

# Showring Success

## Presenting Your Animal

J

Juniors may want to consider presenting their animal at a show. Several shows are held throughout the summer at the regional, state and national level.

It is important to pay close attention to all show rules and health requirements. More information can be found at [www.njaa.info](http://www.njaa.info).

### FROM THE BEGINNING

Before entering the showring there are several steps to take to prepare. First, halter-break the calf, which is safer and less stressful if started shortly after weaning.

There are several strategies to halter-break an animal but, the ultimate goal is to minimize stress for all concerned — the calf, equipment and yourself. Contact a local extension agent or regional manager to help determine which method is best for your skill level, resources and available time.

A list of popular techniques follows:

1. Run several calves together in a crowded pen. Enter the pen slowly and calmly, and scratch calves on the back, not head.
2. Halter calf and let it drag for a few days prior to tying. This allows the calf to understand pressure means stop. Always remove the halter at night.

Each method requires a nylon rope halter (about  $\frac{1}{2}$ -to  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch diameter); the handler to remain calm and patient at all times; and tying calf 12 inches away from the fence, with their head in a natural position for short periods of time, approximately 15-20 minutes. While handling, try not to allow the calf to pull away; once a calf gets away it will try again.

When the calf stops pulling against the halter, begin tying its head up, so it understands standing with its head up with their feet sturdy and square underneath. Begin to practice stops and turns to allow the calf and yourself to better understand maneuvers and behaviors.

The next step is to add in a showstick, with time for the calf to adjust. Scratching the calf's belly with the showstick, after setting their feet, help them remain calm and aids in keeping their top line up.

Set the front feet square under the calf to create a

straight line from shoulder to ground. The back feet are set at an angle with the back leg, facing the inside of the showring, set back slightly farther than the non-show side.

Always use practice as a mock show, so a calf can better adjust once at a show. More showmanship tips can be found on page 13.

### PROPER FITTING TECHNIQUES

The next step is to fit your animal. The object of fitting is to present an animal in the best possible form while still looking natural. There are several techniques to fitting cattle, but each concept is the same. After practice and watching others fit, you will find what works best.

### HAIR CARE

Before an exhibitor can begin to fit, they will spend time caring for their animal's hair. Genetics and nutrition play important roles in hair growth. A veterinarian can help develop a ration to promote a healthy hair coat.

Consider the following guidelines:

1. Protein (12-14 percent protein on a ration with 60:40, oats:corn)
2. Minerals and iodized salt
3. Vitamin A
4. Routine worming
5. Beet pulp or cottonseed hulls act as a filler, expanding the animal's stomach. Cottonseed also helps keep oil in hair.

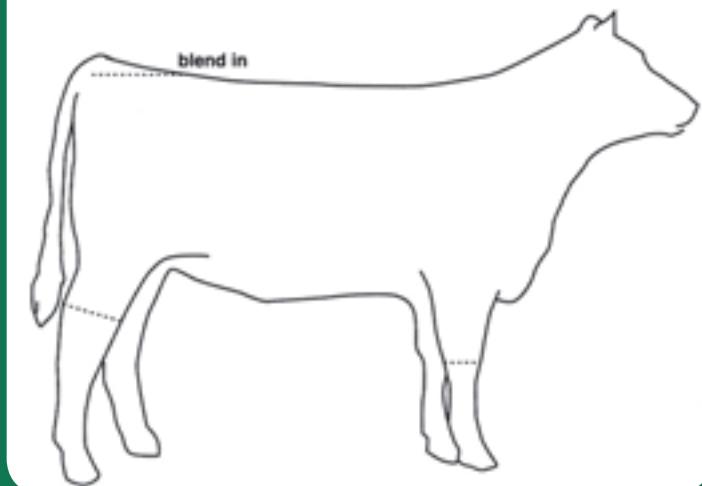
Other strategies to stimulate hair growth include: brushing, especially in the hot summer months; daily rinsing with mild soap and conditioner, to replace natural oils; and keeping animals in a dark, cool place with fans or misters to circulate air.

To promote new hair growth, shear the animal in March or April (Illustration A) and wash a minimum of once a week. Regular washing will also control external parasites. Dry and spray with oil-like hair-conditioning polish to train the hair.



