

Methods of Preparing Cattle for the Show Ring.

Minor Thesis for the Degree  
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## Importance of The Show Ring.

Too few of our breeders appreciate the value of the show ring to themselves and their breed. Many regard it as a play-ground for fanciers and fail to realize that it is one of the most important factors in herd and breed development.

There are many benefits to be derived from the show ring. Most important of all is, perhaps, the standardization of a specific breed type. There is an accepted type followed by all the show ring judges and the breeder who shows his cattle soon learns that unless he has cattle conforming to this type he cannot expect to win. As soon as he learns this he begins breeding for this ideal. The effect is far reaching and will have a strong tendency toward a standard breed type.

The show ring is an educational institution with the breeders showing and the public as the students. Merely watching the judging at a fair does wonders toward educating the public to the ideal.

It is also an advertising medium. The breeder who shows his cattle is advertising not only his own herd but also the breed. Very few men are breeding for pleasure alone, but for pleasure and profit. To profit the breeder must sell his surplus to good advantage and to do this he must have a well advertised herd. The show ring offers the best possible method of advertising. The breeder who shows his cattle, whether at his local county fair, his state fair or the larger shows is telling the public in a direct way the merits of his herd. "Advertised goods sell best", or "It pays to advertise". This is true with cattle as well as with any other commodity.

Not enough interest is taken by the public, or the breeders themselves in the judging at county fairs. There is a remedy for this. If every breeder will make it a point to show some of his best animals at his local fair the friendly rivalry will create plenty of interest. The farmer

takes his vacation by spending a day or two at the fair. He comes to the fair for information and out of curiosity. Large exhibits of splendid cattle appeal to him, and he will go away with a longing to own some like them. If the breeder will, when exhibiting his cattle take the trouble to explain the merits of pure bred live stock to the fair visitors as they go through the barns, he will do himself and his breed a world of good.

#### Methods Used.

There are different methods used in preparing cattle for exhibition. To prepare the animal for the show, we must first consider the kind of animal to be shown, that is whether it is a beef animal or a dairy animal. Then if it is a beef animal we must consider the breed since in each breed there are particular or individual methods used in showing certain points about the animal. The same is true of the dairy breeds. Therefore we should learn how to bring out the points of the breed which we are to show. I will in this paper try to tell how the points of the different dairy breeds (Holstein Friesians, Jerseys, Guernseys and Ayrshires) are brought out.

"To prepare rabbit stew, first catch your rabbit" likewise the initial step in preparing a dairy herd for the show ring, is the proper selection of the animals. In order to do this it is necessary to know to what classes an animal is eligible. Positive information as to age limits of the various classes, may be found in premium lists available, on request, from the secretary of any show, but the following ages usually govern:-

Only registered animals are eligible.

Junior Calf. Bull, - Under 6 months.

Senior Calf. " , - 6 months to 1 year.

Junior Yearling " , - 1 year to 18 months.

Senior Yearling " , - 18 months to 2 years

Bull - 2 years and under 3

" - 3 years and over

Aged " - 4 years and over

Same age limits apply to females.

An exhibitor's herd consists of : -

Bull, 2 years or over

Female 3 " " "

" 2 " and under three

" 1 " " " 2

" under 1 year.

Breeders young herd:-

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Bull, under 2 years           | ) |
| 2 Females, 1 year and under 2 | ) |
| 2 " under 1 year              | ) |

All to be bred and owned by breeder showing.

Calf herd:-

Bull, under 1 year  
 2 Females, " 1 year.

Get of Sire: - 4 animals, by the same sire, any age or sex.

Produce of Dam: - 2 animals, any age or sex, the produce of one cow.

Thus it is seen that one animal may be eligible to a number of classes. We should, therefore, select animals with the view in mind of filling the greatest number of classes with the fewest number of animals.

Holstein Friesian females may be clipped smooth over the entire body, but the bulls should not be clipped all over. The head of a holstein bull should not be clipped but allowed to remain rough in order to bring out the masculine features most. However, if the hair of the females is short and fine only

the bellies and udders are clipped in order to show the milk veins well and not have long hair on the udders. Also the tail is clipped leaving a good switch. The horns may or may not be taken off.

Jerseys may be clipped all over or only a portion of the body clipped. When only a portion of the body is clipped it should be the head, and neck, the belly, udder and tail leaving a good switch. The bulls as well as the cows are clipped and horns should be left on animals to be shown, since they detract from appearance a great deal when cut off.

Guernseys are not clipped except the belly, udder, and tail leaving a good switch.

