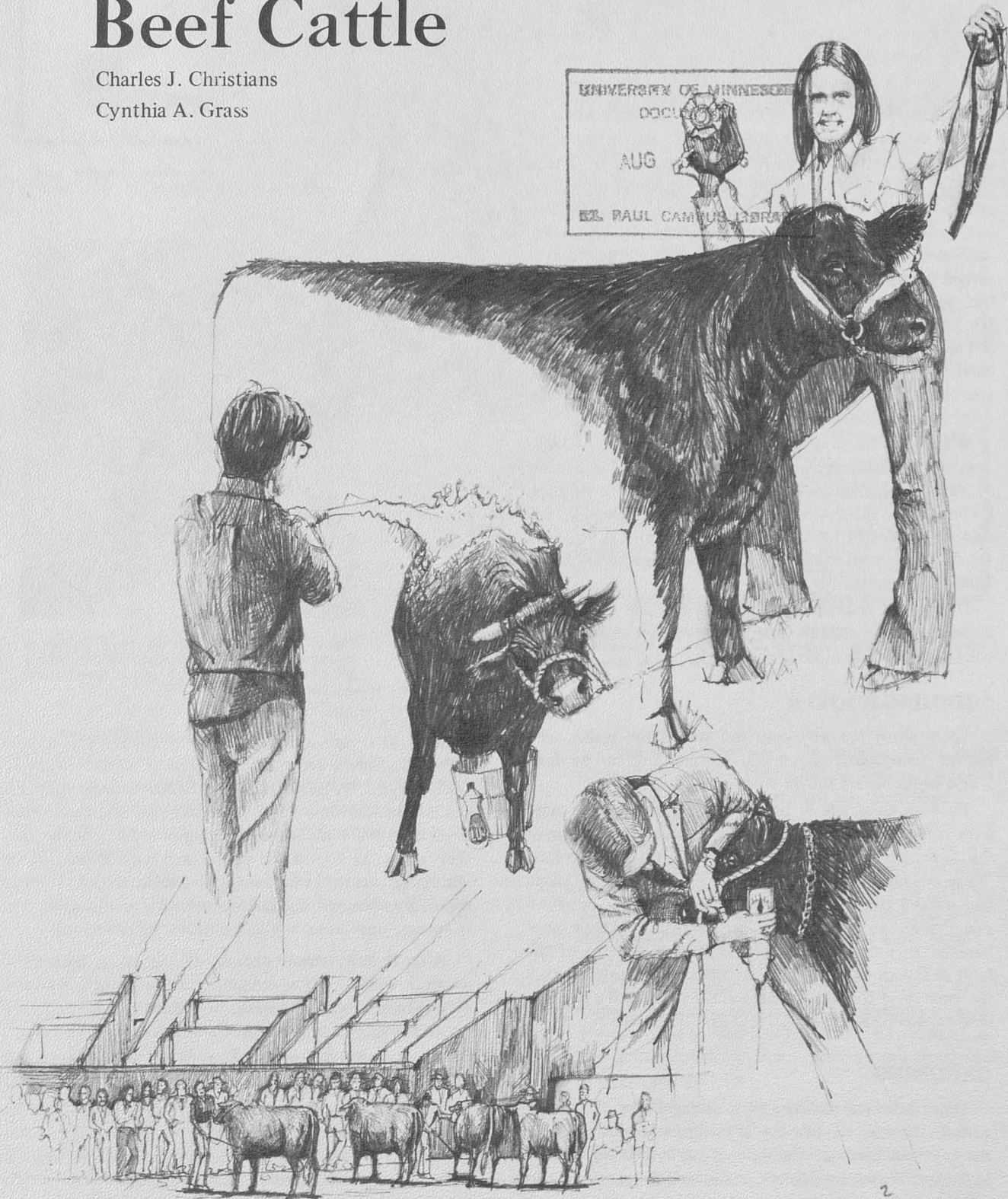


Fitting and Showing Beef Cattle

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Fitting and showing your beef animal can be a learning experience, and it can give you a great deal of personal satisfaction. To show your calf to its best advantage, know both his good and bad points. Compliment the good and improve upon the bad.