## ILLUSTRATION A

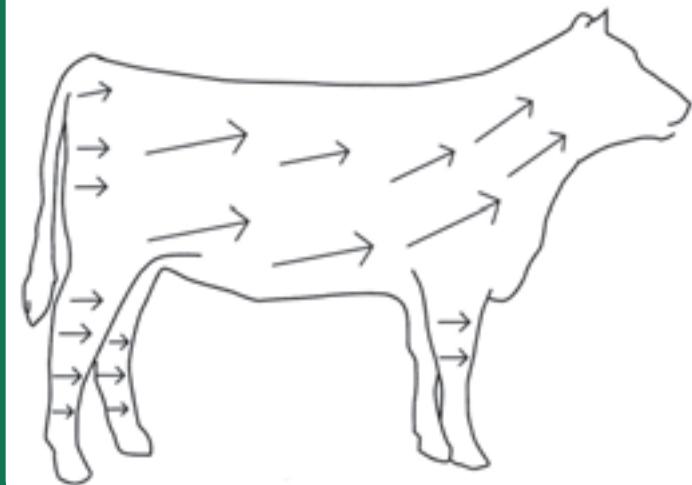
### Pre-show-season shearing



Shear animal 90 to 120 days prior to show. If using a pair of sheep-head clippers or two-speed clippers, shear up on the calf's body and down the lower quarter and legs. If using regular flat-head clippers, clip down the entire animal. Leave some hair on the poll, tailhead and lower hind legs.

## ILLUSTRATION B

### Brushing and combing pattern



Rinse, brush and blow dry your animal to promote hair growth and set the hair in a desired angle. This also keeps the calf clean and presentable.

After washing:

1. Remove excess water with backside of comb, brushing in a downward motion.
2. Brush all hair downward, removing curls.
3. Brush hair toward the front shoulder and neck.
4. For animals with more hair, brush at a 45-degree angle, and work toward desired angle. Brush the hair on the legs straight forward.
5. Use a blower (moving top to bottom, front to back) to help train the hair. Rest the tip of the nozzle next to the skin and move slowly in an arc pattern. Be sure not to create lines in the animal when using the blowers.

## CLIPPING

Before clipping begins, consult a show-supply salesman to purchase correct clippers for your skill level. Then identify the animal's weaknesses to correct while clipping. For safety, restrain the animal in a chute and always stay alert.

Approximately three weeks before a show, clip the head, brisket, and neck (Illustrations C & D). Clipping usually takes two sessions — before and at the show. The main portion of clipping is completed at home, with a minor touch up at the show. Body clipping on an animal can take 45 minutes or more, depending on the amount of hair on the animal and the clipper's level of experience.

Proper hoof trimming is also vital to show an animal and how it moves. If done incorrectly poor hoof trimming can affect the calf's movement and showring presence. Hooves are trimmed 30-60 days prior to a show, with clean bedding to prevent infections.

## AT THE SHOW

Take precautionary measures before traveling to prevent stress on the animal. Do not feed the morning of leaving for a show; upon arriving feed half a ration; and keep the calf clean and comfortable at all times.

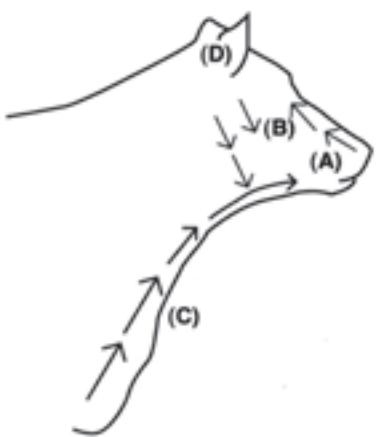
The day of the show, wash, dry and feed the calf two hours prior to the show start. To accomplish a deeper-bodied appearance the day of show, restrict water intake until right before entering the showring, or feed beet pulp; cottonseed hulls; water or alfalfa.



