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Beyond Expectation



CALF REARING BOOKLET

FOR PET DAY OR GROUP DAY

Updated Sep 2023

Introduction

This booklet has been written to act as a briefing for judges and competitors so that uniform standards are applied for School Pet Days and Group Day.

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-reliance 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 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 behavioral traits characteristic 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

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Beyond Expectation

What to do before you get your calf

- Research about how to care for a newly born calf
- 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
- Think about names for the calf

What to get before your calf arrives

- A calf needs somewhere to **sleep**
 - A **shelter** and enclosure
 - A **cover** to keep it warm
- A calf needs something to **eat and drink**
 - **Milk** (Whole milk or whole milk powder)
 - A **Bottle** to feed it milk
 - **Water**
 - A **Bucket** for it to drink the water
 - **Hay**
 - **Meal**
- Things to **train and clean** the calf with
 - **Brush**
 - **Face cloth**
 - **Halter**
 - **Lead**
 - **Practice ring**



Once you have all of these things you are ready to go and pick up your calf!

How to pick your calf

- If you are lucky enough to be able to pick your own calf then here are a few tips on how to:
 - One way is to pick a calf out of a nice cow, a friendly nice looking cow, the calf should inherit her temperament and look.
 - Pick a calf that is friendly in the calf shed, if you are in with a mob of calves the friendly calves will usually come up to check you out.
- Try and pick your calves before they are too old, try and get them around 2 weeks old.

Once you pick your calf

- Find out the calves birth date and breed.
- Give the calf a name
- Make sure it is put in its nice shelter to be warm and dry

Feeding the Calf

- The calf should be fed fresh gold colostrum milk for the first 4 days from birth, the farmers should have done this before you get your calf
- Make sure to get some milk that the calf has been drinking to feed it before you transition to milk powder or whole milk (Do not change its diet quickly, as this can cause an upset gut)
- Feed the calf from a bottle as it will associate you with food
- As calves feeding and weaning techniques are subject to frequent revision, get help from a parent/farmer/vet 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
- To make a plan talk with your local vet or a friendly farmer to make a plan for how to feed your calf and look after your calf

Daily Care

- Your calf needs to be feed **ATLEAST ONCE EVERY DAY!**
- Clean your bottle after every feed
- Check it always has fresh clean water
- Make sure its shelter is clean and not wet or muddy
- Make sure it has some hay and meal to nibble on during the day
- Check it is happy and healthy, if your calf looks a little sad or has runny poo talk with your parents and ring your vet if needed
- Check the calves cover, make sure it is not too tight, if it is going to be a hot day remove the calves cover. A cover also helps to remove loose hair and keep the calf's coat clean, give the cover an occasional wash

Other tips:

- Make feeding time grooming time. After a few days of having the calf, rub over the calf's 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 to walking freely. Never pull or drag the calf, as once it develops into a "puller" it is very hard to remedy

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 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
- Measure the weekly growth of the calf in length, height, and weight
- Use a halter during these early times to get the calf used to being tied up and having something secured to its face.
 - To begin with make sure you are with the calf when you tie it up, as it can become tangled if it gets upset.
 - Tie your calf up as much as you can but make sure not to leave it tied up for too long, while it is tied up make sure it still has access to water and feed.
 - Once your calf is used to having a halter and lead on then you will then be able to practice leading.



PREPARING FOR PET DAY OR GROUP DAY

- Commence training the Calf from an early age. Make some time each day to play and spend time with it. Talk to it quietly when feeding and playing with it.
- Calves must be born between 20th July and 25th September
- No clipping, oiling or trimming of calves
- Animals only to be fed tidbits and bottles whilst tethered and not once judging has commenced
- All calves attending must have a readable NAIT ear tag
- All calves over the age of one (1) month must be accompanied with a TB status card or any calf from a farm under movement control or suspended and is over six (6) weeks must be tested no more than 60 days prior to moving.
- All animals must be lice free – they will be checked before entering

Any evidence of any of the above mentioned will lead to elimination from **Group Day**

