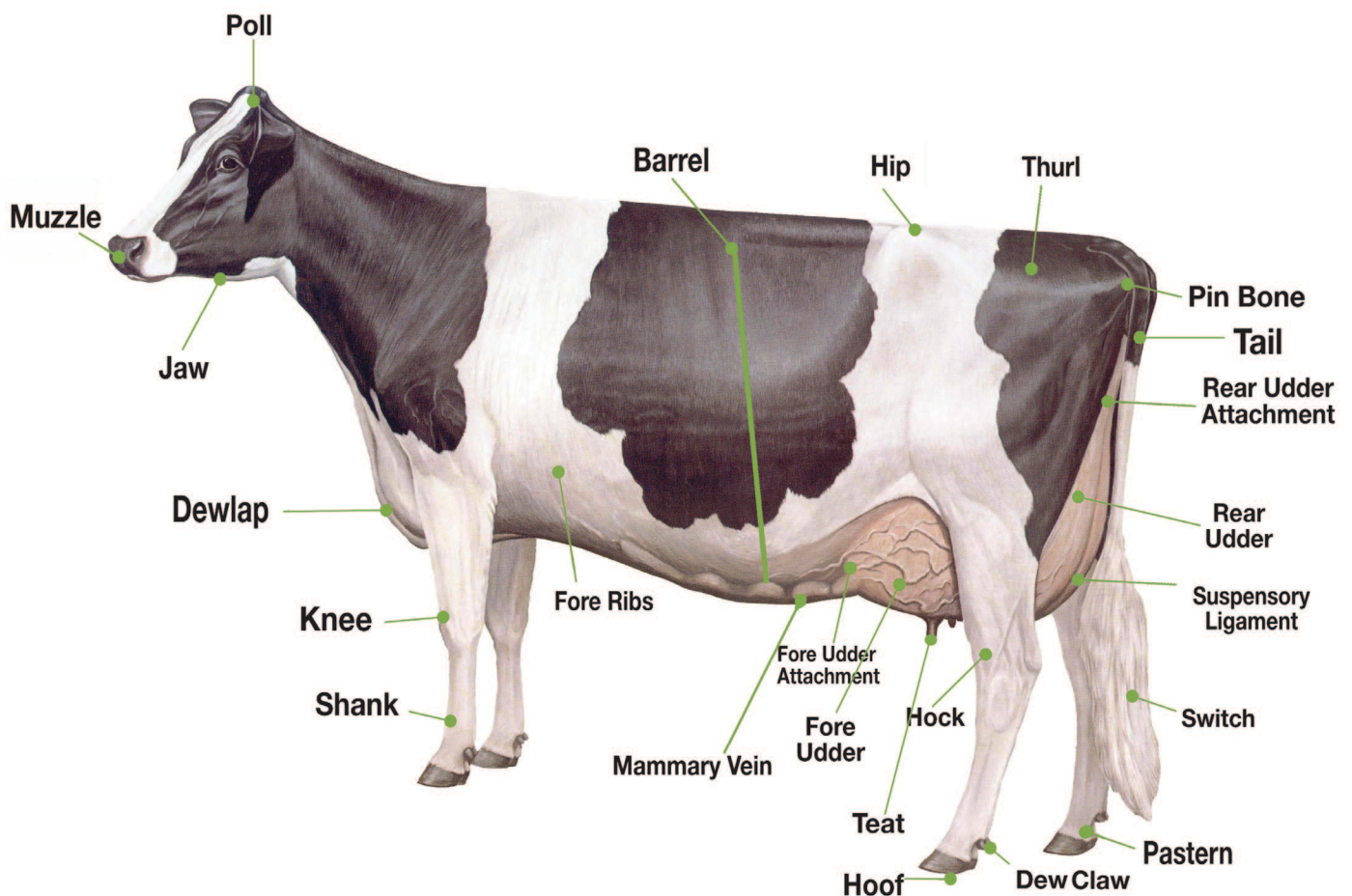
Selecting your animal

Whether you live on a dairy farm with many animals to pick from or you're planning to go out and purchase or lease your first animal, there are a few things to take into consideration.

There are several different dairy breeds in New Zealand. Some people have a preference when it comes to breeds, and you may be limited in breed selection depending on what you have available on your farm, or what's available from area farms or sales.

Consider what age of animal you'd like to show. It's best to pick an animal that will be appropriately sized – not too big or too small – for the person who will be showing it. Next, look at the birthdates of the animals you have to choose from. Your ideal heifer should be well grown and competitively sized in her class, so look at animals that would be some of the older ones in their class (see page 19 for a list of class breakdowns by age).

If you have more than one calf to choose from, your favourite or the friendliest may not necessarily be a show winner. If the calf is registered, evaluate its pedigree, especially if you are purchasing the animal and plan to raise her and eventually milk her as a cow. The most important consideration when selecting the calf should be her overall physical correctness. An ideal calf is free of major faults – well grown for her age, long-bodied, deep-ribbed and feminine, with a desirable set of feet and legs.



Caring for your show animal

Keeping records

Preparing the necessary paperwork is one of the most important steps in making sure you will be ready for the show season. First, find out if your animal is registered with its breed association. It may need to be registered or transferred into the exhibitor's name by a specific date, depending on which shows you are planning to enter. If she's not registered but is eligible to be, obtain a registry application from the breeder or breed association and complete it as soon as possible. If you are purchasing or leasing a registered calf, it's a good idea to become a member of the breed's youth programme.

You will want to keep accurate health records on your animal, such as when they get dehorned and receive vaccinations (see page 32). It is also a good idea to record your calf's performance to ensure it's meeting benchmarks for health and growth recommendations (on page 31), and see how your heifer compares to those benchmarks.

Another helpful exercise with your dairy project will be to create a budget and keep track of your expenses. Consider what you will spend on purchasing any needed equipment, veterinary care, feed, bedding, transportation, and show entry fees for your project (see page 33).

Housing

There are many housing options for raising calves and heifers. If you are on a farm that already has youngstock housing, it's ideal to separate your show animal(s) from the rest of the herd when you are preparing them for the show. This is helpful in many ways, including making them more convenient to work with, being able to monitor their health and condition more closely, keeping them cleaner and being able to feed them a ration specifically tailored for their needs.

If held indoors, your calf's pen should be sanitary, dry, well-ventilated, protected from drafts, with an area that provides shade and protection from weather. Ensure the area is free from debris, sharp objects, or anything else that could injure your animal.

The area should be large enough that the animal will not be crowded, has room to move about, is easily accessible to you, and conveniently located to areas where you wash and practise leading your heifer. The pen should also have a designated area for feed and water.

Finally, if you have multiple animals you are working with, it is acceptable to keep them all in one pen/paddock, as long as there is not much size difference between the animals. For example, you would not want a young calf to have to share a pen/paddock with a more aggressive yearling. This would create unfavourable competitiveness for feed, and the younger calf may be bullied and not get all of the feed it requires.

Nutrition

Your animal may be dependent on you for feed, quality water and general care. If an animal's nutrient needs are not met, it will not grow at an acceptable rate. [Consult with a dairy vet](#), nutritionist, experienced dairy farmer, or showman to develop a diet that will allow your animal to reach its maximum growth potential while maintaining a healthy weight and body condition.

Feeding times should be consistent from day to day and good quality hay should be fed to aid in rumen development. In show animals, feeding hay helps the animals develop their depth of body and spring of rib. Ensure you are feeding appropriate levels of grain and/or silage to help prevent weight gain from excessive amounts of energy in the diet. As it gets closer to the time of a show, you should transition to feeding the animal a similar diet to what it will receive at the show. This is important so the animal does not go off-feed and prevents stomach problems from a sudden change in diet.