Remember to practice good showmanship in both breeding and market classes, not just in showmanship contests.

TRAINING

You should halterbreak your calf at a young age when he weighs 350-500 pounds rather than waiting until he is stronger and has "a mind of his own." Begin by tying your calf in the stall with a rope halter. Leave him tied for periods of 2 to 6 hours, brushing him occasionally. After the calf has learned to stand tied, which may be a few days or several weeks, start leading him around the stall. Later lead him outside the stall with a rope halter, and gradually get him accustomed to a leather halter. Always lead from the left side and walk forward with the lead strap in your right hand. Never allow the calf to break away from you while you are training him or he will discover he is master and training will become difficult.

When your calf leads with ease, you should carry a light-weight show stick in your left hand. After your calf has become accustomed to the show stick, use it to position his feet. Place the lead strap in your left hand and the show stick in your right hand. The show stick should be about 4½ feet long with a blunt nail or screw protruding about 1 inch from the smaller end.

During the training period, lead your calf a short distance every day. About 2 months prior to the show, lead your calf at least ½ mile every day.

TRIMMING HOOVES

To improve the way your calf stands and walks, trim hooves periodically. Final hoof trimming should be done 3 to 4 weeks before the show.

To do a good job of hoof trimming, remove the extra growth from both the point of the toes and the bottom of the hoof. Various methods allow you to trim the feet. These include throwing your calf through the use of a rope tied around the front and rear flanks, use of a foot trimming table, or a foot trimming stanchion. Use a hoof trimmer to remove the excess outer edge and toe of the hoof as shown in figure 1. Remove all dead material from the bottom of the hoof. Smooth the hoof with a rasp and scraper. BE CAREFUL NOT TO CUT TOO DEEP.

GROOMING

Begin brushing and combing during the early training period. Brushing calves every day will remove dirt and keep the hair coat healthy. Use a downward stroke when brushing. A stiff rice root brush works well for removing dirt and dandruff.

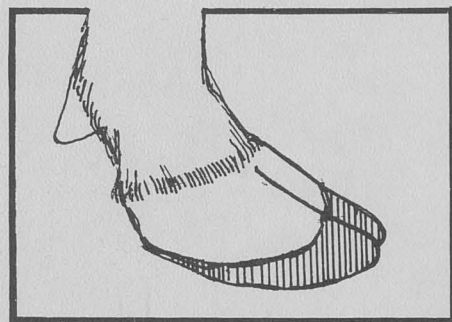


Figure 1. Trim the excess, shaded part, off the front and bottom of this hoof.



Figure 2. After the hair has been washed or wetted down, set the hair with a liner or comb. After drying, pull hair up with a scotch comb and brush until dry.

Wash your calf at least once a month until 2 months before the show, and then wash once a week. DO NOT GET WATER IN YOUR CALF'S EARS or wash your calf the day of the show. Wet your calf with lukewarm water if possible and work the mild detergent lather into the hair. Start from the top of the animal and work down. Rinse with clean water. Make sure all detergent is removed since any left in the hair will cause dandruff. A dilute solution of vinegar rinse water will help remove the detergent.

After rinsing, remove excess water by using the back of a scotch comb, a water scraper, or by brushing downward. If you have an electric groomer or a blower which will blow air, it can be used to blow out the hair and dry your calf.

Two months before the show it is a good idea to wet your calf down every evening with cool water to stimulate hair growth. Remove the excess water, brush the hair down then set the hair with a liner or comb. After the hair has partially dried, use a brush and scotch comb to pull up the hair until it is dry (figure 2). Combing the hair in this manner will train it to stand up.



Figure 3. Clip the complete head and face on market steers. Do not clip the ears or eyelashes.



Figure 5. Clip the tail from midway point between twist and tailhead. Do not clip out the tailhead, clip the longer hair from the side of the tail.



Figure 6. Clip the long hairs on top of the tailhead. Blend in with the hair on the rump.



Figure 4. Clip the head forward of a line just behind the ears, and continue down from the jaw bone.



