

RAISING & SHOWING A CALF OR STEER

The junior livestock program is a unique opportunity to use live animals to help youth develop. Youth learn something about agriculture and livestock production and develop an appreciation for the livestock industry. However, the main objectives are to teach life skills and help youth become productive citizens. The experience of youth owning and working with animals, being responsible for their care, health, and growth, and exhibiting them in a competitive environment is a tremendous character building process. Junior livestock projects help develop life skills such as leadership, communication, decision making and problem & solving skills. Character building, record keeping and the development of personal responsibility are other skills youth can develop as a result of their involvement in the broad range of programs in junior livestock.

The following are some basics for the showing and care of your animal.

HEALTH

When you buy your steer ask the breeder or seller if the steer has been vaccinated. And if the steer has been implanted with a growth enhancer such as Ralgro. Ask if the steer has received treatment for internal and external parasites. If you have any questions about vaccinations contact our office. Some common vaccinations are:

1. 7 or 8 Way Colostridial
2. 4-Way Respiratory
3. Shipping Fever

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance is making sure the meat you produce by raising a steer is high quality. The meat from your steer needs to be wholesome and free of defects caused by injection site lesions. When an injection is given in a muscle, the muscle at the vaccination site is likely to be damaged and less suitable for food. Read the directions on the label for proper administration. Use subcutaneous (just under the skin) injections rather than intramuscular (in the muscle) whenever possible. Make all injections in the neck region to avoid damage to the valuable cuts of meat.

FACILITIES

Keep your calf in a pen that is clean, dry and comfortable, with good air circulation. It should have a place to get out of the rain and bad weather in the winter and shade in the heat of the summer. Clean manure and any uneaten hay found in your calf's pen on a regular basis. When your calf is comfortable it will gain and finish better. Give it space to get adequate exercise. Have a small pen so it is easy to catch the calf. This can also be where you feed him. By

handling your calf each day it will be more gentle.

HALTER BREAKING

Allow your calf to get adjusted to his new surroundings. Some calves may break easier than others; however, with patience and persistence even the difficult calves can be gentled down and handled easily. Be slow and deliberate with movements around your new calf. He has to get used to you and you have to get used to him. Put him in a small area to put his halter on. This may be in a trailer when you are hauling him or in a small pen or even a chute. Use a nylon rope halter that is ½ inch to 5/8 inch in diameter. Make sure the halter fits properly. Keep the nose portion of the halter on the upper third of the nose but out of his eyes. This will provide control and prevent slippage. Let him drag the halter for a few days before tying him up for the first time. Tie him about eye level to a secure fence post. Always use a slip knot when tying your steer. If he falls and you need to untie him, do so, but try not to let him go! He needs to learn that he can't get away. Stay with him while he is tied for the first few times. You need to be able to help him if he gets in a situation and needs help getting up again. Depending on your schedule, tie him up between 30 minutes and four hours at a time. When you let him go, don't let him jerk the rope from your hands. This will teach him to have respect for the halter and that he can't get away whenever he wants to. Begin touching your steer as soon as possible. You can start with a broom or show stick. This will keep you safe and allow him to get used to being handled. Don't poke, just scratch and rub. As soon as he will let you stand close to him, rub him with your hands. Run your hands over his body, between his legs around his head, over his back, etc. Talk to him all the time to calm him and be slow and deliberate in your motions. Be patient and calm.

TEACHING TO LEAD

Use the pull, release and reward method. Put steady pressure on the rope, pulling toward you. Give him a little slack to see if he responds to the reward of releasing the pressure. Some calves will not budge. Be patient and deliberate. If he doesn't want to move, tug firmly on the rope while maintaining steady pressure. This will make his head "bob" as you tug. Often he will take a step forward. When he does, reward him and relieve the pressure. Remember don't give him his head all the way, just relieve the pressure. Keep repeating this method until he leads well. This will take a week or so. Then when he stops you can repeat this and he will remember to come to the pressure and be rewarded with relief! Once he responds well to you in a small pen you can take him out to a larger pen or pasture. The more environments he can be introduced to, the better he will handle at the show.

FEEDING

How Much Will He Eat?

- Beef convert 6 pounds of feed into 1 pound of gain.
- He needs to gain 77 pounds in a month (30 days).

- That's 2.5 pounds per day (2.5 x 6 = 15 pounds).
- He needs to eat 15 pounds of feed per day to gain 2.5 pounds.
- 15 pounds x 30 days = 450 pounds of feed per month.
- 450 x 9 months = 4050 pounds of feed.

Weigh your steer regularly to help determine how he is growing. This will help you decide how much to feed him so he reaches his desired weight for the show.

- Provide clean, fresh water at all times.
- Clear uneaten feed from feed trough before feeding.
- Avoid dusty, moldy, spoiled feed
- Start calves on a small amount of grain. Increase grain amounts slowly.
- Calves will eat up to 2.5 to 3 percent of body weight in feed each day.
- Feed at the same time each morning and night.
- Grain should be equally divided between feedings.
- Feed a clean, high quality grass hay. Provide as much hay as he will eat and still clean up his grain. Protein content should be between 10.5 and 12 percent. This will promote optimal growth and market readiness.

Most commercially prepared grains have adequate supplements added. However you may choose to offer additional vitamins and minerals. Make ration changes slowly over a week or two.

Approximate Feeding chart

Steer Weight	% of Body Weight Eaten Per Day	Approximate Feed Amounts
500	3%	12 lbs grain - 3 lbs hay
800	3%	20 lbs grain- 4 lbs hay
1100	2.5%	24 lbs grain- 4 lbs hay

HAIR CARE

Comb your calf as much as possible. Not only will this help calm him but it will keep his hair coat and skin healthy. Rinse and wash your calf on a warm day. Comb the hair straight down then

forward until it is dry. At this point you can comb it upwards at a 45° angle. This will be a good way for him to begin to enjoy being combed. If you have a blower you can blow him dry. Always blow the hair forward while pulling the blower backwards slowly. Keep the blower end one to two inches from the skin. When the hair is almost dry, start combing it up and forward. Eventually you will be able to comb the hair straight up and get a full almost velvet look. Remember some cattle are not genetically prone to have good hair. Do the best you can with the hair your calf has.

EQUIPMENT

Here is a basic list of tools, equipment and supplies that are used in showing market steers.

- Show stick
- Show halter
- Feed trough (home)
- Feed pan (at the show)
- Water trough (home)
- Water bucket (at the show)
- Wash bucket & water hose (with nozzle)
- Scotch comb, rice root brush
- Blower
- Pitch fork (sand or straw), shovel, push broom
- Wheel barrow
- Spray bottles
- Hair working and training products
- Soap (livestock or dish soap)
- Clippers
- Extension cords

Above article prepared by:
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Contact our office regarding the necessary vaccinations needed when you buy your calf and BEFORE you go to show!

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