All feed should be placed in a way that it will be easy for the animal to eat and is unlikely to get dirty. Animals should not consume dirty feed. If you have multiple animals in one pen, ensure enough space at the feed bunk so all animals have an equal opportunity to eat.

It is extremely important that your animal has constant access to fresh, clean water. Heifers will drink [several](#) litres of water each day, even more in the hot summer months.

Whether your animals are kept separate or in a group, monitor their body condition regularly. The heifers' feed may need to be adjusted periodically, depending on how they are developing. Heifers that carry too much excess fat will not only be unappealing in the show ring, but it could also lead to developmental problems as they mature.

Animal health

Several things are important to keeping your animal healthy throughout the year. A thorough vaccination programme along with a watchful eye, fresh water, and good feed are all key ingredients to raising quality animals. You should develop a good relationship with a local veterinarian who can help advise you on the best practices for keeping your animal healthy and meeting all health requirements you might need to exhibit at a show.

Dehorning is an encouraged management practice in the dairy industry, for the safety of the animal, other animals, and people. Hopefully your animal will already be dehorned when you obtain it, but if it is not, it should be taken care of immediately. Ideally, calves should be dehorned as soon as a person can feel where the horn buds are. The younger the calf is dehorned, the less stressful it is on an animal. You should also check for extra teats on your heifer around this time. Extra teats should be removed as soon as an experienced person is able to distinguish them from normal teats. If your animal needs to be dehorned or has extra teats, consult with a veterinarian or other experienced individual, as these procedures should only be performed by knowledgeable professionals.

Vaccination is an important investment in preventative care that can go a long way to keeping your animal and herd healthy. Your veterinarian can help you create a vaccination programme customised to the needs of your farm. Purchased animals should be vaccinated prior to arrival on your farm and closely observed after they enter the general population. Medical procedures usually cause some stress to an animal, so try not to group them with other stressful events, such as weaning, as that could cause longer recovery time.

Hoof care has a large impact on your animal's general health, as well as how she walks and will look in the show ring. Management and housing factors have a major effect on hoof growth and wear. Animals kept

primarily on soft surfaces, such as grass or a bedded pack, will not have much opportunity to wear their hoofs down, and their toes may grow too long. Hoof trimming should be done at least one month before the show. Consult with your veterinarian or an experienced dairy farmer for advice, as hoof trimming should only be done by someone with experience.

Common external parasites in cattle include lice, ticks, mites, flies and mosquitoes. Flies can be a significant stress on young calves, and breed in moist warm climates. There are many methods of fly control, including pour-on, sprays, and rubs or dusters, and using some combination of these methods may prove most effective. Your animal will be more comfortable, and their coat will be healthier and easier to work with.

Monitor your animal for signs of common bovine ailments, such as ringworm, and pinkeye, as all of these may make your animal ineligible for a show because they are infectious. **Ringworm** is a common fungus, usually found in heifers, that begins as a round scaly spot with hair loss. It is commonly first seen on the face, and can spread rapidly across the body. Be very cautious when handling animals with ringworm, as it easily spread to other cattle (if you have one heifer in a pen with ringworm, chances are the others will develop it too) and can spread to humans. **Pinkeye** describes redness and inflammation of the lining of the eyelid and eyeball. Pinkeye is highly contagious, and commonly spread by flies. Consult your veterinarian for the treatment of ringworm, pinkeye and the removal of warts as soon as you notice signs of them on your animal.



Preparing for the show

Equipment

In order to properly care for and groom your animal, you will need the right show gear. The following list includes recommended items to bring to a show. All of these supplies should be available at your local farm supply store, or show supply websites. Show supplies are an investment, but with proper care, they should last several years.

STORAGE

Show box or other large container

BRUSHES

Stiff-bristled brushes
Soft-bristled brushes
Curry comb
Tail brush or comb

WASHING EQUIPMENT

Scrub brush
Hose
Spray nozzle } Usually supplied
at shows
Soap
Bucket
Cloth to clean ears
Topline brush for the tail

CLIPPING EQUIPMENT

Large clippers
Small clippers with fine blades
Two sets of blades
Blade lubricant (such as WD-40)
Blow dryer
Extension cords (three-prong)
Topline brush
Hair adhesive

PAPERS

TB Certificate } When required

CLOTHES

Show clothes
Hard toed shoes
Clothes to wear while washing
Rubber boots

BEDDING SUPPLIES

Straw } When allowed
Shavings } Supplied
Broom
Pitch fork
Shovel
Wheelbarrow

TOOLS

Duct tape
Scissors
Zip ties

TACK

Nylon halter
Leather show halter
Two-way ties } Optional
Neck chains }

OTHER SHOWBOX SUPPLIES

Fly spray
Extra rags/baby wipes/paper towels
Rubbing alcohol

GENERAL MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Thermometer*

*If you think your animal is becoming sick at a show, contact the official show veterinarian or another professional for assistance.

FEED SUPPLIES

Grain
Hay
Beet pulp
Water bucket
Feed tub
Feed scoop

EXHIBIT

Fans
Display decorations
Chairs
Extension cords (three-prong)
Table

Now that you've made all the preparations to set yourself up for success, it's time to start working with your animal. You should begin working with your animal as early as possible or as soon as the calf is old enough, but at least two to three months prior to your show. The more you work with your animal, the better the experience will be for everyone involved. Dairy cattle are creatures of habit and they will respond best to calm and consistent practices. When working with your animal, always take care to be calm and gentle, and try not to make any sudden movements or loud noises that would startle your heifer.

Before doing anything with your animal, ensure you have proper attire and footwear to minimise your risk of injury. Flip flops, sandals, and bare feet are strictly unacceptable when working with cattle. Hard toe and soled shoes are a must.

An important first step is getting your heifer accustomed to normal grooming routines, such as being led, handled and washed. Spend time with your animal to get her used to people. Talk to your heifer to familiarise her to your voice, and handle her with gentle movements to keep her calm. Grooming her daily will help improve her appearance, keeping the hair and skin healthier. The more time you spend with your calf, the sooner you will develop a relationship and trust. All good showmen have a natural, quiet, gentle way with cattle.

Beginning halter training

Though not always possible, the best time to halter train an animal is when it is young and can be easily handled. Have at least one person assisting you, especially the first several times you are catching your heifer. When catching your animal to put a halter on it, again remember to work calmly and quietly. You don't want the animal to feel like she is being chased – it should be a pleasant experience that she will grow to enjoy.