Horns on the animals add considerable to their appearance and since each breed has its favored shape the methods of training should be brought out under this head. Since each breed has a different shape of horn special devices must be used for some and an entirely different apparatus for others. Although the horns of the Holsteins, Jerseys and Guernseys are not the same yet they have the same general shape which permits the use of the same devices on all three. The horns of Ayrshires are developed in an entirely different direction and for this reason requires a totally different apparatus. In the first three breeds it is preferred that the horns turn in which is usually accomplished by use of clamps. Jersey should have horns turned in and down which may be accomplished by use of weights. The Ayrshires should have the horns turned out and up, and the apparatus for this may be of several types. Each horn being trained independantly by use of clamps.

This training should be started early especially with the short horn breeds. With the long horn breeds such as the Ayrshires a longer period of training is necessary. The age at which to train the horns is one to two years.

#### Feeds used and their proper combination.

Feeding is one of the principal things in preparing animals

for exhibition, not only in the amount, but the kinds used and the proportion mixed. There are several rations which are used but all have about the same, base constituents in varying proportion. Below are given some of the mixtures used and their feeding values:-

| Feeding Stuff           | Digestable Nutrients |               |                |      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|------|
|                         | Dry Matter           | Crude Protein | Carbo-Hydrates | Fat  |
|                         | lbs.                 | lbs.          | lbs.           | lbs. |
| 400 lbs. Corn           | 358.0                | 30.0          | 271.2          | 18.4 |
| 400 " Oats              | 356.8                | 37.6          | 205.6          | 16.4 |
| 200 " Bran              | 179.8                | 25.0          | 83.2           | 6.0  |
| 100 " Cotton Seed Meal  | 92.2                 | 33.4          | 24.3           | 7.9  |
| 100 " Linseed Meal      | 90.9                 | 30.2          | 32.6           | 6.7  |
| Total                   | 1077.7               | 156.2         | 616.9          | 55.4 |
| 300 lbs. Corn           | 268.5                | 22.5          | 203.4          | 13.8 |
| 300 " Oats              | 267.6                | 28.2          | 154.2          | 12.3 |
| 300 " Bran              | 269.7                | 37.5          | 124.8          | 9.0  |
| 100 " Linseed Meal      | 90.9                 | 30.2          | 32.6           | 6.7  |
| Total                   | 816.7                | 118.4         | 515.0          | 41.8 |
| Mixture used for calves |                      |               |                |      |
| 300 lbs. Corn           | 268.5                | 22.5          | 203.4          | 13.8 |
| 300 " Oats              | 267.6                | 28.2          | 154.2          | 12.3 |
| 100 " Bran              | 89.9                 | 12.5          | 41.6           | 3.0  |
| 100 " Linseed Meal      | 90.9                 | 30.2          | 32.6           | 6.7  |
| Total                   | 636.9                | 93.4          | 431.8          | 35.8 |
| 100 lbs. Corn           | 89.5                 | 7.5           | 67.8           | 4.6  |
| 100 " Oats              | 89.2                 | 9.4           | 51.4           | 4.1  |

| Mixture used for Calves | Digestable Nutrients. |               |                |      |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|------|
|                         | Dry Matter            | Crude Protein | Carbo-hydrates | Fat  |
|                         | lbs.                  | lbs.          | lbs.           | lbs. |
| 100 lbs. Bran           | 89.9                  | 12.5          | 41.6           | 3.0  |
| 100 lbs. linseed Meal.  | 90.9                  | 30.2          | 32.6           | 6.7  |
| Total                   | 359.5                 | 59.6          | 193.4          | 18.4 |

\* Table III in the back of Henry & Morrison's "Feeds & Feeding" 17th Edition.

The first one is the mixture which was used for feeding the V.P.I. herd last year, while on the show circuit. It proved very satisfactory indeed not only as a good ration for show animals but also for dairy or milk production. However, the dairy animals, which are being fed for production should have some succulent feed. One reason why some men will not show their animals is because they can't make records and win prizes too, they think. This is not absolutely true at all. Some very creditable records have been made by animals which were on the show circuit two or three months of the lactation period.

Of course I do not say that the animal is going to do her best when she is on the trip. The show business is very hard on both animals and attendants even under the best of conditions. The animals can be fed a succulent feed even on the circuit. Beet pulp which will serve as a succulent feed may be carried in the car with the other feed. This is a good succulent for animals on record in the dairy barn, and there is no reason why it cannot be fed to the animals on the trip.