### ILLUSTRATION C

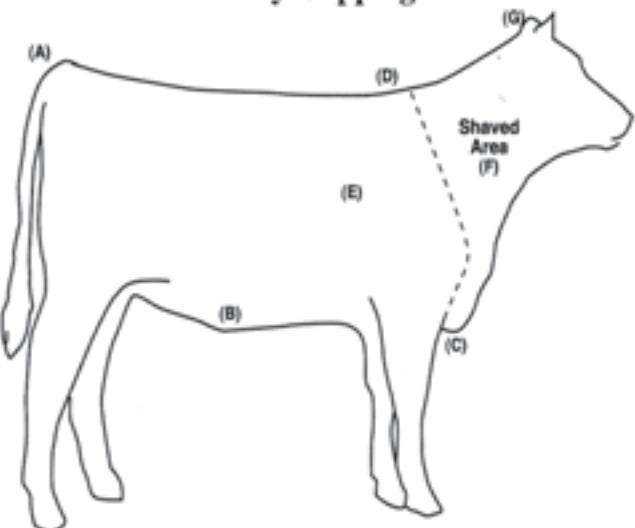
#### Clipping the head

*Always clip against the natural direction of the hair to achieve a closer, smooth job. Approximately three weeks before the show, shear the neck, brisket and head. A few days before the show, re-clip the animal's face. Try not to make line too distinct; keep it neat and natural.*



### ILLUSTRATION D

#### Body Clipping



Tail and tailhead (A) - This area is used to enhance the visual effect of a level hip and add body and thickness. Clip above the grow bone tight (see Illustration E).

Belly (B) - Use sheep-heads or two-speed clippers to trim long hairs on belly for a clean appearance.

Brisket (C) - Shave brisket up with flat-head clippers and blend in with neck hair.

Point of shoulder (D) - Use as a guide point when shaving the front end (three weeks prior to show). Trim hair short to reduce prominence. Under the shoulder point, leave hair long and use to blend.

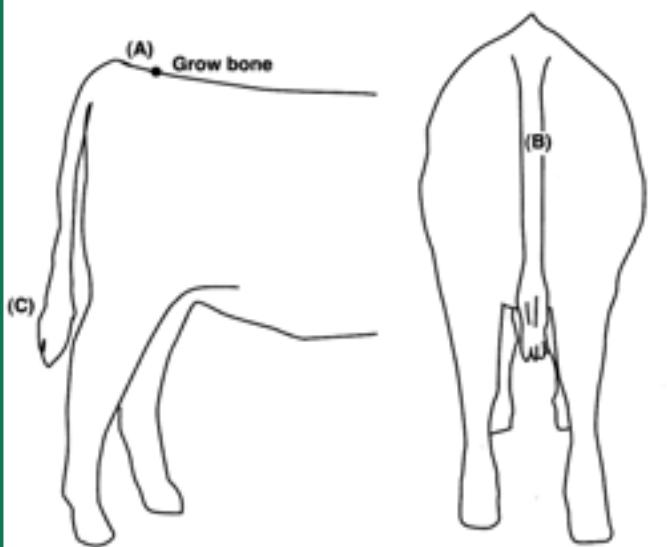
Behind the shoulder (E) - Leave hair as long as possible to ensure proper blending by the shoulder joint.

Neck (F) - Three weeks prior to the show clip the neck on females from the point of shoulder forward, to appear more feminine. Use sheep-head or two-speed clipper to go up with hair; and flat heads to clip down. Hair should be utilized at the top of the shoulder to give a smoother appearance.

Poll (G) - Leave hair on head to give added length and youthfulness.

### ILLUSTRATION E

#### Clipping the tail and tailhead



A. Extend hair at tailhead, hold with glue and trim to desired shape to create a corner to make the animal appear longer hipped.

B. Clip hair into a short "V." This gives the appearance of width between the pins.

C. Ball or trim tail.

## EVERYDAY SUPPLIES

- Rice-root brush
- Scrub brush
- Scotch comb and fluffer comb – plastic to work hair, metal for fitting
- Sprayers
- Hair-conditioning polish
- Blower
- Feed pans
- Water buckets
- Extension cords
- Broom, pitch fork, shovel
- Pliers, hammer and other tools
- Neck rope
- Halter
- Extra halter
- Working chute or blocking chute
- Fan
- Showstick

## WASHING SUPPLIES

- Soap (General livestock shampoo or dish soap)
- Hair conditioner
- Scrub brush
- Hose
- Nozzle
- Wash bucket/dip bucket
- Fly repellent

## CLIPPERS

- Flat heads
- Two-speed or sheep-head clippers
- Blades
- Clipper lube and oil
- Screwdriver
- Extension cords

## SHOW-DAY SUPPLIES

- Scotch comb
- Clippers
- Grooming adhesive
- Tail comb, glue and ties
- Show oil
- Show foam (optional)
- Adhesive remover
- Extension cords
- Chute
- Fitting mats
- Water buckets
- Blower
- Show halter