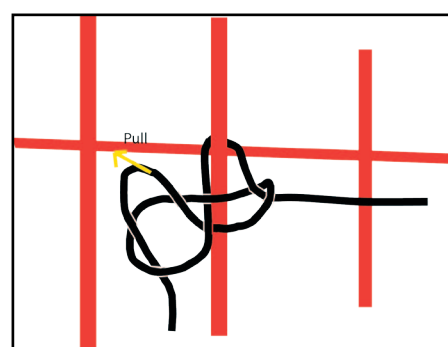
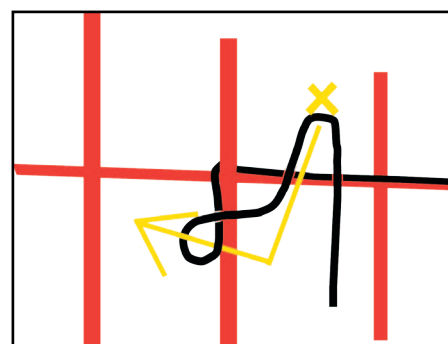
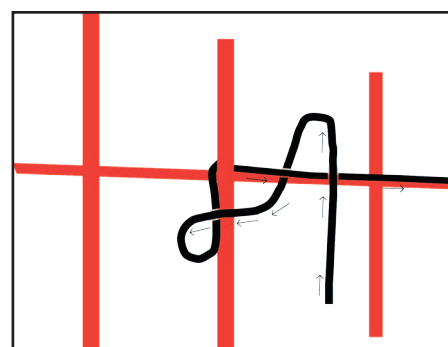
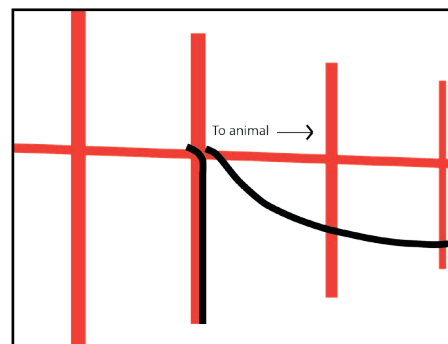
Always use a nylon halter for training. To apply the halter, hold the lead rope in one hand, and make sure the chin strap provides enough slack so there is plenty of room for the animal's nose to fit through. The adjustable side of the halter always goes on the left side of the calf's head. Do not drag the end of the halter as it may become tangled in the calf's legs and/or get dirty. Grasp the head stall in your other hand and slip it over the calf's head and ears. Arrange the chin strap and guide up its chin, tightening the lead rope to fit. The nose piece should be evenly positioned between the top nostrils and the eyes. Nylon halters typically come in two sizes (calf and heifer/cow), so try to use one that's made for the age of the animal you are working with.

Start off by tying your heifer with a halter for up to an hour the first few days. Her head should be tied at a comfortable height (not too high – the heifer should be able to stand comfortably without having to stretch her neck), with no more than 13 centimetres of slack in the rope. If the lead rope has too much slack in it, the heifer may be able to get tangled up and injure themselves. Tie your animal in a safe, quiet place, on secure footing that she will not slip on if she moves around. Never leave an animal tied up unattended, and never leave them tied for an extended period of time in direct sunlight. Always tie your animal using a quick-release slip knot, so you can untie her quickly and easily if an emergency were to arise. You may want to practise this on a rope several times until you get the hang of it before attempting to tie your animal up. See the next page to learn how to tie a slipknot.

Use this time while your heifer is tied up to begin forming a bond with her, work calmly and quietly, talk to your animal and keep a hand on her at all times so she knows where you are and doesn't become startled. Take care not to get kicked, and never put yourself in a position where you would be trapped against a wall or other hard objects if your animal were to swing around. You can brush your heifer, and if she is calm enough, work your way up to her head and spend some time petting her neck and shoulder area. This will get her accustomed to you being by her head and will make the transition to leading her easier.

How to tie a quick release slip knot

1. Wrap the end of the lead rope around a secure rail.
2. Wrap the loose end of the lead rope back over the part of the rope between the rail and the rest of the halter, forming a circle.
3. Reach your fingers through the circle, and grasp a section of lead rope.
4. Pull that section of lead rope back through the circle, forming a loop and pulling until the knot is tight.
5. To secure the knot, slip the loose end of the lead rope through the loop (but don't pull it tight).
6. To release the knot, remove the loose end of the lead rope from the loop and pull. The knot should come undone quickly and easily.



Developing a partnership

Once your heifer is used to the halter and stands quietly when tied up, it's time to begin training her to lead properly. Again, it will be helpful to have someone to assist you. Heifers often walk better if they have someone to follow them when they are first learning. Always lead your animal from her left side. If you attempt to pull a stubborn calf right away, it may plant its legs and pull back on the lead rope. If this happens, let the tension off the rope. When the animal takes a step forward, release its head tension. Pull only to start it walking again after it stops. Remember you are working with a young animal, and don't try to do too much the first few times. Practise leading on a dry, level surface that doesn't have many rocks or other debris you or your heifer could step on.

When leading your heifer, NEVER wrap the lead rope around your hand, arm, waist, or any other part of your body. If the heifer moved away from you quickly when you were bound like this, you could be seriously injured. If your animal starts to pull and tries to get away, try to keep ahold of her, but of course, don't put yourself in a position to be injured. This is one more reason why it's helpful to have an older person assisting you when you are getting started. It is important for your animal to develop good habits, and if it learns it can get away from you, it will try to do it again, which can quickly become a problem.

When you first start your training, don't worry too much about the heifer's head carriage. It's more important to just get her walking forward comfortably. Remember, this is a learning experience for both of you – be patient, and do not get upset if your animal is not cooperative at first. A gentle tug as you walk should signal the calf to follow. Once your heifer has successfully taken a few steps, stop and pet her gently on the neck, then try to take a few more steps. This system of small progress and reward, and being gentle, will quickly teach the heifer what you want her to do. Begin getting your heifer accustomed to setting her legs up the way you will want her to in the show ring. There is more detail on this later but the basics are that the front feet should be set squarely beneath her shoulders, and the hind leg closest to the judge (typically the inside of a circle, walking clockwise) should be set further back than the other. As she begins to walk more freely, work on getting her to take small uniform steps.

Never hit your animal under any circumstances. Usually a tap on the nose or a tug on the halter is enough to let her know that you are in control. If you need to slow your heifer down, put your left hand in front of her muzzle or use your right hand to apply pressure to her point of shoulder. If your heifer remains pushy, have an older person try leading her for a little while, so they learn to respect the person leading them.

Once your animal is consistently leading comfortably on the halter, work on strengthening your partnership and showing her to her best advantage. Hold her head at an appropriate level so she looks her best. Practising leading should become part of your daily routine, working with your calf for 20 minutes each day. Practise leading in different areas so she learns to trust you and becomes accustomed to strange sounds such as birds, falling branches and other strange noises. Also, have someone else lead her as you watch, so you can learn how she looks when walking and standing in certain positions.

Introducing the show halter and fine tuning your skills

Once you and your calf are comfortable and she can be led without tugging, introduce her to the leather show halter. Select a halter colour that best compliments your calf's breed (black is commonly used for Holstein Friesians, while some coloured breeds may look better with a brown leather halter). Halters come in several sizes, from small for young calves, to extra large for older, larger cows, so you will want to be sure you find the size that is best for your animal. The halter's noseband should be evenly positioned to fit across the bridge of the nose, midway between the animal's eyes and the top of the nostrils. A halter that is too big takes away from an animal's appearance and is dangerous as it can easily be pulled off.

When leading, the halter should be held firmly in the exhibitor's left hand, with the hand inside the halter wrapped around the ring with a firm grip on the chain. Never lead an animal with your fingers inside the halter's ring. The lead strap should be looped loosely in the right hand – when in the show ring you will almost always be walking in a clockwise direction, so this is how you should practise at home. Practise having someone approach and touch your calf in the same way a judge would in a ring.

When showing, always stay on your animal's left side. Face at an angle, in a position far enough away to see the stance of her feet and topline. Again, to pose a heifer, the front feet should be squarely placed with the rear leg closest to the judge back. For a cow in milk, the hind leg nearest the judge should be slightly ahead of the other leg. If possible, position her front feet on a slight incline rather than going downhill. You will want to reposition your animal's hind feet as the judge moves from one side of the animal to the other, so practise taking your heifer one step ahead or back, so you will easily be able to make the transition. Never use your feet to position your heifer's rear legs, and don't allow your animal to stand too stretched out. If you need to use your feet to square up your animal's front feet, do it calmly and discreetly. While practising at home, getting your heifer accustomed to setting up her feet will make things much easier on show day.

