

The Day Before the Show

THE ANIMALS should be washed thoroughly as covered in detail previously. Thoroughly soak the animals down with hose and water, and if there is as much water pressure as there generally is at a fair, most of the dirt can be removed by this first soaking. Also, at this time the feet and the dewclaws should be thoroughly cleaned of manure and dirt. During the washing, the animal can be tied with a neck strap and rope to prevent damage to the leather tie halters.

While the animal is out being washed, it is a good time for the attendant in the barn to clean out thoroughly the wet stuff under the bedding and to add an abundance of clean fresh bedding that will last through show day.

Jersey breeders generally do not give their cattle an over-all washing. However, during the hot part of the show season, some of the Jersey showmen will wash their cattle completely. Practically all of the Jersey people suds their cattle down with green soap lather in their stalls, instead of taking the animals out to the wash rack and washing them as do the others. When the lather is dry, they thoroughly brush it out. This removes a lot of the dirt and will help clean the hide. However, the

conventional washing has gained in popularity in this breed in the past few years.

After the animals have been returned to the barn they should be covered with a clean cotton blanket or what is commonly called a "sweat blanket." This is covered with their regular, clean show blanket. When the animal is dry, the sweat blanket may be removed, leaving just the show blanket. This will prevent the animal from getting too warm.

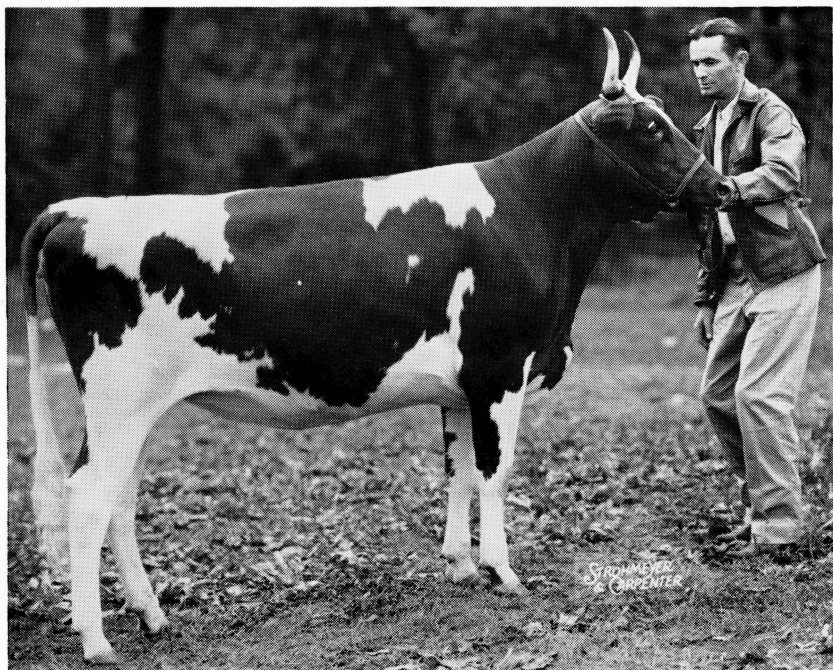
In warm weather the show blanket may be left off until the animal is dry and the sweat blanket removed. Then the show blanket is put on. However, if the weather is quite warm, the show blanket may be omitted entirely, leaving the animal unblanketed after being dried with the sweat blanket. This will occur more often with the cows than with the heifers and bulls, since the producing cow will release more body heat and will be more uncomfortable during hot weather than the bulls and heifers.

Later in the day or in the early evening, go over the horns of the animals thoroughly, as outlined in the preceding chapter.

Where Guernseys and Jerseys wear horn chains and locks, these pieces should be polished and fitted on. The little brass locks can be purchased from most stock supply houses, and should be kept polished as they add to the quality and appearance of the animal's head.

After being washed, except for polishing the horns, the animals should be disturbed as little as possible. Of course, all of the manure must be kept picked up and the animals kept immaculate.