## RING-SIDE SUPPLIES

- Clean scotch comb
- Paper towels
- Showstick
- Show harness with number
- Nose lead (for bulls)



## FITTING TIPS

1. Apply a light mist of hair-conditioning polish everywhere except the legs. Comb in and blow dry. The more you blow on an animal, the better the hair stands up. Reapply as needed.
2. Comb out the tail to leave natural, or backcomb the hair and use strong adhesive to form a teardrop shape.
3. Spray adhesive sparingly on the animal's legs and pull hair up and forward with a scotch comb, also known as to bone the leg.
4. Fit tailhead and clip out topline.
5. Put on the show halter, and offer calf water.
6. Once out of the chute spray a light coat of oil on the animal to give a glossy finish, especially around the neck.
7. After the show, use an oil product remover to get all products off, then rinse animal with soap that cuts through the oil. Wash within 24 hours for best results.

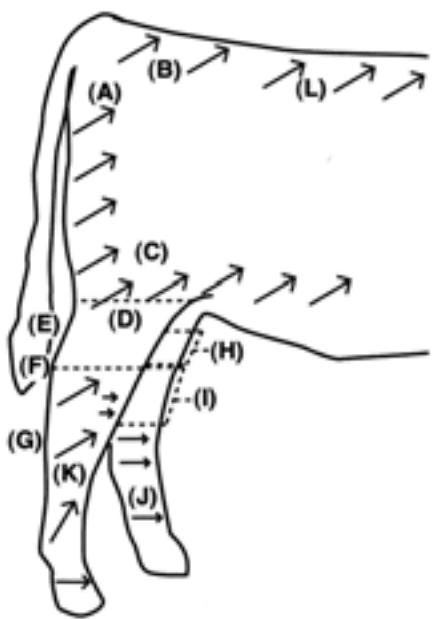
8. Continue to brush the animal and work the hair to prepare for the next show.

*Reminder: The American Angus Association does not allow the use of coloring agents at the show.*



## ILLUSTRATION F

### Hindquarter clipping (side view)

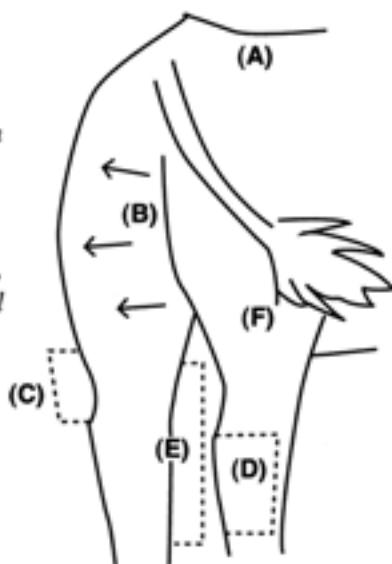


- A. Brush hair out and around hind quarter to add dimension.
- B. Hair is used to fill hip to create a level appearance from hooks to pins.
- C. Pull hair up and out to add muscularity.
- D. Leave hair long to add width to lower quarter.
- E. Leave hair above hock to reduce hock prominence.
- F. Shave ball of hock to skin, 3-inch-long area to reduce hock prominence.
- G. Trim long hairs to appear structurally correct, and heavier bone.
- H. Trim right above hock area to straighten the appearance of the leg.
- I. Trim long hair to fill hock joint area and to straighten the appearance of the leg.
- J. Trim around entire leg to add a straight, symmetrical appearance.
- K. Pull hair on cannon bone forward to add length.
- L. On steers and heifers, clip loin top area flat.

## ILLUSTRATION G

### Hindquarter clipping (rear view)

The rear view is perhaps the most important view when evaluating cattle. It shows muscularity, muscle design, cleanliness, condition, height and structural correctness in the animal.



- A. Hip hair is very important in order for the animal to appear level hipped.
- B. Trim hair around the tail short, in an outward motion, leaving most hair on the hind-quarter edge to create thickness and dimension.
- C. Blend the area from the hock to the lower stifle to add muscle shape.
- D. Trim the outside hock area short to add balance and extension.
- E. Shave or trim inside hock area to add height.
- F. The twist area can be trimmed and shaped to appear more muscular.