Once your animal is consistently walking freely with you at the halter, get her in the habit of always walking with her head up – not just in the show ring – with your hand in the halter (walking forward). This will ensure you always have good control of your animal, reinforces your training that her head should be up in the show ring, and will also keep your heifer looking her best at all times. You never know who may be watching you while you're walking your animal, either at home or at the show. It is a positive reflection on you as a showman/woman to have a calm animal that always looks nice, whether she is in the show ring or just walking to the wash rack.

Your ultimate goal is to get your heifer to respond quickly to halter commands and walk gracefully. A useful move to teach your animal is how to back up. To back her up, apply pressure to the point of shoulder with your fingertips on your right hand, and apply backward pressure on the halter. This is not a natural move for dairy cattle, so it will take some practise. Use this skill to adjust the position of your heifer's feet – do not circle your animal when you need to switch poses.

As a final note, never tie your animal up when they have a show halter on. Either hold them yourself, or have someone assist and hold the animal for you if you need to do some finishing touches after you have already put the show halter on.

Washing

A nylon halter should always be used when washing your calf. Tie her securely in your washing area using a slip knot. Again, make sure you don't have too much slack in the rope (less than 13 centimetres), as animals tied too long will move around more, making them difficult to wash. For safety's sake, ensure the area you are washing in has good footing to reduce the chance of your halter (or you) slipping when the surface becomes wet and soapy. Wear clothes and shoes that you don't mind getting wet – some people that have several animals to wash will even invest in a rain suit to help them stay dry.

Using a hose with a nozzle, slowly begin wetting the animal completely. Start at the hooves and work your way up to the legs, back, shoulders and neck. Remember, cattle prefer a nice, steady spray. As always, work calmly and gently and don't do anything that surprises or startles your animal. Gently wet the head with a weaker spray, and avoid the eyes and ears (getting water in a heifer's ears will cause it to droop). Repeat this process on the other side. Don't forget to wet and wash the tail – some people save this step for last as animals like to swing their wet tails.

Fill your wash bucket with soap and water. Using soap specially formulated for cattle works best. Dip a stiff-bristled brush in the bucket and begin scrubbing, using firm circular motions, starting at the top of the body and working downwards. Use a clean, wet cloth to wash around your heifer's eyes, nose and ears. Be cautious around the legs as some animals may try to kick. Scrub both sides of your animal and under the belly, working water and soap into a lather. Pay special attention to the topline, working to wash out all of the dirt and sweat, as that will make it easier when you are working with the hair later. Work your way down to scrub the hooves (carefully, to avoid getting kicked), removing as much dried manure from them as possible by scrubbing with a stiff-bristled brush. Be careful, because some animals are sensitive with their feet, especially around the hoof hairline.

Thoroughly rinse the soap out from the head and work your way down every part, including the belly, tail and hooves. If you don't get all the soap washed out, it will create dandruff and dry skin that is hard to get rid of. Again, take extra care to ensure all soap is washed out of the animal's topline. If your heifer's tail is tangled after washing, you can use some regular hair conditioner to help detangle it. Some showmen/women also like to use conditioner on their animal's toplines to help the hair stay in top condition. Like with soap, if you use conditioner, be sure to thoroughly rinse it out.

Once rinsed, brush her swiftly to remove the remaining water, using either a clean stiff-bristled brush, or your wash after it has been thoroughly rinsed. After getting the tangles out, hold the switch upside down and comb it with a topline brush to give it a fuller appearance. Remember to brush the belly, as that area tends to collect water. Your heifer should not be dripping water when you take her back to her pen after washing. The topline hair should be brushed down flat with the grain of the hair, as this will make it easier to stand up when it comes time to fit her for the show.

You should wash your animal with soap once or twice per week, but it is a good idea to at least rinse them off daily with water, especially during the warmer months, as this will help them cool down, keep them clean and get them used to being handled regularly. Washing with soap too frequently may dry out the skin and hair.

Fitting your animal

An important part of exhibiting dairy cattle is being able to clip and prepare them so they look their best in the show ring. Clipping is one of the most important things you can do to your animal, as it improves its style and overall appearance. No two people clip exactly the same, and not all animals are alike. Work to develop your own system and style – once you have mastered the art of clipping, it will be extremely satisfying knowing you prepared your animal on your own. Some shows will even include a clipping competition for youth.

When you first start out, ask for an advisor's assistance, having them coach you through the process. If you have access to multiple animals, practise clipping animals that are not ones you plan to show, so you can experiment with your technique and it doesn't matter if you make mistakes. Practise makes perfect! If you have the opportunity, watch an experienced showman/woman clip their animals, paying attention to how they handle the clippers and work with the hair in different parts of the body.

Taking proper care of your equipment is important, and doing so will ensure it will last a long time. Here are a few basic pieces of equipment you should have in your show box, and what each is used for:

- *Large clippers:* A large set of clippers is what you will use to clip most of the body, with the exception of the ears and tail.
- *Small clippers:* A small set of clippers typically have finer blades and will clip the hair shorter. These clippers are to be used on the ears, tail and to fine tune the topline.
- *Two sets of blades:* It's helpful to have multiple sets of blades in case the set you are using becomes dull or breaks. More advanced fitters will have multiple blades that will clip the hair different lengths depending on what the end goal is. Read more about this on page 17.
- *Blade lubricant:* It is important for you to spray a lubricant, such as WD-40, on your clipper blades frequently to help them stay cool and sharp for longer.
- *Blow dryer:* The blower will be used to help the animal's hair stand up when you are working on the topline.
- *Extension cords:* You'll want to have at least one good length extension cord (three-prong, not household) in case you have to clip in an area that's not close to an electrical outlet.
- *Topline brush:* You will want to only use this brush when working on the topline, to ensure it stays clean. This stiff-tined brush will help train the animal's hair to stand up when you are working on the topline.
- *Hair adhesive:* A strong adhesive, such as Clear Magic, which is formulated specifically for use in cattle, will help the hair stay in place once the topline is clipped and blown up on show day. This product is very strong and should be used sparingly until show day. Get advice from an experienced showperson when learning to apply hair adhesive to the topline.



Before the show season begins, ideally as soon as it begins to stay warm in the spring, you should fully clip your animal, removing her long winter coat. This will allow the hair to grow back evenly with a clean, healthy appearance.

A month or so before your first show, begin working with the animal's topline hair, training it to stand up. Begin by washing your calf well. When she is completely clean and dry, you can begin blowing up the animal's topline and removing any remaining dampness.

You should clip your animal for the final time two days before the show, clipping her topline the way you will want it to look, so on show day all you have to do is blow it up and set it with hair adhesive.

Working with topline hair

To blow up her topline hair, take your blower, and hold it at a slight angle against the topline. You should be working up the hair on the sides, rather than brushing straight down the top of the spine. Be careful to make sure the blower is primarily blowing against the hair, rather than the spine, or you risk burning your heifer's skin. Place your topline brush in front of the blower, and push them together down the back, encouraging the hair to stand on end. The cleaner the hair is, the easier it will train. You will have to do this over the area several times per session to train it to stand up easily. Again, do not let the hot air hit your animal's skin for an extended period of time, or leave it in one place on the hair too long, or you risk scorching the hair and/or burning your animal's skin.

While a regular blow dryer can work, if you have multiple animals or plan to show at many shows, it would be wise to invest in a blower designed for use on livestock. Many times they come with a special attachment to help direct the flow of air better.



The basics of body clipping

Here are a few helpful tips for getting started clipping:

- Always clip in a well-lit area so you can clearly see what you are doing
- Always clip against the grain of the hair
- Clip slowly, taking long, steady strokes
- Begin on one side of the animal and finish it completely before moving to the other
- Never leave your animal half-clipped. If you're going to start clipping, be sure you will have enough time to do the job completely.
- Always keep your free hand on your animal to help steady it, especially when working around the legs. Like any other time you work with your animal, you do not want to startle it.

