

SHOW STEER SELECTION



RICH CO. EXTENSION

Utah State
UNIVERSITY



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BREEDS OF CATTLE

There are many breeds of cattle. Listed on this page are some that are used in the show calf industry.
Some show calves are straight bred while others are crossbreds.

Angus



Many Maines are black



Shorthorn



Charolais



Simmental

Many Simmentals are black



Hereford



Maine Anjou

WHY SHOW JUNIOR LIVESTOCK?

The junior livestock program is a unique opportunity to use live animals to develop youth. 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 of our society. 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 youths can develop as a result of their involvement in the broad range of programs in junior livestock.

How big should a calf be ?

- w A March born calf is 8 months old in November when you buy him.
- w He should weigh about 550 pounds.
- w From November to August is 9 months.
- w Depending on the steers frame, an ideal market weight could be 1100 to 1350 pounds. The number of 1250 is used a lot for an ideal weight.
- w He needs to gain about 77 pounds per month to reach 1250 pounds.
- w Remember it depends on the frame size as to how much your steer will weigh.

A Look at the Math.

1250 finish weight	700 pounds to gain
-550 beginning wt	÷ 9 months to fair
700 pounds to gain	77 pounds/month

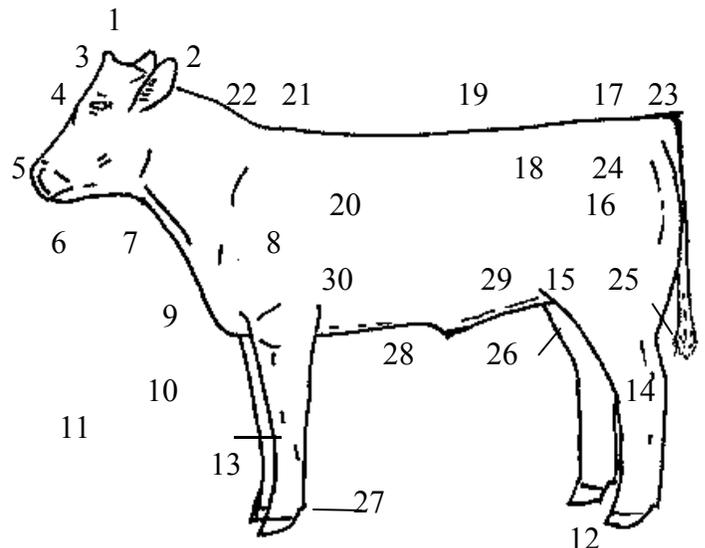
How Much Will He Eat?

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

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

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

PARTS OF THE STEER



- | | |
|------------|--------------------|
| 1.Poll | 16.Round |
| 2.Ear | 17.Rump |
| 3.Eye | 18.Hip or Hook |
| 4.Face | 19.Loin |
| 5.Muzzle | 20.Rib |
| 6.Mouth | 21.Crops |
| 7.Throat | 22.Crest |
| 8.Shoulder | 23.Tailhead |
| 9.Brisket | 24.Pinbones |
| 10.Forearm | 25.Switch |
| 11.Knee | 26.Cod |
| 12.Hoof | 27.Dewclaws |
| 13.Pastern | 28.Navel or Sheath |

14.Hock
15.Stifle

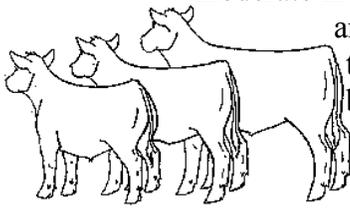
29.Flank
30.Heart girth

SELECTION

Areas to consider when selecting a calf:

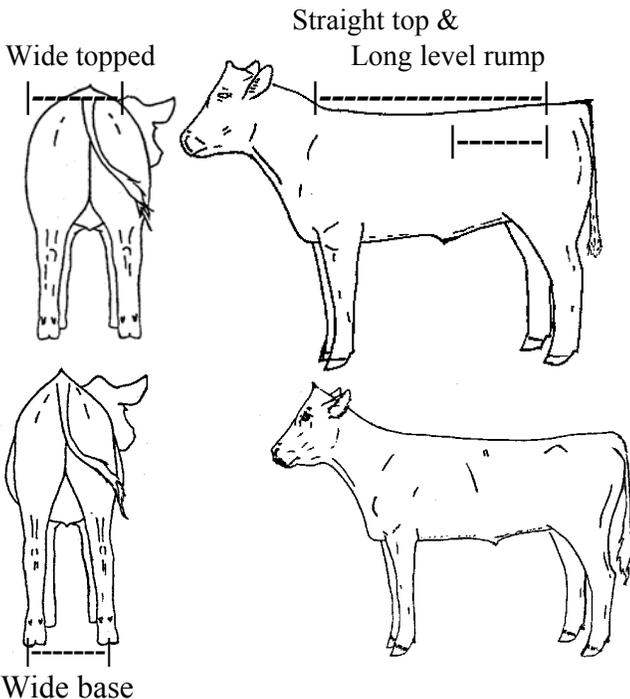
Frame Size

Select a calf that has adequate frame. He should be moderate in size, long bodied, clean and free of excess waste through the neck and brisket.

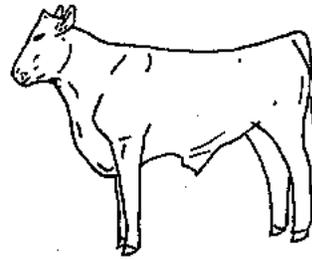


Muscle

The muscle expressed in the lower quarter of the round should be visible when the animal walks. A calf should be wide based, his feet wide apart. He should be wide over the top and straight, long, and level in the rump.



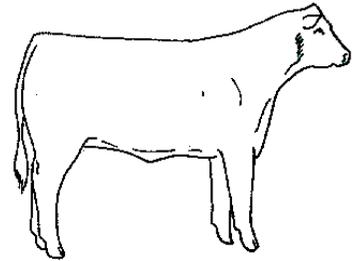
These represent a wide based, well muscled steer.



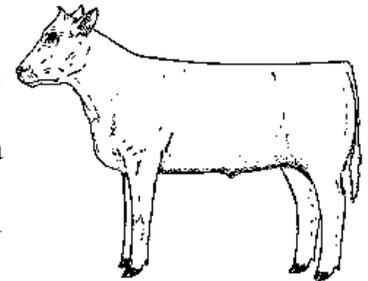
These represent a narrow based, light muscled steer.

Balance

Unbalanced, weak topped, Properly Balanced, heavy fronted, light well muscled steer muscled steer

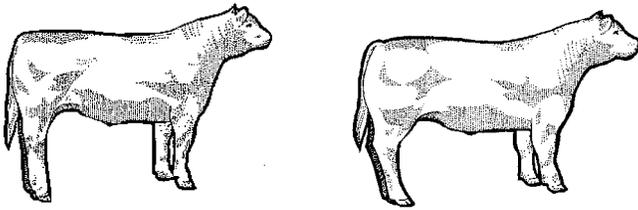


Select a calf with balance and style. You want to have as much in the front quarter area as you have in the rear quarter. A deep bodied calf that is full in the flank is desirable. He should be uniform in his capacity and ruggedness from front to back.



Structural Correctness

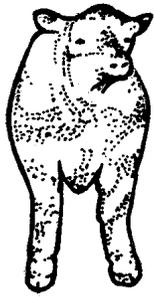
Here are some examples of structure to avoid.



He should have a nice straight rear leg with a little set to his hock that allows him to flex freely when

Post legged

Sickle Hocked



walking. Proper set to the hock means an angle is present in the hock joint and that the joint is deep. There should be some slope to his



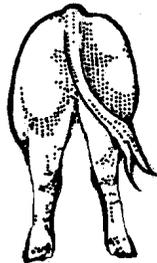
shoulder. His pasterns need to have some slope to them as well. A structurally correct calf will walk smooth and

Toes out

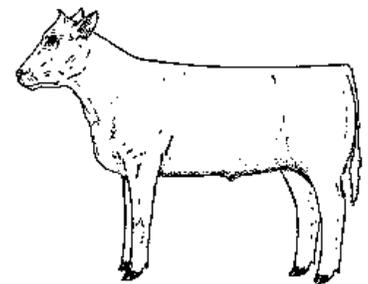
Toes in



have a long stride. His feet should point straight ahead when he stands and walks.

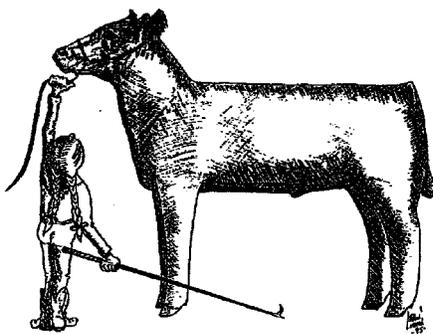


Bow legged



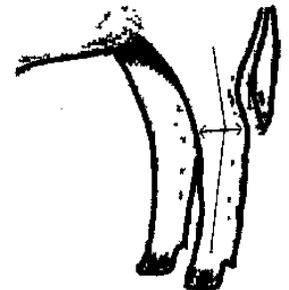
Cow hocked

Your calf needs to have a large



circum

ference of bone to handle the additional weight when reaching market readiness.



