

# Dairy Feeder Project Guide

Helpful information for your Dairy Feeder Project (Richwood Fair version)

If you are interested in raising a Dairy Beef calf this is the project you will enroll in:

#	Title	Description
117D	Dairy Beef Feeder (Market)	Select and raise a dairy calf from a few days or weeks of age to a weight of 400-700lbs.



## Project Literature

You will need the following project materials for your dairy feeder project:

- **Beef Resource Handbook** (\$17.75) Designed to be used for all years of your dairy beef projects
- **Beef Project and Record Book**, (\$8) Obtain and keep for the resource info it contains Note; do not use for your annual record keeping.
- **Union County Livestock Project Record Book** (free) Download this document and use as your Record book for your project. Keep a new one each year. \*You will need to bring this completed to participate in Beef skillathon at the fair.

In Summary: obtain the first two books listed above and keep and use them for all years you are taking a Dairy Feeder Project. Each year: download a new Livestock Record book and use it to keep your annual project records.

## Project Requirement for Exhibition at Richwood Fair

If you are interested in exhibiting a Dairy Feeder project at the Richwood Fair,

You need to know and meet the exhibition requirements. Basic exhibition requirements include:

- You must participate annually in Livestock Quality Assurance Education, by the deadline of July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- You must be a member in good standing of your 4-H Club: meaning attending a minimum of 5 meetings, doing a demonstration, etc.
- You must own your animal(s) by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023
- You must register your animals online by the deadline of June 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Dairy Feeder calves must be 100% dairy breed, dehorned, castrated males, within the weight range, at fair, of 400-700 lbs.



## **Selection**

Select Market Dairy Feeders that:

- Dairy breed or a cross of dairy breeds only, no beef breeds
- **Look, act healthy with no signs of scours**
- Long bodied with a straight top line (back)
- Are wide and thick across the top of the back
- Height is not as important in selection, as stockiness and health
- Market Dairy Feeders should have been born between mid-January and mid-March, to reach proper weight range by Richwood fair time.

## **Finding a calf**

Start asking past exhibitors, club advisors, etc. about local, reputable dairy farms willing to sell young, male dairy calves for beginning dairy feeder projects. Other local farmers will occasionally have small groups of dairy calves that are started and still on milk for sale. Reputable farmers will usually only sell bull calves on milk, that have been fed plenty of colostrum and are eating milk well off the bottle on their own. **NEVER buy a project animal from an auction sale barn, new born calf jockey or a calf that has not received at least 2 feedings of high quality colostrum. No Exceptions.**

## **Weight**

- Ideal market weight is about 500-600 lbs (**Richwood Fair has a range limit of 400-700 lbs**)
- A normal rate of gain is 2.2-2.8 lbs of gain per day on average over the length of the project. Calves will gain roughly 1 lb. of body weight for every 7 lbs. of concentrate they consume. \*This could vary greatly depending on animal health, management, and different feeding strategies.
- Example: A 100 lb. calf purchased on March 1<sup>st</sup> should weigh around 500 lbs. around Richwood Fair Time (180 days X 2.2 lbs. per day = 396 lbs. + 100 lb. bought = 496 lbs.)
- Market dairy feeder should weigh around 375 lbs. The first week of July at to reach ideal weight for fair. \* Ending weight will depend on project start date, type and amount of grain fed and overall management of comfort and health.

## **Nutrition**

- Young Market Dairy Feeders will need to be on a high fat/high protein milk replacer (remember its cold when project starts) until they are 6-8 weeks old. The rule of thumb is to wean calves from milk once they are eating at least 2 lbs. of highly palatable calf stater each day. Pre weaned & weaned calves need to be offered fresh clean starter grain and water twice each day. Young calves can be blanketed with calf jacket below 40 degrees to reduce energy loss/stress.
- Dairy Feeders need 2-4 lbs of hay per day throughout the duration of project.

- Eventually, Dairy Feeders can eat 5-15 lbs. of feed per day.
- It is recommended to follow project book recommendations and consult with those knowledgeable in raising dairy feeders (area farmers, experienced exhibitors and feed/nutrition consultants) to learn proper types of grain feeding strategies and amounts.
- Market Dairy Feeders should eat between a 12-18% protein feed.
- Clean/ freshwater access

### **Finish**

- Dairy feeder steers have a higher muscle-to-fat ratio than beef steers, while also having a thinner hair coat and less external fat to maintain body heat. Because of this, dairy steers require more energy than beef steers.
- As you near the fair, your calf may need a little more fat cover or need to burn off some fat.
- If the animal is too skinny and you want to increase rate of gain and build finish (fat), you need to feed a ration that is higher in energy.
- If your animal is over-conditioned and you need to control or take off finish (fat), feed a ration that is lower in energy.

### **Health**

- A normal body temperature for Market Dairy Feeder is 100.4°F-102.8°F
- If your calf is not castrated and dehorned at purchase, seek assistance from a veterinarian for getting these procedures done. You might also seek assistance from an experienced producer who has the proper equipment and can help you.
- Common health concerns to look for:
  - scours (diarrhea), pneumonia (elevated temperature/nasal discharge/heavy breathing/persistent coughing) & umbilical hernia in very young calves,
  - acidosis/overeating/bloat (digestive disorders that can cause much harm after sudden changes in feed amount & type. Could show as not eating, belly swelling or kicking at side) and coccidiosis (dark watery stool) in weaned calves
- Dairy Feeder Calves that do not feel well will stand by themselves, not eat or move, as well as other symptoms
- It's very important to observe your animal's normal behavior every day so you can notice abnormal behavior.
- Remember: a healthy animal almost always stretches when it stands up after it has been sleeping, sick ones don't.
- **Calves acting unusual or exhibiting signs of disease must be addressed immediately. SEEK HELP**

