



# Dairy Showmanship Guidelines

The goal of Showmanship is to present and lead an animal in a way that minimizes conformation faults, and allows the animal to be displayed to its best advantage. The following are some of the procedures for dairy showmanship as recommended in Holstein Canada's "Leading the Way" manual. If you would like a copy of that information, please contact Holstein Canada.

## Before the Showmanship Class:

- ⇒ Your calf should be halter broken, and well trained.
- ⇒ It is essential to wash your calf numerous times. This helps to clean the calf, make her calmer to work with, and makes the hair easier to clip.
- ⇒ An experienced hoof trimmer should ensure that the feet are well shaped, and that the calf moves with ease.
- ⇒ A calf should be clipped a couple of times prior to a show.
- ⇒ A good fitting halter enhances the appearance of an animal's head. Approximately three loops in a short lead strap is most manageable.
- ⇒ Holding the throat enhances the general appearance of the head and neck. It is a common practice. Practice holding the halter and throat properly so your motion in the ring will appear smooth and easy.

## During the Showmanship Class:

**Entering the ring** - After the judge or ring assistant motions you into the ring, walk briskly forward with your animal. It is important to allow for sufficient spacing between the calves in front of you to allow both you and the judge to maneuver easily. Move in a clockwise direction. Avoid hugging the outside of the ring to allow the judge to view your animal from both sides. If holding the throat provides a more dairy appearance to the animal, it should be held when entering the ring.

**During the Class** - Once all the calves are in the showmanship ring, walk slowly backwards in the ring with good spacing between the calves. Keep in mind that the judge assesses numerous things during the showmanship class. The judge will evaluate you from the time you enter the ring until the completion of the class.

## The judge will observe the following:

- ⇒ A properly fitted halter
- ⇒ Correct spacing between your calf and the previous one
- ⇒ Dress code adhered to
- ⇒ A well-presented calf
- ⇒ The calf handling well
- ⇒ A calf with good head carriage
- ⇒ You and the calf moving in unison
- ⇒ The calf's head tipped slightly when the hide is felt
- ⇒ The calf *set up* quickly and correctly when stopped
- ⇒ The calf's head and top line aligned straight when the judge views from the rear.
- ⇒ Equal attention paid to both the calf and judge; be aware of the where the calf in front and behind you are located
- ⇒ From behind, the calf straight from nose to tail
- ⇒ Control of the calf



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When the judge motions for a **stop** in order to walk around the calf, lead it into an attractive standing position. The hind leg closest to the judge should be back slightly. As the judge moves around your animal, go ahead one-half step. When the judge returns to the other side, or to the centre of the ring, move ahead another one-half step. This should be done smoothly, and not be over-exaggerated. The animal should always be balanced when standing. When pulled into the lineup, walk smartly forward with the shank and lead strap in the right hand.

Upon reaching the lineup, turn, and using the left hand, lead the calf into place, setting it up to advantage. The tail head should be adjusted, and the loin pinched, as necessary. Use the halter to move the animal ahead or back, if the rear feet require repositioning. Maintain a uniform lineup with the front feet of the animals in line.

You should line your animal up with the head of the first animal in the class. If you are the first one in the lineup, follow the instructions of the ring steward regarding where to start the lineup.

Keep your animal alert, and be aware of the judge's location at all times. Watch that the calf's rear feet are always properly positioned. The first calf only in the lineup should have its outside hind leg forward. As the judge moves down a lineup, keep your animal straight with good spacing between it and others. Use the right hand on the point of shoulder, with the left hand holding the halter to control your calf, if necessary.

## When in a line up, remember the following:

- ⇒ You will be discriminated against if you move excessively in and out of line without instruction from the judge. There may be times when a heifer is particularly unruly for a number of reasons, and move in and out of the line excessively. In such cases, use good sportsmanship, respect the other calves and members in the lineup and be aware of your personal safety, as well as that of the members and calves around you.
- ⇒ Don't circle with your animal without instruction from the judge, don't leave spaces in the lineup and don't crowd animals too tightly side by side
- ⇒ Stand to the side so that with minimal movement, you can observe the judge easily. This also allows the judge to view the front of your animal.
- ⇒ You may permit the calf's head follows the judge until it becomes awkward to do so.
- ⇒ After the judge motions for you to circle from a lineup, walk ahead until the judge focuses attention back to the moving animals. Then turn and walk backwards, leading with the left hand.
- ⇒ When the judge indicates for you to move into line, take the lead shank in the right hand and move briskly into the designated spot.

