**Some extra information to help with caring for your calf - to be read in conjunction with the official CALF BOOKLET**

Before approaching a farmer; who may be your parent, friend, neighbour, you need to check you have a few essential things.

Calves need safe, well fenced paddocks with shelter from extreme heat or cold, and clean water in a low trough which the calf can reach easily. A shelter, shed or barn is a good idea to keep your calf out of the wind and rain, especially at night.

Calves need good quality, fresh, long grass as (when they are very young) they tend to nibble at the tips of the grass. A good supply of hay is necessary for your calf to sleep and rest in.

It is also a good idea to have a cover. A cover for the calf can be easily made from a clean sack. It keeps the calf warm and helps to loosen and remove winter hair, keeping the calf’s coat fine.

**To be eligible to enter calves must be born between 20 July and 25 September.** Please note that parents also need to refer to the **“Official Guidelines”** in CALF BOOKLET which is based on the Constitution.

**GROOMING -** Regular brushing maintains a clean coat and healthy skin. You can start when it is a couple of days old using a pet brush or cheap hair brush. Please don’t pluck or trim your calf. Once or twice before competition day, a wash in fine, calm weather could be a good idea. Use lukewarm water with a bit of milk soap or shampoo to wash your calf and then rinse with clean water. In a sheltered, sunny spot, rub dry with a cloth or towel and brush the coat to restore the hair to its correct direction and remember to re-cover the calf before night time. Spot cleaning around the rear of your calf may also be a good idea.

**FEEDING -** Use a milk feeder for your calf – preferably a bottle which allows you to feed the calf on its own so you develop a friendship with it. Right from the start, your calf will need feeding twice a day - in the morning (before you leave for school) and the afternoon (when you get home).If you’re lucky enough to live on a dairy farm, you will probably get your milk direct from the farm dairy in the mornings and afternoons, when it is still warm so you can immediately feed your calf. If you don’t live on a dairy farm, you can mix special calf milk formula with warm water (the water-powder ratio is given on the outside of the bag of milk powder) and feed your calf. You can purchase milk powder and bottles from stores like RD1 and Farmlands.It is very important to keep whatever utensil you use to feed your calf (bottle) very, very clean – calves can get ‘a tummy bug’ called scours (diarrhoea!!!) from dirty feeding utensils, so be very careful to clean everything in hot soapy water after each feed so it is clean for the next feed. **CALF MEAL -** Your calf will grow quickly and will soon begin nibbling grass and drinking water from the trough. At around two weeks you will want to introduce calf meal to its diet so it grows well and has ‘good condition’ (has a good cover of fat and muscle) and is contented during the day between feeds.Meal is fed in the mornings, after your calf’s milk feed. You will need a large, flat-bottomed feeder which your calf can’t push around the paddock. Although the supply of grass, hay and meal increases as your calf grows, it is still important to keep feeding milk as this ensures your calf will have a ‘bloom’ (shine) on its coat when it competes at Lamb, Calf, and Chicken Day. You can purchase calf meal from stores like RD1 and Farmlands.

**WEANING -** At around two to three weeks, and after checking with your farmer, the calf’s twice daily milk feeds can be reduced to one – generally in the morning. The amount of milk generally increases so your calf is getting one larger drink of milk each day.

Calves generally remain on once a day milk feeds with grain until after Calf Club. Weaning then takes place when the calf returns to the farm.

**HALTERS**

• Calf halters can be purchased from your local farming store; they are made of soft leather and can be adjusted so they fit very small, and quite large, calves. Or a simple halter suitable for the training period and the show may be made out of a piece of soft rope. See Calf Booklet.

• Halters should be fitted for around one hour each day of the calf’s life with you – leaving it on for longer would rub hair off. As soon as possible after your calf arrives, fit the halter with help from the farmer, Mum or Dad.

•When fitted correctly, you should be able to fit two fingers between any part of the halter and your calf’s skin, and it should not pull off if the calf pulls back.

Try to make time to look after your calf before and after school each day. Try to allow around 30 minutes each morning, and again in the afternoon to care for your calf. Remember this is your responsibility, not Mum or Dad’s. Your calf is going to rely on you, so you have to be there, every day, caring for it. It’s a big responsibility and you want to be sure you can do it for 6 to 12 weeks.

**TRAINING -** When the calf appears to accept the halter, you can begin teaching it to lead. There are several ways to do this – you can pull and tug, or you can get Mum or Dad to help you tie a long soft rope into a big loop – big enough to fit around your calf’s bottom, under its tail, with the lead coming over its back and through the loop on the halter.

Now, when you pull the lead, the rope will come up under the calf’s tail and it will move forward. As it moves forward, the pressure under its tail stops, and so it learns to move forward. This way often trains a calf in a shorter time than any other method.

Another alternative is to walk around the paddock calling his/her name before you feed them. As your calf responds and follows give him/her some milk. They’ll soon come running from the other side of the paddock when they hear you calling their name!

**LEADING** - Teach the calf to ‘tie up’ and relax at the end of the rope fastened to a fence. Gain the calf’s confidence by standing or sitting with it, talking to it and patting it. Let it know that you are its friend and it will not be long before it accepts you completely. When you start leading it, try to be patient!

You want your calf to walk on your right, and for its head/shoulder to be alongside you. Your right hand holds the rope close to the halter (around 15-25 cm away from the side of your calf’s head), with the rest of the rope in your left hand so it is not trailing on the ground where you or your calf can walk or trip on it. Remember never to wrap the rope around your hand – this is very dangerous as it could mean you are dragged if the calf gets a fright and attempts to run away from you.

It is a good idea to erect a simple ring at home with a light rope and put in pegs to make the course to practice on. Remember leading is an acquired habit. To accustom the calf to other people, invite other members of the family to join you in the ring. A little practice daily is the best idea. Animals become used to seeing and smelling familiar articles so plan ahead for this when choosing what you are going to wear on competition day. **TURNING** - If you have followed the steps described in the leading section, you will have your calf moving happily forward with you. Now you have to learn to turn the calf. Remember you are on the outside of the calf when it turns, so you need to push its head towards the new direction as you begin to make the turn – and remember, the turns need to be very big at the start as your calf won’t be used to this new movement and you don’t want it to become unbalanced and trip or it would get a fright and lose confidence in you. **STOPPING** - You also need to learn how to stop your calf. This is done by a gentle pull on the lead rope and shouldn’t be done suddenly which would give your calf a fright. Let it know you’re going to stop, by giving gentle tugs on the rope, and then a long pull, fixing your feet on the ground and leaning back a bit so the calf feels your weight on the rope – don’t give any hard, sudden pulls on the rope though as this would hurt the calf’s nose. Remain stationery (still) for 3-5 seconds – the calf only moving forward again when you decide.

**COMPETITION DAY**

**On competition day remember to bring:**

* A standard to tie your calf up to while it is waiting to compete
* Rope for tying Halter and rope Brush
* Bottle of milk Container for water Overalls or something similar

**PRESENTING YOUR CALF** Here are some points to remember before presenting the calf in the ring: **1.** Make sure that the halter as well as the lead is clean and shiny. **2.** Clean ears, tail, hooves and under the chin. **3.** Wash off any signs of manure. **4.** Give a last brush to smooth the coat and remove any loose hair, particularly under the belly and the legs. **5.** Look neat and tidy yourself.

On competition day there are three classes. Each class is allocated points and the total points are added at the end of the event to determine the best calf. The classes are;

* Leading Calling Care and Attention

**LEADING -** Lead your calf anti - clockwise around the ring, count to 3 then start off again. You may be asked to do a second circle so listen carefully to the judge. **See Calf Booklet for full information** **and diagram. CALLING** Try **not** to: **1.** Release the right hand grip upon the rope at any time, **2.** Touch the calf with the hand at any time during the competition. **3.** Hit the calf with anything – see No.6 in Calf Booklet **4.** Jerk on the halter. **CARE AND ATTENTION -** The judge will ask some questions about your calf. **See Calf Booklet for questions.**

After competing make sure you stay around the calf area with your calf for prize giving and ribbon presentation.