



Kaharoa School - Ag Day

Calf Rearing Booklet



Rearing a calf

Introduction:

This booklet has been written to act as a briefing for judges and competitors so that uniform standards are applied for school ag day and group days.

This activity provides a link between school and home and between school and community.

It helps to develop in the child an understanding and love for animals as well as self-resilience and resource in carrying out a chosen task.

The learning outcomes should enable the child to:

- Rear a pet calf successfully
- Learn the daily and weekly requirements for a caring for a calf
- Train and prepare a pet calf for school pet day
- Identify scouring and lice infestation and know how to treat
- Describe a number of behavioural trait characteristics of calves
- Observe when a calf has had enough to drink
- Devise a way of measuring the weekly growth of a calf - height, length and weight
- Keep these measurements on a graph if able to do so
- Discuss orally the activities associated with rearing a calf

Materials required

Calf & enclosure
Whole milk or whole milk powder
Bucket or bottle for feeding
Brush
Bucket
Cover - Homemade or purchased
Face cloth
Halter + lead

Hay
Meal
Practice ring
Waterproof shed/shelter
Drinking water



Rearing a calf

Attitudes

- Calves must be born between 20th July and 25th September
- The students display a responsible attitude in carrying out the tasks associated with caring for a farm animal.

Activities

- Discuss how to care for a newly born calf
- Give the calf a name
- Make a shelter for the calf. Prepare a pen with a shelter in it in a sunny position free from draughts. Discuss the reasons for providing a shelter

Feeding the calf

- Selecting a calf from a nice looking cow. It is likely to inherit some of the parent's good qualities eg health and temperament. You should take over responsibility no later than 2 weeks after birth
- Give the calf a name and record its birthday
- Your calf should be protected from the weather when it is taken from its mother. Provide it with a Warm waterproof shelter that has a clean dry floor. It can be a good idea to tie it up with a dog collar and piece of rope. While it will most likely pull a great deal it will learn that it cannot get away and this helps when training the calf to lead. When it can drink properly it can be let loose.
- The calf should be fed on the colostrum milk of its mother for the first 4 days
- For a start it can be a good idea to feed the calf from a bottle as a treat. Later you can introduce the calf to the bucket and feed this way until it is weaned

As calves feeding and weaning techniques are subject to frequent revisions, get ekp from a parent in drawing up a feeding programme. As the calf grows bigger and gets older it is provided with more milk and meal until the stage is reached when you cut down on milk ready for weaning.



Rearing a calf

Feeding the calf

- Ensure drinking buckets/containers are thoroughly washed and cleaned after each feeding time. The calf should not be fed on a calfeteria

Daily Care

- Make a cover from a clean sack. A cover benefits the calf in cold weather but remember to remove it on hot days. A cover also helps to remove loose hair and keep the calves coat fine and free from lice. Give the cover an occasional wash
- Check the calves shelter for cleanliness
- Feed the calf regularly and ensure that clean fresh drinking water is available at all times. Your calf must be hand fed.
- Make feeding time grooming time. From 3 weeks old, rub over the calves body with your hands while it is drinking. At the first sign of loose hair brushing should commence. Two brushes are desirable - one semi-stiff and the other soft
- Handling and leading at feeding times rapidly develops an affinity between animal and child. Don't be too anxious about making the calf lead in the early stages. Talk to it in a friendly way while feeding and gradually get it accustomed to its halter and walking freely. Never pull or drag the calf, as once it develops into a 'puller' it is very hard to remedy.
- After the third week, provide some clean hay daily

Weekly Care

- Devote some extra time each week to any overall grooming of the calf. Don't overlook brushing underneath the tummy, between and down the legs. Use a damp cloth to clean hooves, ears and nostrils and under the chin where dried milk usually accumulates
- Check to make sure the cover doesn't become too tight
- Watch for scouring and if it develops tell your parents straight away. Sours can arise from poor feeding, over feeding, dirty drinking water and dirty buckets
- Check for lice. Infection causes a rapid decline in both the general health and bloom of the calf. During grooming look for lice on the neck, brisket and between the back legs. If discovered early, these small black creatures can be easily treated. Get your parents to do this for you.
- When the calf begins to eat hay, provide a little fresh supply each week



Rearing a calf

Preparing a calf for pet day or group day

- Commence training the calf from an early age. Make some time each day to play with the calf and caress it. Talk to it quietly when playing with it.

Making a halter

A simple halter suitable for training period can be made out of a length of soft rope. Use a string to learn how to make this halter. Tie a loop 8 cm long at one end and other the same size a few centimeters from it. The cord between these 2 loops is placed over the nose of the calf. The long end goes round its head and back under its jaw, passing through the 2 loops.