Some animals do not like to be clipped, so be patient as they adjust to the noise and the feeling of the clipper blades. For the purposes of this workbook, we are going to recommend working from back to front, as cattle are usually less sensitive when working with their back end, and it will give them more time to adjust to being clipped before you get close to their head. Before you start clipping, blow up her topline hair, so you can begin to see how it will look and start blending as you go.

Beginner showperson should have two sets of clippers – one large set of livestock clippers to be used on most of the body, and a set of smaller clippers with shorter blades (recommended: size 30/0.5 mm blade) to be used on the tail and ears. For more guidance on specific clipper blades sizes, see the section 'Taking your fitting to the next level' on page 18.

Tail/Rump

The tail should be clipped three or 10 centimetres above the top of the switch up to the rump. If you have them, clip the tail with your small clippers, as the shorter hair will help give a leaner, more dairy appearance. Stop clipping up the back tail with the small clippers at the point where the hair begins to form a ridge; you will blend that later as part of the topline. Clip the rump with your large clippers, leaving enough hair by the topline so it can be blended in and you can correct any faults. Clip off any long hairs on the vulva with small clippers.

Legs

Legs can be one of the most difficult areas to clip, because animals tend to move, and there are many different curves and crevices to get around the hock. Be careful when you clip the legs, as your animal may kick, and keep one hand on the calf's body to make it feel more comfortable. When clipping the front and rear legs, all the hair should be removed up to the belly, including the inside of the legs. Take your time and experiment with different ways of angling the clippers to help you get all the hair, especially down by the hoofline. If you have a pair of small clippers with blades that clip the same length as your large clippers, they can be easier to manoeuvre on the lower part of the leg.

Body

Hold the clippers parallel against the body of your animal, as the clipper blades are sharp and you don't want to cut your heifer or yourself. Remember to work in long, steady strokes clipping against the grain of the hair – don't use short, choppy strokes. Clip the entire body, leaving five to seven centimetres of hair near the back, including the loin, chin and rump. This hair eventually will be blended to form the topline.

You may clip hair off from the belly, making sure you clip all the way through the brisket. Some exhibitors prefer to leave longer hair on the heifer's belly. If you have the opportunity to work with an experienced showperson, you can have them show you how to properly blend the belly hair if you decide to leave it on. If you are

exhibiting a milking cow, the belly and udder will need to be clipped to display the milk veins. You will want to use small clippers on the udder to remove as much hair as possible, as well as along the milk vein. Ask for assistance from an experienced showperson if you are unsure what to do when clipping a milking cow for the first time.

Head and neck

Most animals will not like having their heads clipped, especially if it's their first time. Start by clipping the brisket and throat, working calmly. Always have an adult assist you when clipping the head to help you control the animal. Clip the head and neck with regular large clippers, and use small clippers on the insides and edges of the ear. Do not use large clippers on the ears.

When clipping the neck, start inside the point of shoulder. Go straight up from the point of shoulder to the top of the shoulder blade. Keeping your clippers at the same angle, go straight up – do not round off the top of the withers, as that's part of the topline.

Working calmly and quietly, clip the head, still clipping against the grain of the hair. It's sometimes helpful if you have access to headlocks, as the halter can be moved for easier access. You'll likely have to hold the clippers in several directions to get all of the hair, as cows often have a lot of swirls on their foreheads. Clip the entire head, trimming behind the poll and clipping off the whiskers. Be extra cautious when working around your heifer's eyes, and take care not to accidentally trim off her eyelashes. You'll need to loosen up the halter to get the hair hidden by the rope.

Topline

Clipping a heifer's topline is a key step in preparing for a show. The purpose of clipping the topline a specific way is to enhance the animal's appearance, making her look straight and sharp down her top. It takes a great deal of practise and experimentation to master this, and it's best if you can practise first on animals you don't plan to show. It would also be helpful to find someone with experience clipping cattle to help guide you through the process the first time.

Make sure your calf is standing on level ground with its head at the level it'll be at when you're showing it. It's sometimes easiest if you can have an assistant hold the animal, rather than tying it up. Start by blowing the heifer's topline hair up so it is standing up, as you have trained it.

Once the hair is standing up, begin by trimming straight across so she looks level from her rump to her withers. Keep two hands on the clippers for stability. You can fine tune the levelness when you are done blending with a pair of scissors, if needed.

Next, begin whittling away at the hair to give her a nicely-blended, wedge-shaped topline. Hold the clippers with one finger held beneath the blades as a guide and for balance. Blend the standing hair into the body of the heifer using a very light touch. Clip the hair along both sides (crops, shoulder and back) of the topline creating a wedge shape. Take a little off at a time as you can always go back and take more off. Remember to trim on both sides of the tail head.

When you are finished, the topline should look smooth, natural, and well-blended. If it still looks rough and obvious where the longer hairs are, you should keep working. You may need to stop at some point while you are clipping and re-blow up the topline hair to ensure it is standing straight up. When you are finished, brush your animal off to see if you missed any spots. If you have someone helping you, have them lead the calf as if you were at a show so you can stand back and make sure her topline looks level and well blended. Getting the topline right, especially when you are first learning, can take time, so be patient and don't rush. Wash your heifer again after you are finished clipping to remove any dirt that was ingrained in her hide, loose hair, and to wash out any adhesive products you used on the topline.

Taking your fitting to the next level

As you hone your skills in clipping show animals and build your inventory of fitting supplies, you may start to look for ways that you can take your skills to the next level. One thing many experienced dairy fitters do is use different size/length blades to achieve a more refined look for their animal. Below are some guidelines from experienced showpeople on different blades you can work with and how to use them.

As you can see from the pictures below, most clipper blades come clearly labelled with their standard lengths. When in doubt, consult with a salesperson at your show supply store to be sure you are purchasing the correct blade you are looking for. As many of these blades will cut the hair very short, you should experiment first on animals that you are not planning on showing, until you get the feel for how the blades work, and/or ask for guidance from an experienced fitter or showperson.

- **For the body:** Andis brand size 31 bottom blade with a size 23 top blade, or something comparable of a different brand
- **For the head and legs:** Size 10 blades on a small clipper (cuts hair to 1.5mm)
- **For the ears:** Size 30 blade on a small clipper (cuts hair to 0.5mm)
- **For the tail:** Size 30 blade on the black part of the tail and size 40 or 50 on the white part. The 40 and 50 blades will cut the hair extremely short, and should never be used on black hair because it will make the skin appear grey and be too hard to blend. Size 40 and 50 blades should also never be used for fitting anywhere on an animal's body except the tail, and udder on cows.



Completing show entries

Before heading to a show, there is another important step you need to complete – filling out and sending in an entry form! Rules can vary greatly from show to show and within the dairy breeds. Obtain a copy of the rules from each show you're planning to enter and review them thoroughly. Review the health requirements and check with your veterinarian for any health tests or paperwork that may need to be completed.

For a show, all entries are divided into classes by age. Showmanship classes are grouped according to the exhibitor's age (check the show rules). Conformation classes are grouped, by breed, according to the age of animal.

The following is a list of typical classes you will find at most dairy shows, listed youngest to oldest. Always verify the official classes your show is offering in the show rules.