This is not all the feed which is to be used; it is only the concentrates. The animal must have some roughage. For this purpose almost any good hay will answer, but there are certain hays which I believe are better if they

can be secured. That is, the animal will usually eat more of these than the others and seem to like them better. These hays are alfalfa and clover.

The amount of hay to be used will vary with individuals and the kind of hay. The animals should have just about as much as they will eat. The amount of grain to be fed should be the amount they will clean up well and not leave any.

#### Details of Feeding Certain Prize Winning Animals.

For a man to make a success in the show ring he must study the individuals and not the group as a whole. This is true particularly with the prize winning individuals. Feeding is one of the principal things. Your prize winners should be studied carefully as to the food they like best. Cattle as well as man have taste for certain things. That is, there are certain things which they like better than others and will eat more of than the ones they don't care for so much.

To feed a prize winning individual successfully the show man should, also, see that he is feeding a balanced ration. Dairy cattle should not be too fat, yet they should be in good flesh to show the important points to the best advantage. Dairy animals that are too high in flesh not only do not show well, but if the show man allows them to get into such shape he is liable to injure them for their future breeding or milking. The show animals can have their constitution greatly impaired on the show circuit or in the process of fitting them for the ring. Therefore, great care should be exercised not to overdo anything in the fitting or showing of the animals.

For an animal to be a prize winner it must be in good condition and care should be taken in feeding the individual so that it will not get out of condition. This can easily be done by feeding; so the feeding should be watched very closely. Don't overfeed, don't attempt to try every feed that comes along and expect to keep the animal in best condition. Don't feed sour or mouldy feeds. Feed regularly a good, balanced ration. Should the animal seem to be

getting too fat cut down the corn a little. If it seems not to have quite enough flesh increase the corn a little. The animals must be studied and the best way to find out whether the animal is gaining or loosing is by use of the scales. Place the animal on the scales frequently and weigh it so that you know what it is doing.

Should the animal seem **not** to have as good an appetite as it should a tonic might be given, but this is another thing which should not be over done. A good tonic such as Tincture of Nux Vomica; one teaspoonful night and morning in the feed for two or three days, might be used with good results.

Another thing about feeding the prize winners is not to let them become gorged with the feeds which they like best. It is best to keep them wanting just a little more than what you give them.

#### How a Show herd Should be Handled and Fed under Virginia Conditions.

The show herd in Virginia should be taken off of pasture early in the Summer, about July. The animals should be placed in a cool, dry, well ventilated barn, where they can be easily handled and attended.

The first thing to do after the animals are placed in the barn is to carry them through a sort of cooling out process. By this is meant getting the animals in condition to handle a good deal of grain. If the animals have been on pasture or have been receiving but little grain then it would not be advisable to put them on a full ration at once but begin by giving a small amount of grain and gradually working up to the full amount.

The animals should be fed and watered regularly and should have all they hay they will eat. The feeding is not all of the process by any means. The animals should be exercised every day and trained to stand to show to the best advantage. This is a tedious proposition and takes a great deal of patience. The animals will not know what you want them to do at first and will move, squirm and probably become slightly nervous. You should not become angry and hit the animals, but keep trying to teach them. They will finally learn to stand the

way you wish them. Do not try to work them too long at the start but just stand them a little while to begin with and increase a little each day.

Next comes the grooming. The herd will not be in condition to show unless the animals are carefully groomed daily. The animals should be curried and brushed good daily, at first to loosen the dust and dirt which may have accumulated on the skin and also loosen the hide. Then they should be washed with soap and water. Tar soap is good. This ought to be done about twice a week at first, but later on once a week will be enough unless they get themselves dirty. After they seem to be fairly clean the currying should not be done so much, but a good stiff brush will answer the purpose. Brush thoroughly every day, and then go over them with a cloth. A woolen cloth with a small amount of sweet oil on it will prove to be most satisfactory. The animals should then be blanketed. This is done for several purposes, first to keep the animals clean, second, to sweat the hide to get condition and quality into it, third, to shed the hair, fourth, to make it lay straight, fifth, to give the hair a silky appearance. Some of the animals may have long, rough or course hair and should be clipped all over at the start.

Then comes the horns. The animals may be in perfect condition in every respect except the horns which would be rough and in bad shape. This would detract from the appearance a great deal in exhibiting, so they should be looked after and polished. The first thing to do with these is to use a rasp in getting off the roughest portion and shape them. Then a piece of glass is used to smooth them after which a fine sand paper is used to finish the smoothing process. After getting the horns smooth the next problem is to polish them. This is done by using oil and a whitening powder (which fills any small crevice), rubbing with the hands or a cloth vigorously. The best results, however, are obtained by using the hands. The more rubbing the better the job. Rub until the hands get very hot and feel as though they were going to blister. Then take a flannel cloth and wipe the horns after which they may be polished using metal, or tan shoe polish, shining them the same as you would your shoes.