Dress

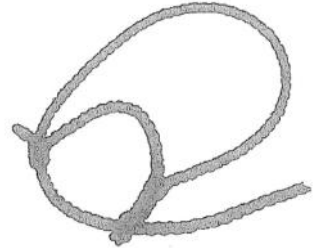
Attention to dress is important. Animals become used to seeing and smelling familiar articles so plan ahead for this when considering Pet Day and Group Day clothing.

TB Certificates

All animals over the age of 1 month must be accompanied with a TB status card or any animal from a farm under movement control, suspended or over the age of 6 weeks must be tested no more than 60 days prior to moving.

Lice

All animals must be lice free - They will be checked before entering

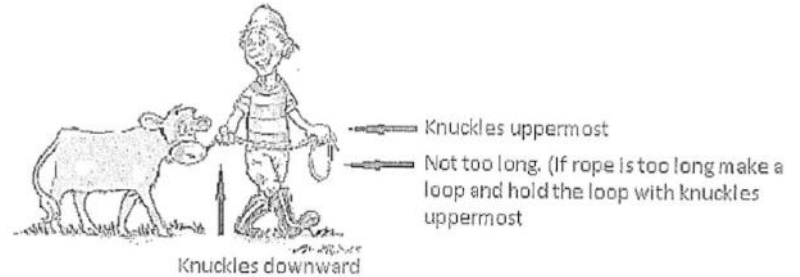


Leading



Leading

When the calf accepts and will stand alongside you it will tie up and relax at the end of a rope fastened to a fence it is time to practice leading daily. Hold the lead approximately 10-20cm away from the calf's head with the right fingers uppermost. Allow for a loop between the hands, and with the left hand hold the rope, knuckles uppermost. See illustration.



- Commence training with short leads. Use the right hand as a steering wheel and brake. A slight pressure with a forward or backward motion will start or stop the calf
- Walk slightly behind the calf's head and soon it will learn that the child's pace is that speed at which to travel. Don't release the right hand. Leading soon becomes an accepted habit.
- Erect a ring at home using light rope and put pegs to mark the course. Try and use it daily
- To get the calf used to other people get other family members to come in the ring sometimes.

- Sometimes a calf will lead well at home but behave badly on competition day because it is frightened and feels insecure. This difficulty can be met by introducing the calf to other people and new sights. When a calf is leading well, let it meet other people, less familiar things and see other places. In this way it will get used to changes and the day will be just another experience.

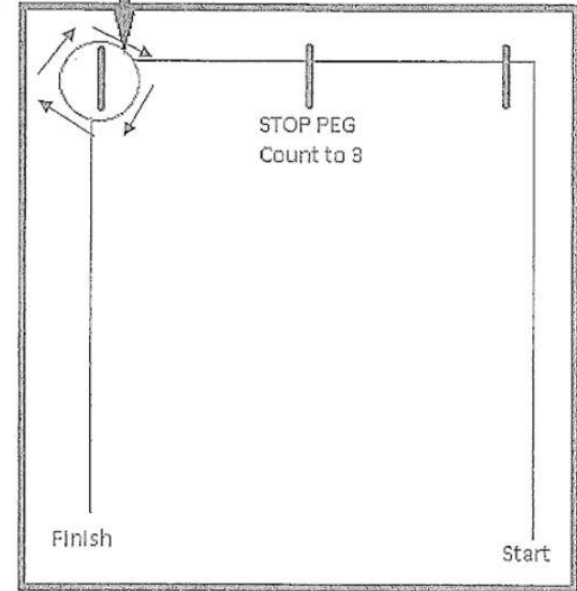
Leading - On the Day

Leading on the day

- The right hand should grip the lead, palm upwards at 10-20 cm from the halter.
- The left hand should grip the lead, knuckles upward, leaving a loop of slack lead between the hands. This loop of slack lead needs to reach the knees.
- There should remain only about 30-45 cm of tail end of lead hanging from the left hand. No loops or trailing ends. (Not touching the ground)
- Stand between the head and shoulders of the calf at all times - standing or moving - keep your head up - look straight ahead and walk the same pace as the calf
- Pay particular attention to the fit of the halter. Don't use a new halter for the first time on the day
- If you must hit the calf, do so with a left hand back motion, using the short end of the lead behind your back
- All control should be exercised by the right hand on the lead

Walk with your calf from the start round the first peg and stop at the middle peg. Count 3 seconds (quietly), start again and walk around the next peg in a fairly wide clockwise circle. Continue to the finish.

