

Clipping

THE PROPER clipping of dairy cattle gives a neater, more attractive, refined appearance, and is an attempt to approach the true type model as nearly as possible. Amazing changes can be brought about by a man who is skilled with the clippers. Much can be done to level out the rump, straighten topline and crooked hind legs, improve udder attachments, and refine shoulders and necks. Of course, these changes are in appearance only, but they make the difference in placings when the animals are close.

Clipping the Tail

It doesn't make much difference where you start clipping, but let's start with the tail. It seems to be most acceptable in clipping the tail to start about two inches above the top long hairs of the switch. This depends on the size of the animal — a little less on small calves and a little more on larger cows and bulls. Some may start higher or lower than this and it is perfectly acceptable. However, it should not be exaggerated too much either way.

Run the clipper up the tail and on the sides of the tailhead, gradually removing the clipper by the time



Fig. 5.1—The long hair is being removed from a high spot in order to make the rump level and straight.

the tailhead has joined the body proper. This will then make a gradual and smooth change from the clipped to the unclipped hair, instead of leaving an abrupt line. On the back of the tailhead where it curves forward to meet the topline, it is advisable to leave some hair in order to give the appearance of a longer, squarer rump. Whether or not hair is clipped from the top of the tailhead depends on whether it is high or low. Take it off if high, and leave it alone if it is low. On some animals, if the tailhead is clipped too completely, or in the form of a "V" with the point on top and towards the head, attention will be focused on all the faults in that area.

In this region there is often a high place on the rump caused by one or two vertebral spines that are

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longer than the rest. Clip the hair from the top of these bumps. Be careful to start clipping these bumps on the back side and not on top. If clipping is started where the hair is attached in front of the bump, it will make a depression in front of the bump, and the topline will be as rough as ever. Of course, leave the hair long in all low places to level out the line. Clip off the long hair on any other high place on the topline in order to make the topline as straight as possible.

Fig. 5.2—On this young cow the areas that have been clipped show up clearly. Note the line running from the point of the shoulder up to the withers where it gradually blends into the point of the withers. Notice also that some of the long hairs have not been completely clipped out of the "U" part of the neck. The tail has been clipped leaving a good switch and a few long hairs at the back of the tailhead to give a squarer appearance. However, all the hair has been closely clipped from the top of the tailhead in this instance to attempt to give a more nearly level appearance to the rump. The udder and area just in front of the udder on the abdominal wall inside the flank line have both been closely clipped showing a smooth attachment of the udder and a well veined area.



If the hind legs are a bit crooked they often can be made to appear straighter by clipping the back part of the hock. Don't begin too low here, or the effort will be wasted.

Clipping the Udder and Underline

Next in this region is the udder and underline. On heifer calves, yearlings, and bulls, do not clip the underline or belly — clipping only takes away depth of body! On cows that are of milking age, clipping on the belly should be limited to the area along the milk veins. Clip the milk veins and about four to six inches out on the



Fig. 5.3—This shows the hair that is left in the ears when clipping the Brown Swiss. Notice also the small holes in the ends of the horns where a wire horn trainer has been applied.

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side of the cow's body, and blend in smoothly. The belly floor immediately in front and to the side of the udder, inside the flank, should be clipped.

The sides of the udder should be clipped up to the body attachment, and the fore attachment should be clipped clean, too — provided the udder attachment is good. If the fore attachment is broken or loose, the hair at the attachment of the udder to the body should not be clipped clean, but left in and blended out smoothly. The rear udder should be clipped up to where it joins the body.

