

REARING A CALF

INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been written to act as a briefing for judges and competitors so that uniform standards are applied for Pet Day and Group Day.

This activity provides a link between school and home, and between school and community.

It helps to develop in the child an understanding and love for animals as well as self-reliance and resource in carrying out a chosen task.

The learning outcomes should enable the child to –

- Train and prepare a pet calf successfully
- Learn the daily & weekly requirements for caring for a calf
- Identify scouring & lice infestation and know how to treat
- Describe a number of behavioural traits characteristic of calves
- Observe when a calf has had enough to drink
- Devise a way of measuring the weekly growth of a calf – height, length and weight. Keep these measurements in a graph if able to do so
- Discuss orally the activities associated with rearing a calf

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Calf and enclosure

Whole milk or whole milk powder

Bottle for feeding

Brush

Bucket

Cover – homemade or purchased

Face cloth

Halter

Hay

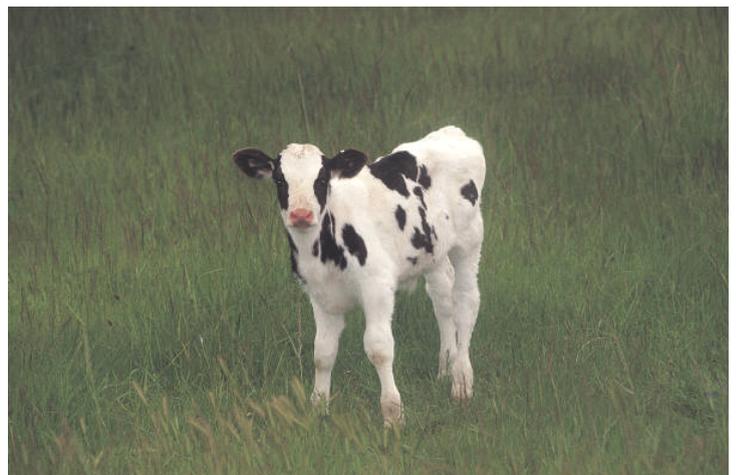
Meal

Practice ring

Rope

Waterproof shed/shelter

Drinking water



ACTIVITIES

Calves must be born between July 20th and September 25th.

FEEDING THE CALF

- Select a calf from a nice looking cow. It is likely to inherit some of the parent's good qualities such as health and temperament. You should take over responsibility no later than 2 weeks after birth.
- Give the calf a name and record its birthday.
- Your calf should be protected from the weather when it is taken from its mother. Provide it with a warm, waterproof shed that has a clean dry floor. It can be a good idea to tie it up with a dog collar and piece of rope. While it will most likely pull a great deal it will learn that it cannot get away and this helps when training the calf to lead. When it can drink properly, it can be let loose.
- The calf should be fed on the colostrum milk of its mother for the first four (4) days.
- For a start it can be a good idea to feed the calf from a bottle using a cut down inflation tube as a teat. Later you can introduce the calf to the bucket and feed this way until it is weaned.
- As calves feeding and weaning techniques are subject to frequent revision, get help from a parent in drawing up a feeding programme. As the calf grows bigger and gets older it is provided with more milk until the stage is reached for gradually breaking down the whole milk to skim milk. It is at this stage meal is often added to make up for the loss of fat from the whole milk.
- Ensure drinking buckets/containers are thoroughly washed and cleaned after each feeding time.

DAILY CARE

- Make a cover from a clean sack. A cover benefits the calf in cold weather but remember to remove it on hot days. A cover also helps to remove loose hair and keep the calf's coat fine and free from lice. Give the cover an occasional wash.
- Check the calf's shelter for cleanliness.