Figure 7. Clip the longer hair off the back and shoulder. Blend in the hair to give a longer, muscular appearance.

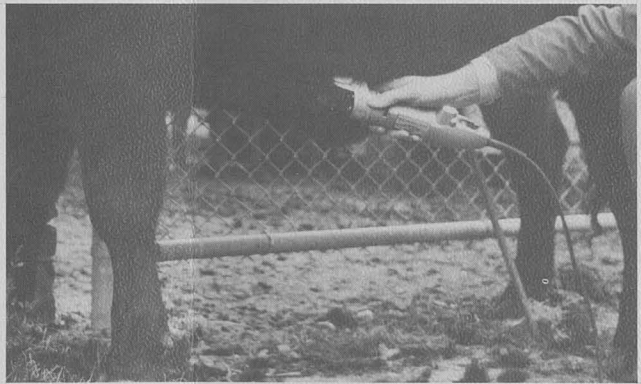


Figure 8. The brisket, belly and flanks should be clipped to give a trimmer appearance.



Figure 10. Rat the hair of the switch to fill in the twist area. Do not allow any of the switch to hang below the hock.

CLIPPING

If you have never clipped a calf before, first watch someone who is skilled at the job. You should practice and clip your calf 2 to 3 months before the show so you can correct the mistakes you may have made. Do the final clipping a week before the show.

The complete head of steers and Angus breeding cattle should be clipped while other breeding animals should not (figure 3). Some breeds like the Polled Hereford have only the poll of the head clipped to emphasize its prominence. Some of the exotic breeds are clipped depending on the refinement or coarseness of appearance.

When clipping the complete head, clip in front of a line just behind the halter and down across the rear of the jaw bone (figure 4). **DO NOT CLIP THE EARS, EYELASHES, OR THE HAIR AROUND THE NOSE.**

Tails of most cattle breeds, except Shorthorns, should be clipped. Start at a point halfway between the twist and tailhead region. Clip up to the tailhead (figure 5). In clipping the tail, you may either clip around the tail or just clip the

top side. The hairs on the top of the tailhead should be trimmed with a scissors or a small hand clippers so the tailhead appears somewhat square. Very little hair should be clipped off the top of the tailhead (figure 6). Leaving this hair will make the animal look longer and level rumped when properly fitted. Clip the hair over the back and the shoulder. Remove the excess hair from the top of the shoulder to give a longer appearance (figure 7).

Clipping the brisket, belly, and flanks of beef cattle gives them a neat appearance. This is especially important so steers look trim (figure 8). The belly and brisket of a breeding heifer may be clipped but, if you have a shallow bodied heifer, just trim the long hairs and do not clip too close.

FINAL SHOW PREPARATION

Before you go to the show, purchase or make a wooden or metal show box for storing your showing and fitting equipment. Your show box should contain a rope halter, show halter, clippers, scotch comb, brush, curry comb,



Figure 9. Comb and brush the rear quarter as shown. By combing out from the tail, the quarter appears thicker.

grooming comb, mild liquid detergent, wood chisel, pail, mineral oil or coat dressing, saddle soap, butch wax, hair spray, oil sprayer, rags, and a show stick.

Wash your calf at least 1 day before show. A few hours before the show, brush the dirt off your calf, wet him down with water, and comb up all the hair on his body. Make sure to pull up the hair on the legs to give your calf an appearance of greater substance of bone. A blower will hasten drying the hair. Make sure the hair is dry at least 1 hour before the show.

After the hair is dry, apply a light coat of butch wax or saddle soap to keep the hair up. The hair on the rump should be combed away from the tail on each side so your calf appears heavy muscled as viewed from the rear. Hair on the top of the tailhead should be combed up as shown in figure 9 so the tailhead looks somewhat square. This also will make your calf look longer.

Fluff the switch by ratching the hair with a comb or fingers so the switch fills the space above the hocks and below the twist (figure 10). Do not comb the tail too often because combed out tail hair will not grow back.



Figure 11. Pictured is an ideal rear pose. Note the properly clipped and fitted tail and rump. The hair is groomed to the outside quarter to express muscle thickness. The showman uses the show stick in his right hand and holds the halter in his left hand.

