

Showmanship

Your weeks of preparation have paid off and you are ready to enter the showring with the animal that you have selected, washed, broke to lead and fit to perfection. The procedure for showing your animal, and yourself, to the winners circle follows these guidelines.

- ❖ As you enter the ring, walk forward with your left hand in the halter and pulling throat with your right hand. Your left arm should be comfortably positioned – not too straight and the elbow should not be too high. You should be slightly ahead of the animal's nose and away from the shoulder of the heifer. Be sure to walk forward, not sidestepping as this is a slight discrimination on the showmanship scorecard and is distracting for the judge.
- ❖ If possible, walk in step with your animal – as she steps with her left front leg, you step with your left foot and vice versa. This is a sign of a keen showman and someone who has worked extensively with your animal.
- ❖ Be smooth on the halter – do not jerk the head to make your animal move, simply pull your animal forward. If your animal isn't moving, don't hit it – this will cause it to move further backwards.
- ❖ The head should be not too low as this is a moderate discrimination. If you have the nose too high, or pulled towards you away from the judge, you will receive a slight discrimination. Ideally, the heifer would walk with her nose slightly towards the judge.
- ❖ The halter should fit properly with the nose band placed half way between the nostrils and the eyes of your animal. Make sure that it is clean and put together correctly.
- ❖ If the showman has the lead strap looped and fastened, it is a serious discrimination – lead straps are long for a reason! The strap should not be wrapped tightly or in a figure 8 that shows above the calf's nose. The strap should be loosely wrapped or for young children and if showing in Canada, a circle works best.
- ❖ Hold the chain in doubled in your hand and never put your finger through the ring as this can lead to serious injury.
- ❖ The judge will be looking for all of these things as you enter the ring. Once all of the exhibitors are in the ring, turn around and walk backwards facing your animal. This will give you greater control while the judge inspects your animal.
- ❖ Be sure to leave four to five feet of space between you and the animal in front of you.
- ❖ The wall is not your friend! Always stay five feet away from the outside of the ring or sideline area. This allows the judge to better see your animal. If you are on the outside of the ring, your animal will appear smaller, which is a negative.
- ❖ The judge will motion you to stop or ask you to stop verbally. Set your animal up with the leg closest to the judge back on heifers and forward on cows. Be sure to have the calf's head up and the throat pulled.
- ❖ When setting your heifer up, you are allowed to gently touch the front feet with your feet to get them square. Do not kick the front feet, step in and move them with a gentle tickle from your foot and a shift of weigh at the halter. You may never touch the back feet with your feet to set your animal up - you will receive a serious discrimination for using that practice.
- ❖ The judge should use this opportunity to ask questions. They may ask the birthdate, sire, dam, the animal's weaknesses, or any other information that is appropriate for your age and level of showing. When you respond to the question, look the judge in the eye and answer

with confidence. Be prepared, but if you don't know an answer, smile and say that you don't know.

- ❖ When you are leading, spend half of the time watching the judge and half of the time watching your animal. A good rule of thumb is to look at the back leg and then the judge with each step.
- ❖ Do not smile the entire time you are in the ring. Look happy and confident but not with a pasted on smile. Look professional without looking nervous – this is the fun part!
- ❖ Once the judge is done asking questions, they will begin pulling exhibitors into line. When you are signaled to come to the center, turn around and walk just as you did when entering the ring. Keep your animals head up, throat pulled and walk along. Do not run – a cow is a lady and will not look her best moving quickly. Don't go too slow either.
- ❖ Be sure to use proper spacing when going into line – do not get too close to the person in front of you as this will give you room to work. Don't crowd or bump other animals as this is a moderate discrimination.
- ❖ When you approach the line, turn around and walk backwards into line so that you get your animal set up correctly. If you are first in line, set your heifer up with her back leg on your side of the animal back. If you have a cow, the back leg on your side is forward. Leave your animal this way, even if the judge is walking back and forth.
- ❖ If you are last in line, make sure that the back leg on the opposite side of you is back for a heifer or forward for a cow. Again, you do not need to move the legs every time the judge walks around your heifer.
- ❖ If you are anywhere in between, set your heifer or cow up balanced and not too stretched out and leave them that way.

It is no longer taught to move the animal's legs as the judge moves from side to side. It is most important that the animal look its best and left alone as the judge evaluates the class.

- ❖ When the judge walks around the front of the animal, turn and look at the judge. Do not cover up the person next to you. If you move to the opposite side of your animal, you will receive a serious discrimination.
- ❖ If you are in line for a while and your animal starts to relax or fall asleep, simply take a step back by pressing on the animal's shoulder and guiding them back with the halter. Then move them back to your spot in line, setting them up again.
- ❖ At this time, the judge will pull the exhibitors out of line for a final placing. The judge will be looking for proper head carriage, attentiveness to the judge, proper spacing, moving with ease at a nice pace and, most importantly, whose animal is being displayed the best.

About your animal

- ❖ Try to have a project calf that matches your size. Don't try to show a yearling or cow if you are small and don't show a Spring calf if you are tall.
- ❖ Your animal should be clean, free from dust with its ears cleaned and tail fluffed. It should be recently clipped and the clip job should be completely finished.
- ❖ If you did your own clipping, when the judge is asking questions, mention this. A good judge will take this into consideration when placing you.
- ❖ The only way to have a properly trained show animal is to spend hours working with it and this will be evident to the judge. An animal will get used to whomever trains it, so work with your animal, don't count on others to do it for you. You should work as a team throughout the class.

- ❖ At no time, should you strike your animal in class. This will be a serious discrimination and you will be placed lower in your class.
- ❖ A good way to prepare your animal for a long class is to lead it for an hour twice each day. This way it will be used to long hours on the halter and will behave for the duration of the class.
- ❖ Whenever you take your animal from their stall, hold its head up. If it is used to walking casually, it will not know how what is expected of it in the showing.

Overall exhibitor notes

- ❖ Exhibitors must wear white in the showing. If the show provides a shirt, that shirt may be worn, but white is always preferred for showmanship. Ideally, a long sleeve white shirt with a collar or a polo shirt, in warm weather, is best.
- ❖ White pants should be worn outside of boots – do not wear pants tucked into boots.
- ❖ Exhibitors should have a black or brown belt and hard shoes or boots. Sneakers are a serious discrimination and are not appropriate in the ring.
- ❖ Good sportsmanship is a must. If a judge sees an exhibitor displaying poor sportsmanship, he will place them down in the class, no matter how well they do everything else.
- ❖ If you are late to class, you will be placed lower in the class.
- ❖ The showing is no place for cell phones, gum or chewing tobacco so leave them in the show box!