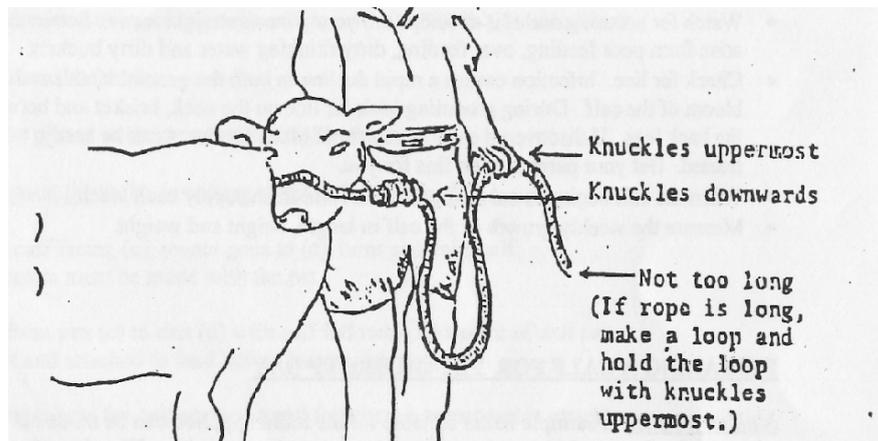
- Feed the calf regularly and ensure that clean fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Make feeding time, grooming time. From 3 weeks old, rub over the calf's body with the hands while it is drinking. At the first sign of loose hair, brushing should commence. Two brushes are desirable – one semi-stiff and the other soft.
- Handling and leading at feeding time rapidly develops an affinity between animal and child. Don't be too anxious about making the calf lead in the early stages. Talk to it in a friendly way while feeding and gradually get it accustomed to its halter and to walking freely. Never pull or drag the calf, as once it develops into a "puller" it is very hard to remedy.
- After the third week, provide some clean hay and meal daily.

WEEKLY CARE

- Devote some extra time each week to an overall grooming of the calf. Don't overlook brushing underneath the tummy, between and down the legs. Use a damp cloth to clean hooves, ears and nostrils.
- Check to make sure the cover does not become too tight.
- Watch for scouring and if it develops tell your parents straight away. Scours can arise from poor feeding, over feeding, dirty drinking water and dirty buckets.
- Check for lice. Infection causes a rapid decline in both the general health and bloom of the calf. During grooming look for lice on the neck, brisket and between the back legs. If discovered early, these small black creatures can be easily treated. Get your parents to do this for you.
- When the calf begins to eat hay, provide a little fresh supply each week.
- Measure the weekly growth of the calf in length, height and weight.

PREPARING YOUR CALF FOR PET DAY AND GROUP DAY

Commence training your calf from an early age. When the calf accepts and will stand alongside you, and will tie up and relax at the end of a rope fastened to a fence, it is time to practice leading daily. Hold the lead approximately 10-20cm away from the calf's head with the right hand fingers uppermost. Allow for a loop between the hands and with the left hand, hold the rope, knuckles uppermost. See illustration below.



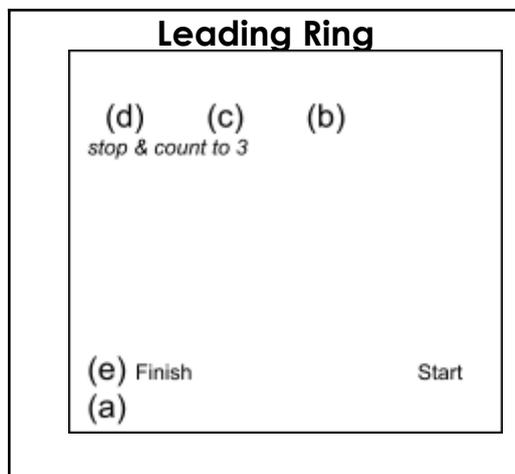
- Commence training with short leads. Use the right hand as the steering wheel and brake. A slight pressure with a forward or backward motion will start or stop the calf.
- Walk slightly behind the calf's head and soon it will learn that the child's pace is the speed at which to travel. Do not release the right hand. Leading soon becomes an accepted habit.
- Erect a course at home using pegs or standards. See diagram on page 5 (corner pegs should be 12m apart). Try and use it every day.
- To get your calf used to other people get other members of your family to come into the ring sometimes.
- Sometimes a calf will lead well at home but behaves badly at pet Day because it is frightened and feels insecure. This difficulty can be met by introducing the calf to other people and to new sights. When a calf is leading well, let it meet other people, less familiar things and see other places. In this way it will get used to changes and the Pet Day will just be another experience.
- Attention to dress is important. Animals become used to seeing and smelling familiar articles so plan ahead for this when considering Pet Day and Group Day clothing.
- On Pet Day and Group Day you will lose points if you put your hand in your calf's mouth **once you have entered the ring.**

TB CERTIFICATES – all animals over the age of 1 month must be accompanied with a TB Status Card or any animal from a farm under movement control or suspended and is over the age of 6 weeks must be tested no more than 60 days prior to moving.