**ANY SICK CALVES ON THE DAY MUST
STAY HOME!!!**

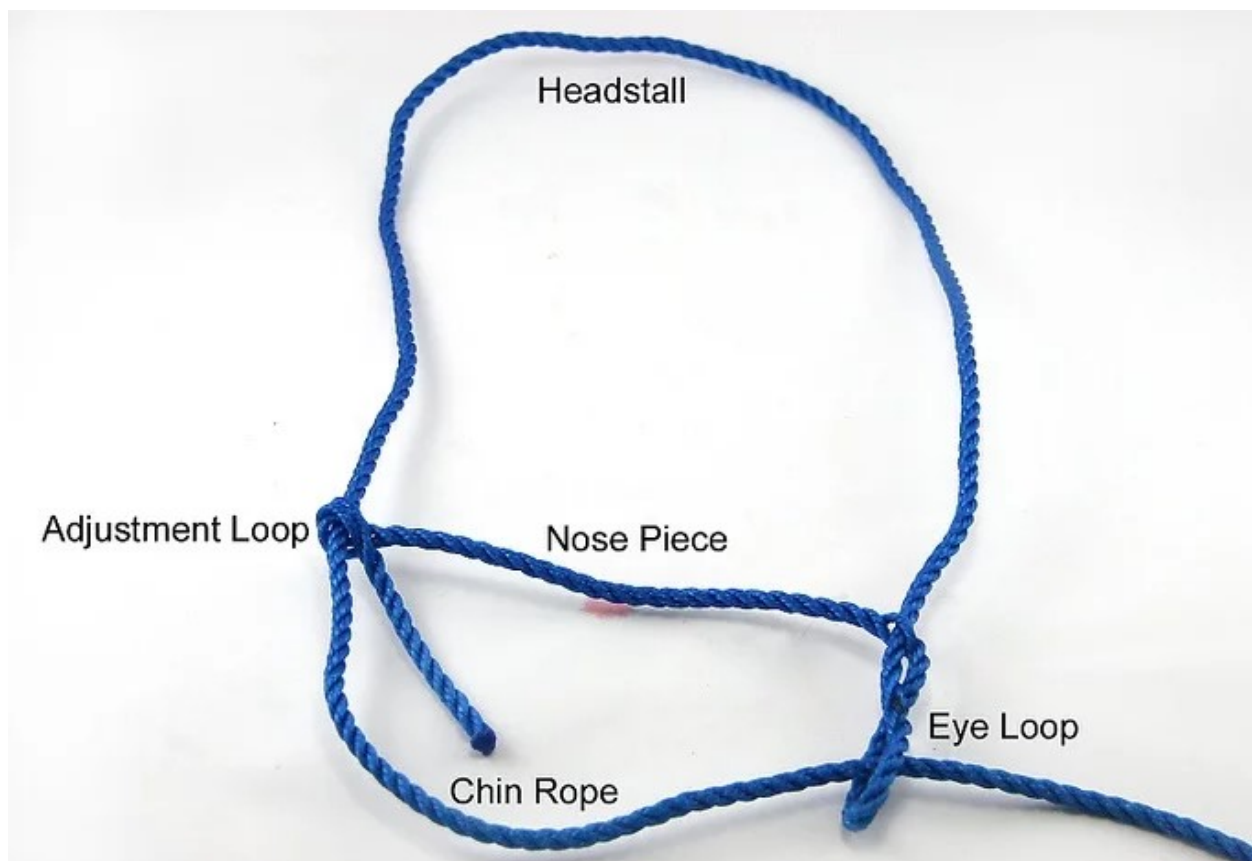
Notes for Judges

- 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.

Making a halter

If you do not have a purposely made halter for your calf, 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.

1. Tie a loop 8cm 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 it's jaw, passing through the 2 loops



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 hand fingers uppermost. Allow for a loop between the hands, and with the left hand hold the rope, knuckles uppermost. See illustration:

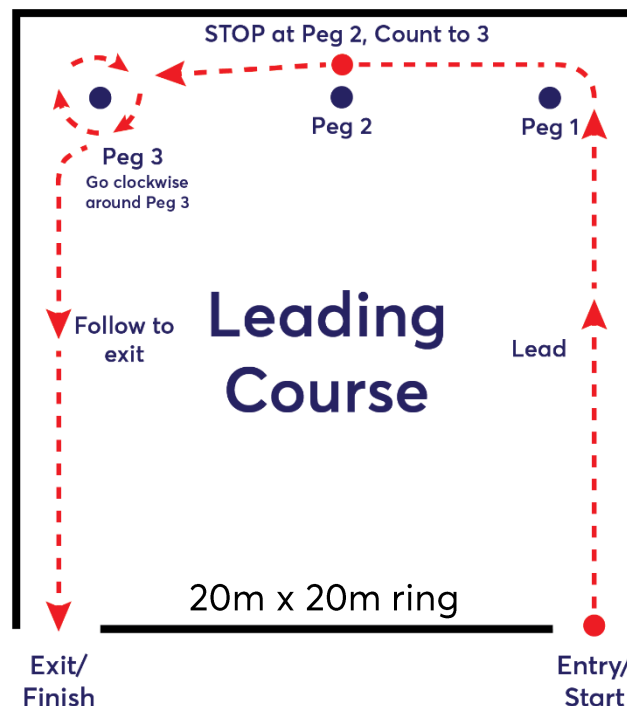


- Commence training with short leads. Use the right hand as the steering wheel and brake. A slight pressure with a forward or backward motion will start or stop the calf
- Walk slightly behind the calf's head and soon it will learn that the child's pace is the speed at which to travel. Don't release the right hand. Leading soon becomes an accepted habit
- Erect a ring at home using light rope and put in 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 to new sights. When a calf is leading well, let it meet other people, less familiar things and see other places. This way it will get used to changes and the day will just be another experience.

Leading - On The Day

- The right hand should grip the lead, palm upwards, and 10 to 20 cm from the halter
- The left hand should grip the lead, knuckles upwards, 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 to 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
- All control should be exercised by the right hand on the lead



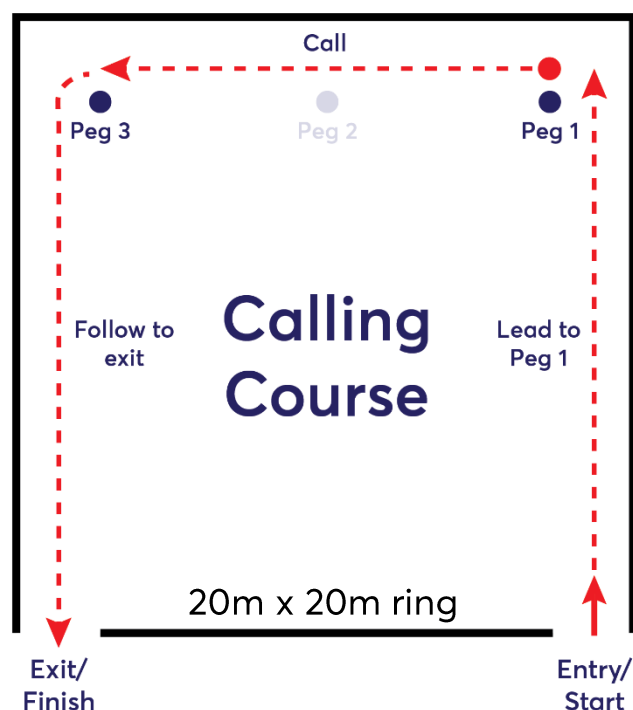
Walk with your calf from the start round the first peg and stop at the middle peg (Peg 2). Count to 3 (quietly), start again and walk around the next peg (Peg 3) in a fairly wide clockwise circle. Continue to the finish.

Call and Follow

- To train the calf to call, stand some distance from it with a bottle 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, contact must be made.
- Walk to the next corner peg with the calf following close behind
- Practice catching the calf quietly near the ring exit

Call And Follow - On The Day

- Judge or Stewards to remove middle peg for calling
- No fingers to be placed in the mouth of the animal in the ring
- Leading from start to first peg in calling event is NOT judged
- Steward holds the calf facing the far peg, child runs to the far peg and turns and calls the calf
- At the far peg contact must be made with the calf
- Child then walks from the 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



Care And Attention

Rearing

This section of a 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 calf's ears, face, legs, hooves, flanks and under stomach are clean for pet day (Brush it well)

Some question 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, hips, udder, hoof.
- What are some 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 to eat grass?
- Why does a calf have a rough tongue?
- Name 3 breeds of dairy cows?
- 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 called?
- What happens if you overfeed your 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?

AND REMEMBER, HAVE FUN!!!