JUNIOR YEARLING HEIFER



Maplecrest Lady Lena

1st Junior Yearling, Wisconsin, Texas, Dairy Cattle Congress, 1947; 1st 2-year-old, National Ayrshire Show, 1948; 13106 Milk 512 Fat 365 days 3X 2 years.

This heifer shows a strong fine feminine head and a long refined neck. She is very smooth and sharp over the withers, has a long body and a straight set of hind legs.

Feeding and Watering

They should be fed at their regular feeding time, but in this case, the night before show day, their feed generally should be reduced somewhat to help insure a keen appetite for the following day.

A little salt, varying from a teaspoonful to a tablespoonful, depending upon the size of the animal, usually should be added to this feed to make sure the animals will be thirsty enough to drink water the following day. During hot weather, this may not be necessary.

Heifers and bulls that are to be shown the following morning should receive only about half the water they normally drink. However, if they are not to be shown until the following afternoon, they probably can have about what they wish, although they should not be allowed to drink an excessive amount.

Cows can be given the normal amount of water the evening before show day, except when the weather is very cold and they are to be shown the following morning, in which case they should be limited to about three-fourths of the amount they normally would drink.

If the cows are going to be shown in the afternoon, they should have a normal amount of water the evening before, and if the weather is hot, they should have nearly their normal amount of water in the morning. This is both for their comfort and to help them udder up properly.

After the cattle have had their water, give them a generous supply of a good mixed hay, or a fine quality timothy hay. This kind of hay will stay with them better and give the animal middle, whereas alfalfa hay

tends to be a little laxative and does not give the animal the middle that is desired. If their hay is fed late in the afternoon, probably another small feeding should be given to the animals late at night.

Bagging

Cows that are in milk may be bagged for showing the following day. At many fairs there is a milk-out rule whereby the animal has to be milked not earlier than a certain hour, say, four o'clock the afternoon before the show. This will, of course, put a maximum on the time that a cow can be bagged. The amount of time that is required to bag a cow depends upon the amount of milk she is giving and the capacity and the conformation of her udder. The time may vary from five or six hours on up.

Bagging is the process of leaving the milk in the udder to distend it and show its conformation. Of course, a capacious udder is desirable. Quarters that are light may have to be bagged a little longer than the rest of the quarters. The udder should not be allowed to become too tight as this not only will make the cow very uncomfortable and restless, but may tend to make the teats strut out to the sides or in different directions and will tend to show any weakness of fore-attachments.

Over-bagging may be injurious to the udder by weakening the attachments. If the udder is not perfectly healthy, a serious flare-up of mastitis may result. Too many udders are over-bagged. It's a good idea to determine before show day the length of time that milk should remain in the udder in order for the udder to show its best type and conformation. This time should

be used for the bagging of the cow on show day. To do this, you must estimate about what time the cow will be in the show ring and milk her out the required number of hours prior to this time.

The udder may be balanced somewhat by milking a little out of the heavier quarters, but be careful not to unbalance the udder by taking out too much milk. An udder will be smoother if it is allowed to fill naturally than if an attempt is made to balance or loosen it by removing milk just before going into the ring.

Morning of Show Day

On show day the animals should have their regular feeding of grain, beet pulp, and hay. The bulls, heifers, and cows that are to be shown during the morning should not be watered at feeding time the morning of show day. At many fairs the cows are not shown until the afternoon. In this event they should have about half of their ordinary requirements of water, and if the weather is quite warm, may be allowed nearly their normal amount.

Any bulls or heifers that will not be shown until the afternoon may be given just a little water at feeding time so that they will not be too restless during the morning. This will take care of the morning feeding.

Probably the next step in getting ready for the show day's activities is to wash the tails and switches on all the animals and remove any manure spots that have accumulated during the night. Other than this, it should not be necessary to brush the animals very much at this time. All of the halters and brushes and supplies

that will be necessary for the day should be assembled in a convenient place.

Filling

About an hour before the animal is due to go into the ring, it should be filled. This is done to deepen the body and give a greater spring of rib, showing a larger feed capacity.

The usual procedure is to water the animal, giving it in most cases as much as it wants. However, the animal should not be allowed to have a great excess of water, for if the water is cold it may cause stomach ache and diarrhea. On cool days, or if the water is extremely cold, take the chill from the water. Otherwise the animal's hair may stand on end and it will walk into the ring with a humped or roached back.

When giving the animal water for filling, enough water should be on hand for this particular animal so that as soon as one bucket becomes about empty, it can be refilled from another bucket without delay. If the animal quits drinking while waiting for more water, it often will not start again, and the animal will not fill as much as is desired.

After the animal has been watered, the fill should be finished with soaked beet pulp. It may be desirable to mix in a handful or so of grain on top of the beet pulp so that the animal will eat it with a little more relish. The animal should be given a good fill, and when the hollow triangular space below the loin and above the flank on the left side has started to fill and round out, the animal probably has had about enough.

SENIOR YEARLING HEIFER



Curtiss Candy Lad's Sunshine

1st Senior Yearling, Junior Champion, Dairy Cattle Congress, 1948; 2nd Senior Yearling, Illinois, Minnesota, Indiana, Kentucky, 1948; 15735 Milk 551.1 Fat 365 days 3X 2 years 3 months.

This heifer shows great strength and capacity as exhibited by the deep chest and great depth of rib and flank. She also has a strong feminine head.

Some experience is necessary in judging just when an animal has had the correct amount of fill.

Generally, animals that are low in the loin and back can have a large fill as this will tend to straighten out the topline. However, the animals should be watched and the filling discontinued if their backs start to roach. If the animal is weak behind the shoulders it should not be filled as much as another animal, as the filling will exaggerate the weakness.

Final Preparations

If the animal has been watered and fed correctly the night before and the morning of show day, there generally will be no difficulty in getting a good fill on the animal. After the animal has been filled, it should be brushed down, using a soft brush. Stiff brushes may cause welts on some tender-skinned animals, and this is certainly to be avoided this day. This brushing should not take place while the animal is filling as it may interfere with the animal eating, often causing the animal to quit eating.

In low spots on the topline one can run a comb through the hair in the opposite direction to which the hair lies. This will cause it to stand up somewhat and will make the topline appear straighter. Sometimes a dampened bar of soap is rubbed on these spots and then combed backwards to the direction of the hair. This leaves the hair very stiff and it will stand up for a longer time to help keep the top straight.

Hair on top of high spots, of course, has been removed with clippers. Sometimes it can be cut shorter

just before going into the ring by using a pair of curved scissors. These are particularly helpful on bumps or high vertebral spines in the area of the rump.

After brushing, the animal should be gone over with an oiled cloth, which is simply a soft cloth which has been dampened with a very thin or fine oil. This should be rubbed over the animal lightly to bring a little more gloss to the coat. However, it should not be applied to any parts that are white. The ears should be cleaned out well with a cloth, and the horns, if desired, given a light application of the fine oil or furniture polish to get additional lustre. The switch should be brushed out thoroughly with a stiff brush and then fluffed up by brushing up from the bottom against the hair in the switch. It is not necessary to use combs in switches. Their careless use over a long period of time may cause much of the hair of the switch to be pulled out and it will become quite thin.

The animals should then be backed out of their stalls into the aisle and the feet cleaned. If a cow is lying on either side of the animal being backed out, the cow should be gotten up so that there will not be any danger of her udder being stepped on.

The show halter on the animal should be neat, well fitting, and made of thin, fine leather with straps not more than an inch wide with three-fourths of an inch preferable. For most animals the lead strap should be entirely of leather. However, there may be an occasional animal that requires a chain lead strap.

The halter should be fitted so that the nose piece

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is approximately half-way between the nostril and the eyes, not any lower, as this tends to unbalance the head.

Bull calves and yearling bulls can be led with halters with the end of the lead strap tied into or just run through the bull ring and doubled back. This will give two means of handling the bull, by the halter and by the ring. Bulls two years old and older should be shown with either a lead strap in their ring or be shown by a bull staff.