HINTS TO COMPETITORS

Leading

1. The right hand should grip the lead, palm upwards and 10-20cm from the halter.
 2. The left hand should grip the lead, knuckles upward, leaving a loop of slack lead between the hands. This loop of slack lead needs to reach the knees.
 3. There should remain only about 30-40cm of tail end of lead hanging from the left hand. **NO LOOPS OR TRAILING ENDS.** (Nothing touching the ground!)
 4. Stand between head and shoulder of the calf at all times – standing or moving – keep your head up and look straight ahead, walking at the same pace as the calf.
 5. Pay particular attention to the fit of the halter. Do not use a new halter for the first time on the day.
 6. If you must hit your calf, do so with the left-hand back motion, using the short end of the lead behind your back.
 7. All control should be exercised by the right hand on the lead.
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- Walk with your calf on your from the start (a), round the outside of the first corner peg (b) and stop at the middle peg (c).
 - Count to 3 (quietly! – 1 banana, 2 banana, 3 banana), start walking again and circle the next corner peg (d) clockwise, not too tight – not too wide, with you on the outside of the calf (i.e. calf closest to peg). Continue to the finish (e).



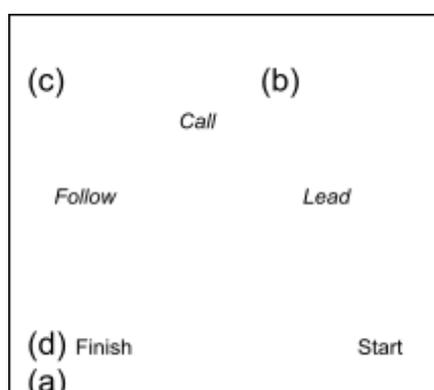
Calling

To train the calf to call, stand some distance from it with a bottle of milk held behind your back. Call it by name. When it comes, give it a gentle pat and feed it. By the time of the school Pet Day, the calf should come when called, even if you don't have a bottle of milk in your hands. **No "tidbits" are allowed in the ring.**

1. Practice over and over again in the ring you've set up at home for leading. Lead your calf from the start peg (a) to the first corner peg (b).
2. Have someone hold your calf at this point while you unclip the lead from the halter. Run towards the next corner peg (c). Call and encourage your calf to come to you.
3. Wait at the corner peg (c) until your calf arrives – pat it gently and then call your pet to follow you to the finish peg (d). Catch your calf quietly near where you would exit the ring.

NB: *These three stages can be taught by giving the calf a small drink from the bottle at the end of each stage while it is young. When it gets older, give it a drink at the finish only and then gradually dispense with the drink altogether.*

Calling Ring



What do cows use their tails for?

How did you train your calf to lead?

How many teeth have calves got?

What is a one-year old calf called?

What happens if you over feed your calf?

Where do you keep your calf during the day/night?

How do cows know which is their own calf?

What are tattoos/ear tags for?

training diary:

<p>Week 1 My diary :</p>	<p>Reminders : Choose your calf and give it a name. Make sure it has an ear tag which gives it a lifetime identification number. Before your calf comes home, make sure you have a safe paddock, clean water, fresh grass, milk supply and an easily cleaned milk feeder. Ask the farmer whether your calf needs dehorning.</p>
<p>Week 2 My diary :</p>	<p>Reminders : How is your calf feeding? You should have a halter fitted and be starting to lead it for a short time each day. Spend time with your calf each day, patting, grooming and talking to it so you become friends.</p>
<p>Week 3 My diary :</p>	<p>Reminders : Your calf should be leading and tying up. If you haven't already fitted a cover, you should be thinking of making one so your calf's coat lies flat. Your calf will be growing so check that the halter hasn't become tight.</p>
<p>Week 4 My diary :</p>	<p>Reminders : You should be leading your calf every day, and walking in different patterns so it becomes used to walking alongside you. Practice standing still too and ask Mum or Dad to come and pat the calf so it's used to what will happen at calf club.</p>
<p>Week 5 My diary :</p>	<p>Reminders Keep up the good work until calf club. Follow the guidelines for weaning and for washing and grooming your calf for calf club.</p>
<p>Week 6 My diary :</p>	
<p>Week 7 My diary :</p>	
<p>Week 8 My diary :</p>	

calf club:

Date of Calf Club:

Held at:

Events entered:

Results:



