

How to Groom and Fit a Show Steer

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Part of caring for a livestock project related to 4-H or FFA is the grooming routine you will follow. This includes feed additives, washing the animal, clipping and training the hair.

Difficulty: Moderate
Instructions

Things You'll Need:

- livestock soap
- blower
- blocking shute
- combs and brushes
- clippers
- hair products

1. Step 1

The first step in this process is of course forming a relationship with the animal. The animal must trust you in order to work with them. If you and the animal have a good trusting relationship it will be a lot easier to do the work needed to be done. Do this by spending time with the steer while he is still young and small. Just letting the steer gain trust in you, by feeding and just hanging out together. As soon as you feel this bond has formed moved on to haltering him.

2. Step 2

The steer should not feel threatened by your presence in the pen now. Daily contact will be needed from now on to strengthen this bond. As soon as you feel ready and can lead the steer well, move on to the wash rack. You should have a secure area in wash the steer in. A cement floor is preferable, but not necessary. A strong fence to tie the steer to is a must, because the first time you wash will probably scare the calf a little. However, soon the calf will come to enjoy this time.

3. Step 3

Start with water, slowly out of the hose. To do this kink the hose to restrict the amount of water coming out. Never use a spray nozzle at first, this will scare the steer. Approach from the front shoulder of the calf slowly with the water hose not on. Rub the end of the hose along the calves back to acquaint them with it. Once

the steer is accustomed to this then use a little water, remember to kink the hose or turn water down, to regulate the water flow.

4. Step 4

Soap can be used, but only sparingly. Use a good quality livestock shampoo and always make sure to rinse completely. Limit the use of soap to a few times, since this will in turn cause the hair to fall out. Once the steer's undercoat is clean it should stay that way with daily rinsing with water.

5. Step 5

Rinsing the steer daily through the summer months will encourage the hair to stay. Feed additives can also be purchased and fed to help grow hair. The steer can be kept in an air conditioned room throughout the hot part of the day and turned out at night. However, this may not be an option for your project. Rinsing daily will help keep the steer cool and encourage the hair to continue to grow.

6. Step 6

Daily rinsing and blowing the hair will also help to train it to do as you want. There are all types of products to use, similar to the ones we use on our own hair. This will also help to calm the steer and make them easier to handle. Use a blocking shute to contain the calf while you are working on them.

7. Step 7

When you feel your calf is calm and trusts you in the blocking shute, you can use the clippers to trim the hair. You should consult someone who can help you when you start this process. Certain ways you cut the hair will affect the way the steer appears in the ring. Just like you there are certain haircuts which look better on you than someone else.