Make sure your calf's hooves and horns are clean. Before you go into the ring, apply a light coat of show oil to them. Black spray paint may be used on the hooves of Angus and other black hoofed animals.

Spray a light coat of show oil on the hair to make it glisten before entering the ring. Too much oil may give a greasy appearance.

Make sure your clothes are neat and clean when you enter the ring. It may be a good idea to fit your calf and then change your clothes just before entering the show ring. Wear boots or hard soled shoes to prevent injury to your feet.

Know all the important information about your calf like birth date, weight of market animals, etc., so if asked you may answer affirmatively.

THE SHOW

Enter the ring promptly when your class is called. Even though you may be extremely excited, stay as calm and collected as possible. Remember to wear clean neat clothes, have a show stick, keep a comb in your back pocket, and have a show halter on your calf.

Lead your calf from the left side holding the lead strap in the right hand about 18 inches from the head. Hold the show stick in the left hand. Walk around the ring in a clockwise direction.

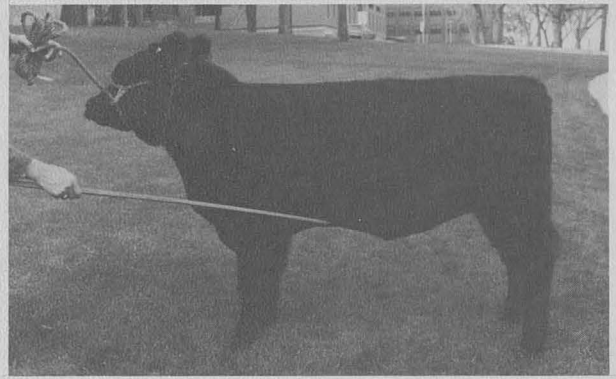


Figure 12. Note how the calf is set up squarely. Use the show stick to set up the calf. The small nail at the bottom of the show stick is used to pull the foot ahead and the point is used to push back. Hold the lead strap neatly coiled in the left hand level with the poll.

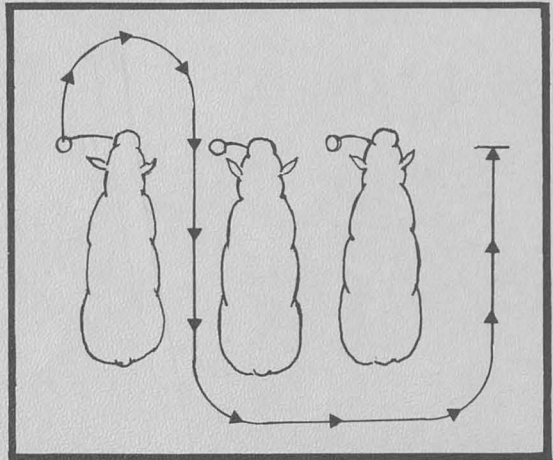


Figure 13. Depending on space available, either back out or turn him around in the line. Move promptly to the location directed by the judge.

When you stop, switch the show stick and halter strap to opposite hands. Then position your calf's feet by first placing the hind feet and then the front feet (figure 11). Leave at least 3 feet between animals so you and other exhibitors have room to work and the judge can move freely around each calf. After your calf has been set up, you may use the show stick to scratch your calf's belly and calm him (figure 12). Always keep one eye on the judge and one eye on your calf. Never block the judge's view of your calf.

If you are asked to move your calf out of the line up, either back your calf out by placing pressure on the calf's shoulder vein or lead the calf ahead, turn around and bring him back through the line. Always move around your calf as shown in figure 13.

When the judge isn't looking at your calf, use the comb in your rear pocket to comb the hair in place. This is important after the judge has handled your calf.

Good luck, and remember good sportsmanship. Be a modest winner and a gracious loser.

BEEF SHOWMANSHIP SCORE CARD*

	Perfect Score
A. APPEARANCE OF CALF	40 points
1. <u>Cleanliness</u>	10
a. Hair clean and free of stains. Areas such as the switch, legs, belly, and head should be given special attention.	
b. Hide free from dirt and dandruff.	
c. Legs and feet clean and hoofs scraped.	
d. Leather halter clean.	
2. <u>Grooming</u>	20
a. Hair handled in a manner best suited to the individual calf. Long hair may be curled or it may be blocked and fluffed out without curling. Short, stiff hair, may be shown smooth. In some cases some areas may be brushed smooth, while other areas such as the rounds may be fluffed or pulled up to emphasize thickness or perhaps minimize some deficiency.	
b. Hoof trimmed and shaped so the animal can stand straight; trimming done early enough so the animal's feet are not sore and so the animal has had time to adjust. Hoofs should be oiled.	
c. Horns should be curved, shaped, scraped, and polished. (All steers should have been dehorned.)	
d. Switch brushed out as fluffy as possible.	
e. Halter properly adjusted, nosestrap midway between eyes and nose.	
3. <u>Clipping</u>	10
a. Except for minor touch-up, clipping should be done 5 to 10 days before the show.	
b. Heads clipped on market animals (no horns should be left on market animals.)	
c. Heads of horned breeding heifers not clipped; heads of polled breeding heifers clipped unless breed custom dictates otherwise.	
d. If clipping is appropriate the hair is clipped in front of a line starting about one (1) inch back of the halter at the top of the head and extending almost straight down to the bottom of the throat. This includes the poll.	
e. Ears are never clipped.	
f. Tail clipped from point halfway between the twist upward to the tailhead. Tailhead not clipped short, but long hairs trimmed. Clipped portion should be blended into unclipped areas.	
	Perfect Score
B. SHOWING THE CALF	40 points
1. <u>Parading and Changing Positions</u>	10
a. Calf led from left side; lead strap held in the right hand from one (1) to two (2) feet from the head and at height of calf's head. Extra lengths of lead strap carried in the form of several large loops in same hand. Exhibitor never leads calf while walking backward.	

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| b. Backward pressure applied with the lead strap to back calf out of line.
c. Calf led in clockwise direction when necessary to parade it or move it to a different position. | |
| 2. <u>Posing in Ring</u> | 15 |
| a. Calf kept from contact with a competitor or encroachment on space rightfully in possession of another. | |
| b. Showman faces calf and holds lead strap in left hand while showing. | |
| c. Calf stands alert with head up, back level, and legs placed squarely under the body. | |
| d. Show stick used to place calf's feet. Show stick not overused. | |
| e. Showman keeps whereabouts of judge in mind and has calf in position when judge looks at him. | |
| f. Proper to let calf relax and to brush or comb calf when judge is at other end of ring. | |
| g. Animal shown until the entire class has been placed and the class is dismissed. | |
| 3. <u>Cooperation with Judge</u> | 15 |
| a. Awareness of position of judge maintained but not made obvious. | |
| b. Body not permitted to obstruct view of judge. | |
| c. Calf maneuvered into improved position for benefit of judge's inspection prior to but not during inspection. | |
| d. Showman steps aside if judge desires front view inspection. | |

	Perfect Score
C. APPEARANCE AND MERITS OF EXHIBITOR	20 points
1. <u>Appearance</u>	10
a. Clothes and person neat, clean, and well groomed.	
b. All colors except white are appropriate for trousers. Extremes in color and fit should be avoided. White trousers are impractical for everyday dress and therefore will be discounted.	
c. White blouse appropriate for girls; white shirt or T-shirt appropriate for boys. Other colors satisfactory.	
d. Grooming comb carried in handy pocket for use in the ring.	
2. <u>Merits</u>	10
a. Brings calf into ring promptly.	
b. Recognizes and quickly corrects faults of calf.	
c. Alert and responsive to judge's and ringmaster's requests.	
d. Not distracted by persons and things outside ring.	
e. Shows calf, not himself. Does not assume extreme, unnatural posture or gestures.	
f. Displays a courteous and sportsmanlike attitude.	
g. Prepared to give prompt answers to any questions pertaining to animal.	
h. Does not leave ring until released by a ring official.	

*Prepared in collaboration with Dave Williams, University of Nebraska, and Tom Wickersham, Iowa State University.

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