The feet also must be cared for since the animals will not show to the best advantage with sore feet nor with ill-shaped feet. The hoofs should be shaped by cutting, which can be easily done with snips. Don't cut too much off as they will become sore and the animals will not walk well or stand well in the ring. The feet should be kept clean in order that they will not become sore and the animals might be shown at their best.

This carries us through the treatment of the herd while at home. Now how should it be handled on the show circuit? This brings us to the propositions of shipping and the handling of the cattle on the fair grounds. First the kind of cars to use. The best cars to use are the box cars with ventilators at either end and screen doors. These are better than the regular cattle cars on both the animals and attendants in case of bad or rainy weather, as it will be dry in these cars. Before loading, the cars should have rings placed in them for tying the animals. This may be done by screwing the rings at about 18 inches or two feet intervals on two feet intervals on two by four rails and then nailing the rails about 15 inches from the floor. At one end and place the rings on one side of the car at the other place them on the opposite side. Having examined the floor thoroughly to see that there are no nails sticking up which might stick into the feet of the animals. The next thing is to put plenty of good clean straw bedding into the car.

After the cars have been fixed the animals are loaded, placing the bulls at the ends the dry cattle next and the small calves and cows that have to be milked in the center. These are so placed because they can be most easily handled and have a little more room. The number of animals placed in a car should be limited to the number that can enter in comfort.

Blankets should be used on the animals at all times, but especially late in the fall when they might become chilled by drafts and take cold while riding. An attendant should travel with the animals to feed and water them, also to milk the ones which are fresh. He should see that they are not injured by crowding, falling or stepping on each other.

Upon arrival at the fair grounds the animals should be brushed clean, or better washed and the final slight touches added before going into the ring. Animals are usually required not to have been clipped within ten days of showing. The day before showing the switches should be washed, plaited or braided and tied up until just before entering the ring when they should be untied, combed and brushed. This adds to the appearance of the animals a great deal. Just before entering the ring go over the animals with your cloth which has a slight amount of oil on it. The cows should not be milked the last two milkings before entering the ring. The milk is left in order to distend the udder and make it show up well.

The animals are not watered the night before and a small amount of salt is given them and then they are watered just before entering the ring being given all the water they wish. This is to make the barrel appear larger, however, if too much salt is given and they drink too much water they may appear hide bound so this point should be watched.

Last but not least comes the showing. Be on the alert and at the call of classes the animals should be led by an attendant into the ring with a properly fitting halter and a lead strap that is not too long. Attendants should all dress alike, lead the animals holding the halter in the right hand and from the time the animals enter the ring the attendant should see that the animals are exhibiting themselves to the best advantage at all times. The attendants should know their animals and by "setting them up" correctly hide, if possible, any deficiencies from the eye of the judge.

By setting the animals correctly such defects as a weak back and drooping rump might be hid from the judge. If the animal has drooping rump and the back is good then by stretching the animal we can remedy this fault. To stretch the animal we mean to make the animal stand with as much distance between the front and hind feet as is possible. Then if an animal's back is weak we let it stand with the feet squarely placed as at other times but placed closer together or in

other words we do not stretch the animal. Also when trying to stand an animal with a weak back the attendant might stand so that he can touch the animal under the body causing it to raise in the back a little. Should the animal twist its back, the attendant should touch the animal in the ribs on the side from which it is twisted and cause the animal to straighten itself. When the animal bows in its back the attendant should press the back lightly causing the animal to bring the back down to a normal position. If possible try to stand the animals with the hind feet an inch or two lower than the front feet.

While in the show ring there are certain points which should be remembered at all times, they are:-

1. Have the animal stand well with its feet squarely placed under each corner of the body.
2. Hold the animal's head well up.
3. Always move as directed by the judge.
4. Keep quiet unless spoken to by the judge, and then answer his questions honestly and as briefly as possible.

The equipment needed on the trip will include buckets, scrubbing brushes, soap (Tar) cloths (Flannel), clipping machine, curry combs and brushes, sand paper, steel scraper, raps, tail comb, rope halters, blankets, vaseline, iodine, Fowler's solution of arsenic, tinc. of nux vomica, salts, 2 in 1 shoe paste, sweet oil, pumice or tripoli, leather halters and about 50 feet 1/2 inch rope. Rope leads on bulls should be changed every week.