1. **Junior Heifer Calf** – (also referred to as Junior Calf) born on or after 1 August in the year of the show
2. **Senior Heifer Calf** – (also referred to as Intermediate Calf) born 1 June-31 July in the year of the show
3. **Junior Yearling Heifer** – born on or after 1 August of the year prior to the show
4. **Senior Yearling Heifer** – born 1 June-31 July of the year prior to the show
5. **Junior Champion, Reserve Junior Champion & Honorable Mention Junior Champion** – if awarded, it is selected from first and second place animals from the above classes
6. **Two-Year-Old In-milk Heifer** – born 1 June-31 May (must have freshened)
7. **Three-Year-Old In-milk Heifer** – born June
8. **Intermediate Champion, Reserve Intermediate Champion & Honorable Mention Intermediate Champion** – if awarded, it is selected from first and second place animals from the above classes
9. **Four-Year Old Cow** – born 1 June-31 May
10. **Five-Year Old Cow** – born 1 June-31 May
11. **Six-Year Old Cow & Older** – born June
12. **Senior Champion, Reserve Senior Champion & Honorable Mention Senior Champion** – selected from first and second place animals from the above class
13. **Grand Champion, Reserve Grand Champion & Honorable Mention Grand Champion** – selected from winners of the Junior Champions, Intermediate Champions and Senior Champions

At the show

Arriving at the show and showmanship

Before leaving for the show, make a checklist of items you need to bring to the show and start gathering your supplies. Plan ahead and don't wait until the last minute to do this. The show box checklist (page 8) would be a helpful place to start. Get everything together in one place and make sure all your equipment is clean.

For overnight or larger shows, give some thought to your exhibit prior to the event. Prepare a simple display and signs for all the animals that will be tied in your show stall. Make a good first impression by having a neat and clean display.

When you arrive at the show, you will be assigned a place to stall your animal. You may want to arrive before the cattle trailer does to give yourself time to set up the display and prepare your cattle bed.

Options for a cattle bed

1. Overnight shows and if straw allowed

Having your cattle bedded properly is a very important part of having your exhibit in order at a show. You will need a shovel and/or rake, a pitch fork, clean straw, shavings, and a wheelbarrow. It is important to establish a firm footing for the cattle bed. The more firmly the bedding is packed, the better it will be. Use plenty of straw and shavings when you prepare the first bedding, as doing a quality job the first time will save you time and money in the long run. Bright, clean straw will also add to the appearance of your exhibit.

1. If on dirt flooring, level the existing ground with a shovel and rake, and spray the entire area with fly spray.
2. Shake out the straw completely, making sure there are no clumps or hard spots in the bedding. Shake the straw into small pieces by hand, and then work the bedding with a pitch fork, positioning it in the area your cattle will be tied. Make the front a little higher than the rear as this displays cattle at their best when they are standing uphill.
3. Add in shavings and pack the bedding firmly with a pitchfork.
4. Put down a second layer of straw and shavings, packing them together with a pitchfork. When you are finished, the pack should be about 12 inches in height.
5. If you have access to a strawboard (a flat piece of board attached to a long handle that is used to create a square edge on the outside of your bedding pack), have someone hold it and use a pitchfork to pack the straw, creating a square, level edge.

2. Sawdust

Many shows will only allow sawdust as bedding. Make sure the bed is level and is of sufficient depth for maximum cow comfort. Sawdust **must** be clean and dry.

Maintaining your bedding pack throughout the show takes effort, but it pays off as your cattle will be more comfortable and your exhibit will look much better. Each morning at the show, you should remove dirty and wet bedding and replace it with fresh straw and shavings, along with getting rid of any uneaten hay. When your animals stand up throughout the day, smooth and re-work the bedding underneath them to keep the cattle comfortable and create a more attractive exhibit. Pick up any manure or dirty bedding as soon as

possible, removing as little bedding as you can. If you have an extra pan or small bucket, it may be helpful to keep it behind the animals and use it to catch any fresh manure or urine. That is an easy way to keep your bedding pack very clean. Try to maintain a square, tidy edge to your bedding pack, and sweep any loose straw from your aisle to keep your area neat.

It is important to have proper spacing between cattle when they are tied in the stall. If tied too close together, they will become irritable and there is a higher risk of them becoming tangled or stepping on and injuring one another. If they are tied too far apart, however, they will stand or lie crossways in the exhibit and make it difficult to keep the bedding clean and dry. Tie all animals securely with a slip knot so they cannot get loose. If you choose to use neck ties instead of a halter in the stall, two-way ties with around 18 to 24 inches of rope works best. Put your smallest calves on one end of your exhibit and work up to the largest animals at the opposite end. Take special care to see that young calves are tied where drafts will not affect their health. If it is going to be hot the cattle sheds, having large fans blowing on the animals will help keep them cool and comfortable.

Getting into a routine at the show

Once the cattle arrive on the show grounds, take them to the wash rack to be rinsed off or washed. It is important to get cattle settled into their new environment as soon as possible. Most cows will tend to lie down after they've been washed. Allow them plenty of time to rest and get comfortable in their new environment.

Plan to do tasks (washing, cleaning the bed, feeding and watering) at a time when public are least likely to be present. Morning tasks should be completed and the exhibit ready for visitors by 8am. Afternoon tasks should be done in a way that avoids aisle blockage and causes minimum mess. It is important for you and the cattle to establish a routine at the show and have a set schedule of feeding and watering times that are consistent from day to day. Your cattle should have hay in front of them at all times – a good rule of thumb is to give your heifer a small amount of hay every time she stands up. Feeding her small amounts consistently through the day encourages her to eat more than just putting a large slab of hay in front of her in the morning. Most exhibitors feed heifers their grain mixture twice a day (cows are sometimes fed three to four times in a day). Having adequate water is extremely important to keeping your animal healthy and eating at the show. Cattle should be watered at least three to four times a day, especially if it is warm in the shed.

If time allows, find some time to take your animal out for some exercise.

Example show chore schedule

6.00am	Arrive at show, clean out stall
6.30am	Wash heifer and water her on the way back to the stall
7.00am	Feed heifer and get her settled in
12.30pm	Water heifer and take for exercise walk
6.30pm	Water heifer and give evening feed
8.00pm	Practise leading
8.15pm	Water heifer and settle in for the night

Little details can make a big difference in the appearance of your exhibit. Keep the aisles behind your cattle clean and neat at all times. Feed and equipment should be stored out of sight. If you have to keep your hay

the exhibit, stack it neatly. Keep all equipment in tack boxes when it is not being used. Someone should be present at the exhibit at all times, ideally someone who can help keep the cattle clean and are confident in handling the animals.

What to expect at the show

Knowing where you are supposed to be, and when, can do a lot to help you stay organised and relaxed at a show. While each show is different, there are many commonalities that are helpful to understand. The following is a rundown of the various things you might encounter at most shows you attend.

You will need to get your exhibitor number cards for the show, which are often handed out at an exhibitors meeting, or a volunteer will come around and distribute them to exhibitors. Once you receive your number, put it in a safe place as you will need it to enter your class on show day. If you are exhibiting more than one animal, record which number is for which animal so they don't get mixed up. Make sure you know what time the show is starting and what order the classes are in so you will be ready at the right time.

Most shows offer two different types of classes for youth to participate in – showmanship and conformation classes. In showmanship classes, the judge is evaluating the exhibitors, rather than the physical structure of the cattle, and their ability to prepare their cattle for show and leading the animal to its best advantage. In conformation classes, judges evaluate the physical appearance of your animal and how it compares to the breed standard. Heifers are evaluated on their general appearance, dairy character, feet and legs, and size, whereas cows are judged on frame structure, dairy strength, feet and legs, and udder. To learn more about how dairy cattle are judged, refer to the Dairy Judging workbook. Knowing what the judge is looking for in ideal animals is an important skill for all exhibitors to have, and will be very helpful when selecting your project animals.

On show day, listen for announcements as to when the show is getting started and pay attention to what class is in the ring. You will want to make your way to ringside while the class prior to yours is in the ring. A volunteer at ringside will likely check you in for the class and instruct you when it is time to enter the ring and in what order you are to enter.

More about the particulars of how you should lead your animals will be discussed in the showmanship section, but there are a few general things to know. You will enter the ring with cattle circling clockwise around the ring. After the judge has had some time to evaluate the animals, they will signal for you to come into an initial side-by-side lineup. From there, the judge will typically study the animals a little further and then signal the exhibitors into a second side-by-side lineup, which is usually the final placing. Some shows will have a person (a steward) in the ring to help instruct exhibitors where to line up.

When they have finished placing the class, the judge will take the microphone and give reasons for their placing. As the judge gives their reasons, the class will lead out. Pay attention to what the judge says, as you might be able to pick up on what you could improve for the next time you exhibit your animal.

If you aren't sure of the order of classes, look at a class list. If you placed first or second in your class, you will want to keep your animal clean and haltered so she will be ready to go back in to compete in a champion class.

Showmanship

When showing dairy cattle, exhibitors are expected to follow a specific dress code or, depending on the breed society, white pants, a collared white shirt and hard-toed shoes. Your shirt should be tucked in with a belt. Your overall appearance should be neat, so as to not detract from the general appearance of your animal.

Showmanship is the one area in which you can excel regardless of the correctness of your animal's conformation. The goal is to keep your animal looking her best at all times, while making it appear effortless. As you start working with your animal, it is important to know what the judge will be looking for in the showmanship class. The main areas judges are evaluating are the exhibitor, cleanliness, and how well the exhibitor is showing the animal to its best advantage. Walk with grace and do not bully your animal.

Entering and leading your animal in the ring

Enter the ring circling in a clockwise direction, confident and relaxed. Lead your animal, walking forward, from the animal's left side, remembering to have your heifer take small steps. When in the ring, all of your attention should be on your animal and the judge. Don't be distracted by anything going on outside the show ring. As the animals enter the ring, the judge will take turns talking to each contestant and examining each animal. Walk your animal in a way it is comfortable with, and position yourself/change your direction so you can see the judge. If the judge is in front, walk forwards and allow room for the judge to see your animal's front feet.

A note to parents and leaders: *Do not teach your child, no matter their age, to watch you for signals on the outside of the ring. Work with them at home so they can confidently show their animal on their own. Their focus in the ring should only be on their calf and the judge.*

Don't 'tailgate' the exhibitor in front of you. Depending on the size of the ring and number of animals in the class, keep a good distance between you and the calf in front of you (one to one-and-a-half metres), as well as keeping a good distance between you and the outside of the ring (around one metre). Remember, the ring needs to be large enough so everyone in the class fits and the judge can see all the animals. Never pass an animal walking slower than you, and never block the judge's view of another animal. If the animal in front of you is being unruly and won't walk for the exhibitor, it is acceptable to assist them by giving the calf a gentle tap on their thigh to help them get moving.

Do not stop walking your animal in the show ring unless told to by the judge. When the judge moves behind your animal, hold her head up with her nose pointed straight ahead, so her entire back appears straight, if the judge reaches to feel your calf's hide, turn her head slightly toward the judge.

Keep one eye on the judge and one eye on your animal at all times in the show ring. Always be aware of where the judge is, but be sure to be attentive to your animal, paying attention to how they are walking and how they look. Work to keep your animal looking her best at all times, even if you don't think the judge is looking directly at you.

If your animal starts to act up, stay calm and regain control. Sometimes it helps to hold your hand in front of the muzzle to calm them down. When it is your turn for the judge to observe you, have your animal set up and smile. Be natural and don't fuss.

Pulling into line and what to do when you are there

After the judge has inspected the animals individually, he or she will begin pulling exhibitors in the centre of the ring forming a line. Pay close attention to their instructions as missing your command may cost you several places. Judges will often point at exhibitors to signal when they want them to come into line. Once the judge signals you into line, turn and walk forward, moving quickly but gracefully.

Always enter the lineup in the order you were selected. Maintain an even line – all animals in line should have their front feet in a straight line. Don't leave too much extra space between your animal and the one next to you, no more than half a metre. When setting your animal up, remember to set the rear feet in the correct position relative to the judge.

Once you have your animal's legs positioned correctly and comfortably, keep her there! She should be relaxed, steady and alert. Your right hand can be placed near the point of shoulder to help steady your animal. When the judge walks in front of the line, they will want to evaluate the front ends of the animals. So turn and face forward with the lead in your right hand and take a small step back and to the side so the judge can have a clear view, do not obstruct the animal next to you in line when doing this.

Handling questions from the judge in the ring

Throughout your work with your project animal, you should learn a great deal of information about your heifer. The judge will most likely ask you questions in a showmanship class about you and your calf to find out just how much work you have done and how much knowledge you have about your animal.

Some basic questions a judge might ask are:

- When was your calf born?
- What age class will your animal show in?
- Who is your heifer sired by?
- What is your heifer's name? (Answer by providing the full registered name)
- How long have you been showing?

The judge may also ask you specific questions such as, "What would you want to improve about your animal?" This is where your dairy judging knowledge will come in handy, as the judge will want to know if you are aware of what your animal's strengths and weaknesses are.

More advanced showpeople should know milk production, calving and breeding information. There is also a chance that advanced showpeople will be asked to switch animals with another person. If this happens, exhibitors should quickly examine their new animal to determine her faults before taking the halter, and then exhibit her to the best of their ability.

Most importantly, relax, smile and act natural. Keep showing until you receive a ribbon, as the judge may change his mind at the last minute. Be a good sport and congratulate your fellow competitors, no matter what the end result.

Tips to take your showmanship to the next level

There are a few common issues dairy cattle can have in the ring that are easily remedied by an attentive showperson, and go a long way to enhance the appearance of your animal. It is always helpful to consult with an experienced showperson when looking for advice on ways to help your heifer look her best in the ring. Here are solutions to some of the most common problems:

- **Extra flesh under the chin/neck, 'beefy' looking head** – Some animals have extra flesh on their necks, under their chin, which makes them look less dairy and feminine in the head. If your heifer has extra flesh, you should 'pull throat' to make her head and neck appear cleaner. The easiest way to do this is to pull up and hold the skin below the jaw in your right hand while you hold the halter with the left. If you intend to do this at a show, practise at home so that both you and your calf become accustomed to it.
- **Holding tail up while walking** – The best way to tuck the tail down is to reach back with your right hand and push your finger down in the indent between the pin bone and the tailhead. However, do not do this if you cannot reach the indent without losing control of your animal or lowering its head level.
- **Arching her back** (sometimes referred to as 'roaching') – To correct an animal from arching her back, gently pinch down the middle of her back, with fingers on either side of the topline, so you don't interfere with it.
- **Animals weak over the topline** – Some animals that are weak over the chine or loin can benefit from being touched under the barrel to give them some lift.



NZ Dairy Breeds Federation recommended showmanship guidelines

The following recommendations are based on the NZ Dairy Breeds Federation most recent Showmanship Guidelines, developed in 2016, to serve as a quick reference for youth competing in showmanship, as well as individuals judging showmanship.