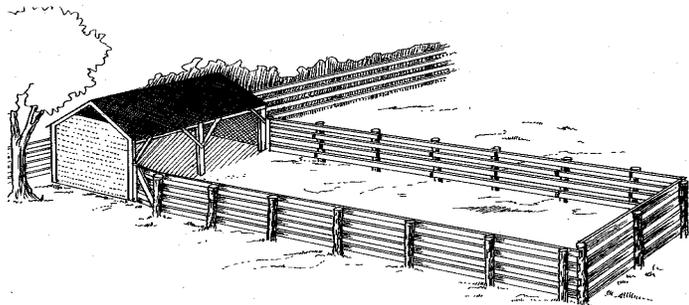
Disposition

Select a calf that you can gentle down and be able to handle. Ask the breeder or seller about the mother and the sire's disposition.

HEALTH

When you buy your steer ask the breeder or seller if he has been vaccinated. Some common vaccinations are:

w 7 or 8 Way



- w Overeating
- w Black Leg
- w Shipping Fever
- w Internal and External Parasites

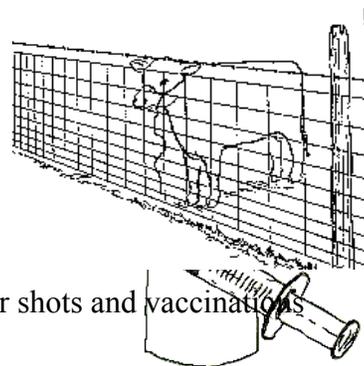
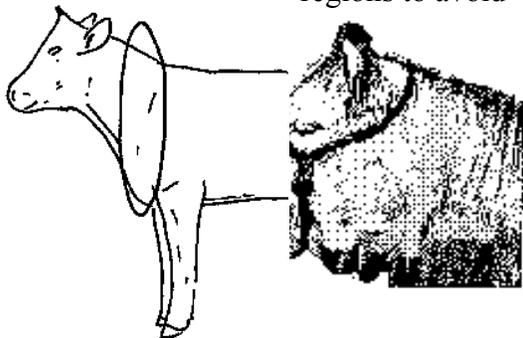
Ask if your steer has been implanted with a growth enhancer such as Ralgro. If you have any questions about vaccinations contact your veterinarian.

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. The meat at the vaccination site of your steer is likely to be damaged and not 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 or shoulder

regions to avoid damage to the valuable cuts of meat.



Proper locations for shots and vaccinations

FACILITIES

Keep your calf in a pen that is clean, dry and comfortable, with good air circulation. He should have a place to get out of the rain and snow in the winter and get some shade in the heat of the summer.

You will need to keep the manure and uneaten hay picked out of your pen regularly. When your calf is comfortable he will gain and finish better. Give him space to get adequate exercise. Have a small pen that you can catch your calf in. This can be where you feed him. By handling your calf each day he will be gentler.

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 your 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 home or in a small pen or even a chute.

Use a nylon rope halter that is $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in diameter. Make sure the halter is fitted 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 up. If he falls down 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 up for the first few times. You want to be able to help up if he gets in a situation and needs help to get up again. Depending on your schedule, tie him up for from 30 minutes to 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 a respect for the halter and that he can't get away when ever 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 times 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 if he ever 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

- Provide clean fresh water at all times.
- Clean out uneaten feed 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% of body weight in feed each day. *(see feeding chart)
- 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 %. 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.

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 down but it will keep his hair coat and skin healthy.

When you get a warm day rinse your calf and wash him. *Comb the hair straight down then forward until it is dry.* AT this point you can comb it upwards at a 45E angle as shown in the picture below. 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 as shown in the picture. 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 that your calf has.

EQUIPMENT

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

- 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
- Adhesives
- Soap (livestock or dish soap)
- Break down product to take adhesives out
- Basic tools (hammer, pliers, screw driver)
- Baling wire, Duct tape
- Clippers
- Extension cords

PAPERS

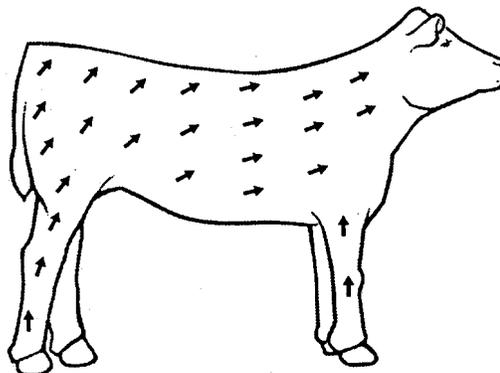
Get a bill of sale from the seller or breeder. Ask about the appropriate Livestock Brand inspection papers as well.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

It is your responsibility to know the rules of the shows that you plan on going to. Different shows will have different requirements, whether county, state, jackpot or even national events. Call the representative for these shows to get a copy of the show premium book or rules.

REFERENCES

The author does not claim all material inside as original. Thank you and credit goes to the following sources.



Combing and brushing pattern.

“Champions are made not born”
Frank Hodnett
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Kansas State University Manhattan

On the Cover: Kelly Burch, Casper College
Livestock Judging Coach, Casper Wyoming, Judging
at the 2001 Weber County Fair, discussing
showmanship with 4-H member Megan Stokes.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO
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