Clockwise circle with you on the outside of the calf



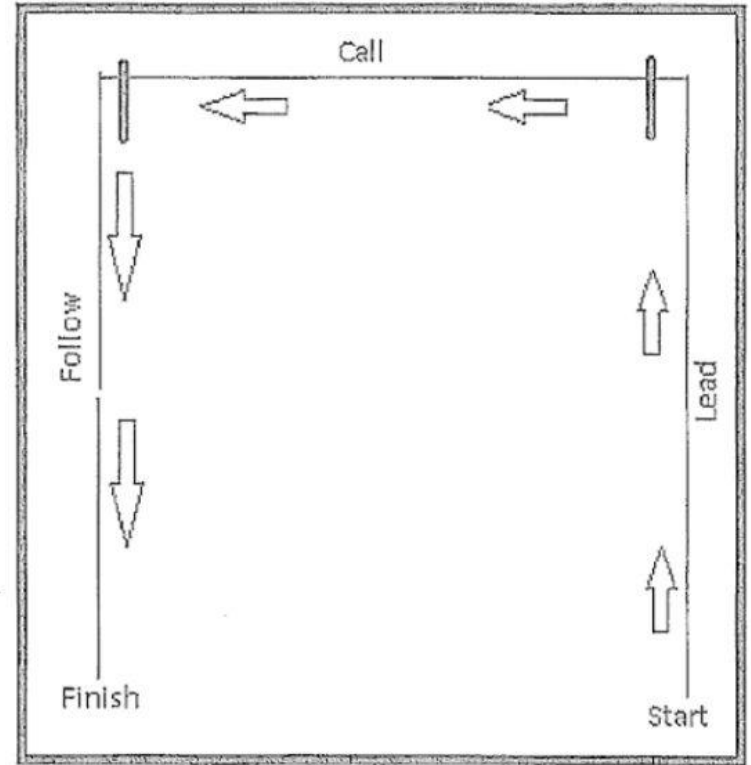
20 x 20 Ring



Calling

Call & Follow

- To train the calf to call, stand some distance from it with a bottle/bucket of milk held behind your back. Call it by name. When it comes, give it a gentle pat and feed it. By the time of the school pet day the calf should come when called, even if you don't have the bottle.bucket of milk in your hand.
- Practice over and over again around the same kind of ring as will be used for the school pet day
- Have someone hold the calf. MOve to the first peg and call it. When it comes give it a pat
- Walk to the next corner peg with the calf following close behind
- Practice catching the calf quietly near the ring exit



20 x 20 Ring



Call & Follow

Call and follow on the day

- Judge or stewards to remove middle peg for calling
- Children are permitted to encourage animals, to call with tidbits, outside of the ring
- **NO TIDBITS ALLOWED IN THE RING**
- No fingers to be placed in the mouth of the animal in the ring
- Leading from start to first peg in calling even is NOT judged
- Steward holds the calf facing the second peg, child runs to the second peg and turns and calls the calf
- At the second peg contact must be made with the calf
- Child then walks from the second peg to the finish with the calf following. At the point of exit the calf must be caught and attached to the lead before leaving the ring



Rearing

Rearing

This section of the Calf project is usually assessed at pet day under the following headings:

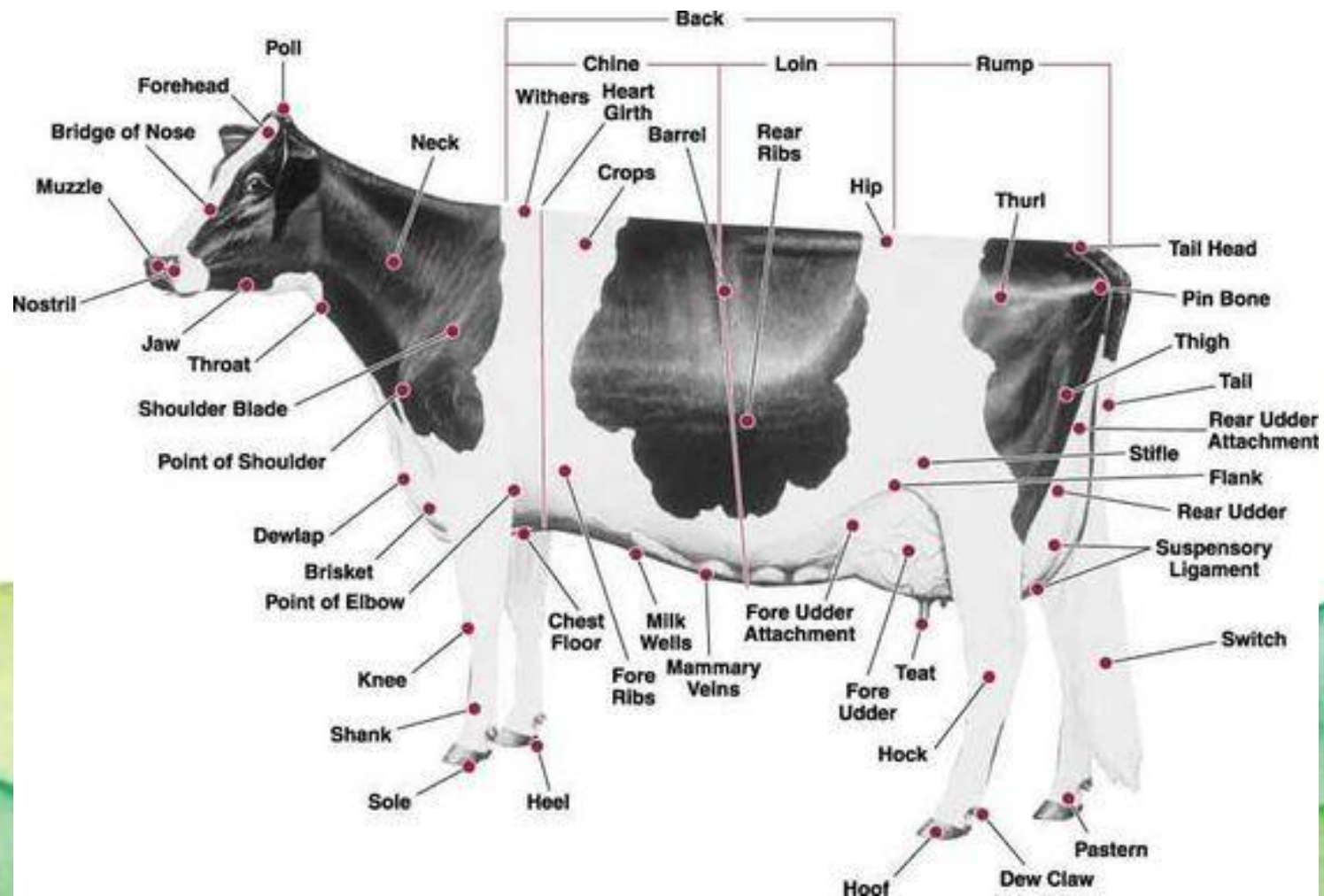
- Care
 - Cleanliness
 - Condition
-
- Have a name for the calf and know its birthday and breed
 - On the day be prepared to discuss various rearing activities
 - Make sure your calves ears, face, legs, hives, flanks and under stomach are clean for pet day. Brush it well

NOTE TO JUDGES

NO concessions to be made for children's age in championship events. It is the schools job to ensure that all children competing are made aware of the rules and guidelines.

Some questions you may be asked:

- When was your calf born?
- What breed is your calf?
- What are some parts of the body? Eg neck, brisket, ribs
- What are some of the diseases calves can get, and how do you cure them?
- What is an animal doctor called?
- Why do cows chew their cud?
- What parasites can calves get?
- What do you do to cure them?
- How much milk does your calf drink each day
- Why do calves have a wet nose?
- At what age do calves start eating grass?
- Why does a calf have a rough tongue?
- Name 3 breeds of dairy cow?
- What do cows use their tails for?
- How did you train your calf to lead?
- How many teeth have calves got?
- What is a 1 year old calf cow called?
- What happens if you overfeed a calf?
- Where do you keep your calf during the day/night?
- How do cows know which is their own calf?
- What are ear tags for?



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.

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.

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.

Weaning & Halters

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.

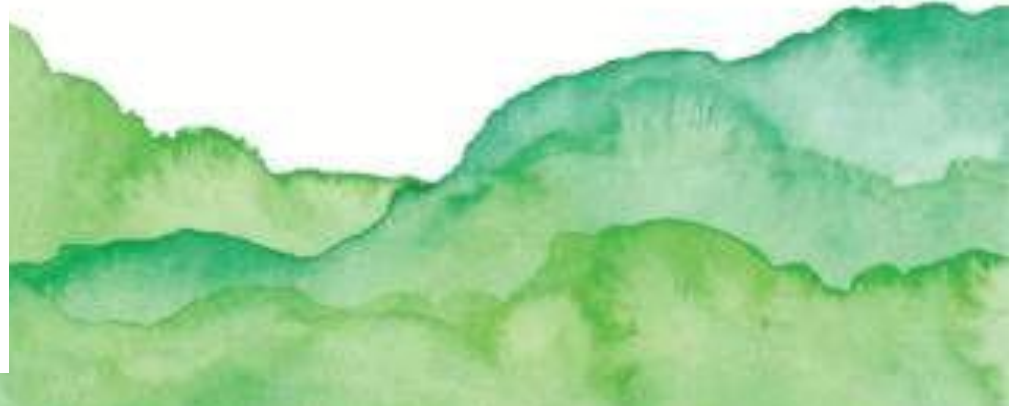
Meal is fed in the mornings, after your calf's milk feed. You will need a large, flat-bottomed feeder which your calf can't push around the paddock. Although the supply of grass, hay and meal increases as your calf grows, it is still important to keep feeding milk as this ensures your calf will have 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.

Training

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 stationary (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.

Competition Day

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

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.

Try not to:

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.