DO THIS	DON'T DO THIS
<p>Apparel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear breed-specific dress or white pants, white collared shirt and belt Wear hard-toe, hard-sole shoes Be neat and clean in appearance Minimise accessories or anything that will draw attention to you instead of your animal <p>Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act natural Smile and enjoy yourself Be attentive but relaxed Exhibit good sportsmanship before, during and after the class is judged Be comfortable with the animal you are showing, evidencing you have worked with your animal many times before Be ringside before the class is called in <p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know some important facts about the animal you are showing, such as her birthdate, sire, and calving date Know the animal's faults and try to minimise their appearance, i.e. pull throat, pinch down topline and tuck the tailhead <p>Halter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a proper, leather dairy show halter that is clean and shined Show halter has a proper fit with nose band midway between the animal's eyes and nose Hold the halter firmly in your left hand, with the hand inside the harness wrapped around the ring with a firm grip on the chain Loop the lead strap loosely, hold it in your right hand, keeping it close to your left hand 	<p>Serious discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late to class Minor instances of unsportsmanlike conduct Striking the animal unnecessarily Wearing inappropriate shoes Carrying or talking on a cellphone Fingers in ring of halter Removing the lead strap from the chain or looping and fastening <p>Moderate discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not wearing white clothing or show-approved professional attire Wearing inappropriate dress that brings attention to the exhibitor Wearing clothing with farm or commercial advertising/logos Chewing gum Not knowing basic information about the animal, such as birth date, fresh date, breeding date, due date, etc. Unable to recognise type faults of the animal Not fitting or putting the halter together properly Holding the lead strap too far from the halter <p>Slight Discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate halter Looping the lead strap too tightly Inappropriate size of calf for competitor

Appearance of the animal

DO THIS	DON'T DO THIS
<p>Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal should be well-trained to lead and pose• Animal should be alert, but calm when touched or around distractions	<p>Serious discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal causing disturbances to others <p>Slight Discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor instances of animal not handling well



Showing the animal to its best advantage

DO THIS	DON'T DO THIS
<p>Leading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the animal's head up at a comfortable level, where she looks her best • Enter the ring, circling clockwise, walking forward on the animal's left side • When the last animal in the class enters the ring, turn to face the animal and walk backwards • Keep a good distance behind the animal in front of you (approximately one to 1.5m) • Keep a good distance between you and the outside of the ring (approximately one metre) • Move together with your animal in a steady rhythm – not too fast or too slow • Keep one eye on your animal and one on the judge at all times • Be aware of everything going on in the show ring • Respond to instructions from the judge or officials quickly • When called into line by the judge, turn and walk forward so you can do so efficiently • Enter the lineup in the order you are called by the judge <p>Posing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line up with other animals in an even line, leaving adequate space between animals (approximately 0.5 metres) • Ensure the animal's topline is straight from the head to tail • Have legs correctly posed as quick as possible • Legs should be comfortably beneath the animal so she is neither too scrunched or stretched • Front feet should be lined up evenly • For rear legs on heifers, position the rear leg nearest the judge back. For milking cows, position the rear leg nearest the judge forward. <p>Showing the animal to its best advantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the animal carries extra flesh on her neck, pull the animals throat with your right hand to make her appear more clean-necked • If the animal arches her topline, pinch it down to make her appear more straight across her top • If the animal puts her tail in the air, tuck the tailhead down 	<p>Serious discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fusses with or moves calf to the extreme • Positioning animal's rear legs by stepping on rear feet <p>Moderate discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to show animal to best advantage • Watching the judge too intently • Slow response to judge or ring official • Inattentiveness • Over-showing • Leading too slowly • Is too far to outside or inside of ring • Incorrect spacing to the animal in from when on parade • Doesn't walk quickly into line • Crowding or bumping other animals when pulled in line • Failure to maintain a straight lineup • Unable to back up animal • Legs incorrectly posed • Failure to switch rear legs when judge moves around the animal • Does not keep animal straight from head to tail • Has elbow or hands up • Improper head carriage, animal's head held too low • Failure to hold throat when needed <p>Slight discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than a slight touch to move animal's front feet • Extra space in line • Walks slowly backward into the ring • Sidesteps when leading calf • Has stiff outstretched arm • Has poor, non-relaxed posture • Improper head carriage: animal's nose is too high • Animal's head is not turned slightly toward judge when hide is felt

Final preparation on show day

Show day is exciting for everyone involved, and the time when all of your hard work and preparation will shine. It will be a busy time, and you want to be well prepared so you can work calmly to get your animal and yourself ready to go.

Start by rising early to get a good start on a successful day. Wash your animal in plenty of time so it will be completely dry for your final preparations and the show. This should be completed at least two to three hours before the show starts so the animal will have time to dry off and eat, and you will have time to finish grooming and setting topline.

Offer your animal plenty of fresh hay and feed the morning of the show, as she will look her best with a proper fill in her stomach. Many exhibitors feed beet pulp the morning of the show to accomplish this, along with several different types of hay. If you're going to feed beet pulp on show day, you don't want it to be the first time she has been exposed to it, so if you plan to do this, talk to a nutritionist or other experienced person about incorporating it in her daily diet leading up to the show. An animal that is shallow will need to be filled earlier than a deep-ribbed one as you do not want your animal to appear gaunt for the show. If you are showing a cow, you will want to try and show her with a full udder to look her best. The ideal amount of milk to have in the udder will have to be decided on the day before the show. As with everything, if you are exhibiting a cow, or want advice on feeding your heifer on show day, consult an experienced showperson that can help walk you through it.

Allow yourself plenty of time to do final grooming and fitting to prepare for your class. Things like cleaning ears and hooves can be done the day before the show, or even at home before going to the show. Here is a checklist:

- **Clean the heifer's ears** – Clean the inside of your heifer's ears with a baby wipe or clean towel and rubbing alcohol to remove any visible dirt or wax. Also clean the animal's ear tags if needed.
- **Shine hooves** – Make sure there is no dried manure on your heifer's hooves.
- **Set topline** – Blow up your heifer's topline as you had practised and use an adhesive to ensure it stays in place throughout the show.
- **Brush off all dust and straw** – Shortly before entering the ring, use a soft-bristled brush to brush off any straw or dust from your animal, and be sure to check the belly for any straw.
- **Fluff the tail** – Use a comb or topline brush to fluff your animal's tail. Brush it straight to get any tangles out, then turn it upside down and brush downwards to give it a fluffy appearance.
- **Apply fly spray** – Especially during summer shows, you will want to spray your heifer's legs, belly and sides with fly spray before she goes in the ring to ensure she won't bother if there are flies around.
- **Wipe her muzzle** – Use a clean, dry rag to wipe your heifer's muzzle free of any feed or saliva shortly before she enters the ring.
- **Properly fit leather show halter** – Put your animal's show halter on and make sure it fits properly and is neat and clean in appearance. This should be done last, shortly before you go in the ring, as you do not want to tie your heifer up with her show halter on.

Don't forget to get yourself ready! Give yourself enough time to put on your show clothes, but don't get in them too early because you want to get dirty before the show starts. You can always put a pair of bib overalls on over your show clothes to help you stay clean. Tuck in your shirt, make sure your shoes are tied tight, and put on your animal's number.

Listen for announcements and be sure you are on time to your class. Good luck!

After the show

Congratulations, you did it! From each show you will be able to take home what you learned and improve the next time you are in the ring. After you're done in the ring, there are still a few things that need to be taken care of:

- Congratulate the winners – good sportsmanship goes a long way!
 - Thank the judge, show steward and volunteers.
 - Wash your animal within 24 hours of the show to rinse out any fitting products used, especially in the topline. There are sprays specially formulated to help rinse out hair adhesive you may want to invest in.
 - Make sure your equipment is kept clean and organised after each show, ensuring many years of use.
 - Keep your exhibit and animals clean and neat until you're released to go home. Even though the show is over, tidiness is still very important. Ask the steward how your stall is to be left, as some shows require all straw/hay/feed to be forked out ready for collection at clean up.
-