## The practice of moving calves up or down in line should be done according to the following procedure if asked:

- ⇒ Take the halter in the right hand, walk forward, continue clockwise around the calf, and back through the hole.
- ⇒ Going around the calf, take the lead strap in the left hand, and into the new position.
- ⇒ Calves in line should be moved to make room for your animal.
- ⇒ An alternate permissible method of changing position, if easily managed, is backing your animal out of line.



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## Other:

Respond promptly, if motioned to move ahead when circling. Take the halter in the right hand and move up quickly on the inside. An animal of manageable size is quite often easier to handle, especially in this situation.

Keep the animal in clear view of the judge. Do not stand between the judge and your calf. You could be requested to lead counter-clockwise off the top of the line in conformation or showmanship classes. If this happens, walk backwards with the left hand holding the lead shank.

## Avoid unacceptable actions that detract from showmanship:

- ⇒ Walking backwards slowly into the ring
- ⇒ Sidestepping
- ⇒ Displaying a tense behaviour
- ⇒ Projecting a "no care attitude"
- ⇒ Showing with a long, stiff arm
- ⇒ Keeping your elbow up
- ⇒ Crouching
- ⇒ Positioning yourself too far ahead of the calf
- ⇒ Holding the calf improperly with the hand and halter up in the air
- ⇒ Holding the calf's nose too high
- ⇒ Twisting the calf's head
- ⇒ Tucking the lead strap through the belt loop

Fundamental in showmanship is a well fitted halter which improves the appearance of your animal's head. Bulky rope halters or wide leather beef-type halters should not be used. The halter should be clean and have a manageable length of chain and strap. The most acceptable method of leading is with your hand under the chain and halter along with two (2) to three (3) loops. For safety, do not put your finger through the ring.

The proper method of entering the ring is to hold your neatly coiled lead in your right hand and walk briskly forward until all animals are in the ring or until the judge or ring clerk indicates otherwise. The correct spacing between your calf and the one in front of you should be maintained to around a calf length 1.5 - 1.8 m (5 - 6 feet). This allows both you and the judge to manoeuvre easily. Holding the throat may provide a more dairy appearance to the animal.

Lead at a graceful walk in a clockwise direction, with the animal's head high enough for impressive style and correct head carriage. The show person should be prepared to change the speed of the walk at the direction of the judge. You and your calf should move in unison. On the move, good positioning in relation to your calf will allow you to maintain control.

Move at the speed of the rest of the class. Moving too slow, crouching, leaning on your calf, not being alert, and showing a "no care attitude" are discriminated against.

Follow accepted practices in leading. It is general practice to walk backwards, holding the shank in your left hand, while being judged. Pay equal attention to both your calf and the judge.



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Lead from the left front of the animal, except briefly when it is necessary to adjust the tail head or pinch the loin. When the judge motions for a stop in order to walk around the calf, try to lead your calf into an attractive standing position. Do not adjust the hind legs by stepping on the feet. Do this by applying pressure on the halter and point of shoulder, with the fingers of your right hand. It is acceptable to set the front legs with your feet. Be certain your calf is straight from nose to tail when viewed from behind. You need to be in control of your calf at all times. When stopped, have a good hold on your calf with your left hand and have your right hand on the point of her shoulder.

As the judge moves around to view the other side of your animal, move the calf ahead one half step. When the judge returns to the other side, or center of the ring, move ahead another half step. While standing behind your calf, the judge may ask you to walk ahead so he/she can evaluate your animal from the rear. Walk in a straight line and be sure to keep her top line straight when viewed from the rear.

Do not stand between the judge and your animal. Provide a clear view of your exhibit. Move out of the way calmly so not to draw attention to yourself in the process.

Turn the animal's head toward the judge when he/she is handling the hair and hide. The judge is checking for the pliability of the hide and dairy character.

If the person in front of you is having difficulty moving his/her calf, it is good sportsmanship to help encourage the calf to move. If you need to pass this calf or are instructed to by the judge, always pass on the outside.

Walk quickly with the shank and lead strap in the right hand, when pulled into line from the outside of the ring. Upon reaching the lineup, turn, and using your left hand, lead your calf into place, setting it up to its best advantage. You may need to adjust the tail head but do not fuss too much. Do your part to keep the line uniform with your calf's head in line with the first calf in the lineup. Ensure your calf is properly spaced to approximately 1 foot between calves. Use your hand to steady the calf and maintain an attractive head carriage. Be prepared to make room for another calf in the lineup if the judge moves another calf beside yours in the lineup.

Moving from one position in line to the other, whether up or down, the handler should move the animal ahead, turn clockwise, come back through the same position and go directly to the position indicated. This should be done quickly with your calf under control at all times. You should only back your animal out of line to switch to the position the judge indicates it will be a smoother and quicker move.