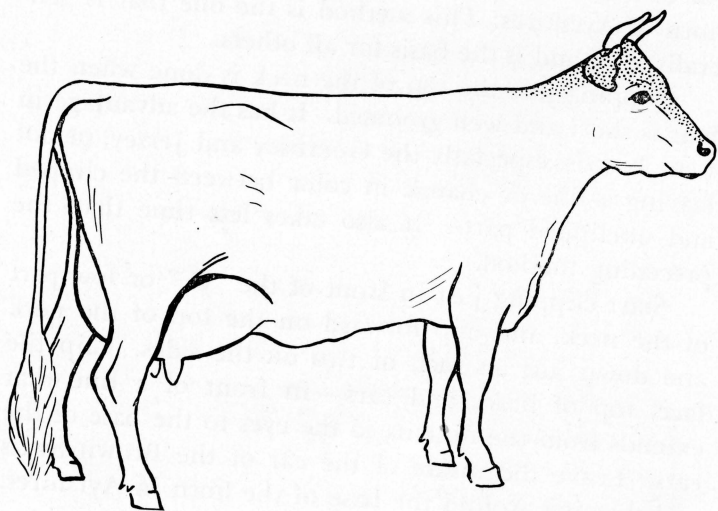
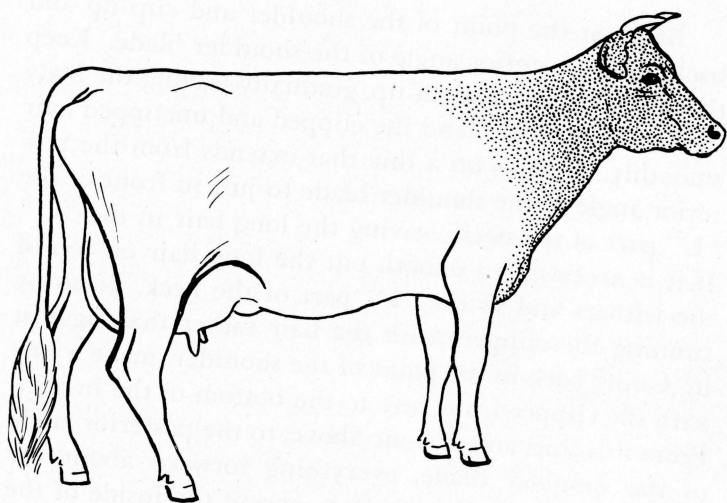
There are some variations among the breeds in clipping about the head and neck. For example, the long hair from the upper part of the inside of the ear is left in the Brown Swiss. Ayrshires are left with a small ring of hair around the base of the horn. Otherwise, the clipping is about the same for all breeds.

Clipping the Neck

On any of the breeds some men prefer to clip the entire neck, and others, just the top. Both methods are given here, starting first with the technique of clipping the entire neck.

Fig. 5.4 (Top right)—This drawing and the accompanying one illustrate vividly the difference in clipping the heads and necks of dairy cattle. The shaded areas are clipped. In this illustration notice how the line runs up from the brisket to the point of the shoulder and from there up and back to the top of the withers, where it blends in and runs forward to just in front of the "U" part of the neck.

Fig. 5.5—This drawing illustrates the method of clipping only the face, ears, poll, and top of the neck.



Begin at the point of the shoulder and clip up and back to the posterior angle of the shoulder blade. Keep the clipper going straight up, gradually leaving the body surface. This will blend the clipped and unclipped hair smoothly. Do this on a line that extends from the posterior angle of the shoulder blade to just in front of the "U" part of the neck, leaving the long hair in the "U." If it is necessary to smooth out the long hair on top of the withers and in the "U" part of the neck, do so by running the clippers with the hair rather than against it. Going back to the point of the shoulder, make a line with the clipper from here to the bottom of the brisket. From this line, and the one above, to the posterior angle of the shoulder blade, everything forward about the head and neck is clipped clean, except the inside of the ear of the Brown Swiss and the ring at the base of the horn of Ayrshires. This method is the one that is generally used and is the basis for all others.

Clipping just the top of the neck is done when the hair is short and well groomed. It has the advantage in some breeds, especially the Guernsey and Jersey, of not leaving a line or change in color between the clipped and unclipped parts. It also takes less time than the preceding method.

Start clipping just in front of the "U," or low part of the neck, and clip forward on the top of the neck and down just an inch or two on the sides. Clip the face, top of head, and ears—in front of a line that extends from the nostrils to the eyes to the base of the ears. Leave the inside of the ear of the Brown Swiss and the ring around the base of the horn in Ayrshires.



Fig. 5.6—Note carefully the ring of long hair that is left around the base of the horn on the Ayrshire breed.

In competition, the animal should be clipped just two to four days before show day. When making a circuit of shows it is often necessary to clip each week, although some animals can be clipped every other week.

Show animals should not be clipped all over, for in doing so the bloom and shine of the coat is lost and all the little rough spots of the animal's conformation show up greatly. Also, the extra depth of body that the long hair on the underline gives is lost.