### **Facilities and Equipment**

- Good ventilation and protection from all elements \*(ie: it is usually cold when calves are started as babies for this project and must be kept warm & free of drafts, however once spring arrives the animals must be kept cool in a pen with adequate shade, shelter and air flow).
- Space- 25-30 square feet per animal recommended. A large pen is best, as dairy feeders do not need to be provided access to pasture. Heat, sun, parasites, and horseflies will all negatively impact growth rates- keep your feeder comfortable!
- Gate should be strong and 4 ft. or more in height \* **Be careful using baling twine to tie gates/buckets as calves will chew all these things and can ingest them**

- Grooming chute (not essential for first year but does make fitting easier if you decide to do that. Usually, you can borrow another exhibitors if needed)
- Rope halter- 1 per animal
- Show halter- 1 per animal
- Neck rope – 1 per animal
- Show Stick
- Feed pan
- Water tub
- Blower (ask to borrow blower at fair time if you need to, as blower and clipper are not absolutely necessary at home)
- Scotch comb
- Curry comb
- Grooming clipper

### **Fair Entries and Fair Rules**

4-H Advisors coordinate the submission of Fair entry cards. Discussion of and completion of Fair entry cards will likely take place at one of your club meetings (another reason it is very important to attend meetings). It is your responsibility to communicate with your 4-H Advisor about what you want to enter in the Fair. Richwood Junior Fair entries are due to the Fair Board on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Therefore, completing entry cards will take place in July. Your Advisor will be able to answer questions about the Fair entry process.

When you choose to become a Jr Fair Exhibitor; you are responsible for knowing the general Fair rules and the Department rules for the project you are exhibiting. These can be found on the Richwood Fair website or in the fair paper under Jr Fair Rules.

You should also be familiar with Ohio Revised Code Sections 901.70, 901.71, 901.72, 901.73, 901.74, 901.75, 901.76, 901.99 and 2925.94. These govern all livestock shows in the state of Ohio.

It is important to note that at the fair, the only people permitted to care for, fit, clip, or groom your animal are your immediate family members, 4H advisors, or other members of your club and assistance is limited to explanation and minimal demonstration (ORC 901.19.31).

### **Drug Use Notification Form (DUNF)**

If you are exhibiting a Market animal you are required, by the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) to submit a DUNF immediately prior to the Fair. This form requires you to declare the use of any medication that has been given to your animal. An online link will be sent to you by email to use for completing your form. You are not eligible to exhibit a market animal until this form is submitted to ODA.

### **Activities that will take place at the Fair**

The following Fair related activities are described below: Arrival/departure, Barn Meeting, Weigh-in, Classes Posted, Skillathon, Showmanship and Show, and Junior Fair Livestock Sale.

### **Arrival & Departure**

Check the Fair Schedule and/or ask your Advisor to confirm the window of time you must arrive with your animal to the Fairgrounds. Upon arrival, find your assigned pen and unload your dairy feeder(s) efficiently so as not to create a line. There are Barn Superintendents in the Barn on arrival day to answer questions.

### **Barn Meeting**

Check the Fair Schedule for the time of the Barn Meeting. Usually, a Barn Meeting for all Exhibitors will be held on Wednesday morning of the Fair, prior to weigh in.

### **Weigh-In**

Check the Fair Schedule, and listen at the Barn meeting, for the weigh in time for dairy feeders. You MUST bring your dairy feeder to the scales at the correct time to be eligible to show. There will be Barn Superintendents in the Barn to direct and help you get to the scales. Your picture will also be taken with your dairy feeder during weigh in.

### **Classes Posted**

Once all calves are weighed classes will be created in approximately equal size classes based on their weights. These Classes will be posted on the Beef Barn bulletin board. It is your responsibility to review the Class posting for accuracy. Check to see that the ear tag number and weight are correct. If you have questions about the Class Posting contact the Jr Fair Board office immediately for assistance.

### **Showmanship and Show Classes**

There are 2 different types of Classes for you within the Beef Show:

1. **Showmanship Classes:** in these classes the Judge is evaluating the showmanship skills of the Exhibitor (you!). These classes are therefore divided by the age of the exhibitor. These classes will be posted in the Beef Barn. Check the posting for accuracy. Participation in your Showmanship class is highly encouraged but is not mandatory.
2. **Market Classes:** in these classes the Judge is evaluating the conformation of your dairy feeder. These classes are divided by the weight of the animals. It is required to participate in showing your dairy feeder to be eligible for awards and to be eligible to sell your calf in the Jr Fair Livestock Sale.

### **Getting yourself and your calf ready for Fair:**

#### **Show Breaking Calendar and Technique**

#### **June – Early July**

- Allow the animal to get comfortable around you to build trust, by tying the calf up each day with a rope halter, starting with 15 minutes and gradually adding time every few days. While the animal is tied up, you can brush him and pet him to build trust and begin getting him used to the show stick. Start using the show stick with the calf in a calm, light way, until they get used to it.
- Practice walking your calf around the yard on the rope halters.

#### **Late July – August**

- Introduce the calf to the show halter & practice using the show stick to set up your animal and scratch it's belly.
- Wash and dry the calf a few times a week- this helps avoid stains on the calf, and helps the calf grow more hair – making the fitting process easier later.
- If your goal is to get the calf to grow more hair, rinse them during cool times of the day (in the evening after being walked is a common time to do this).

#### **Late August – Fair**

- Continue washing and walking your calf, and practice setting it up for the show

### **Showmanship Summary**

### Preparing for showmanship

- Make sure your calf is clean and ready to go! This means at a minimum it should have a good bath and rinse in the early morning of show day, blown dry and kept a close eye on to stay clean until show.
- **Make sure you are professionally presented.**
- Collared shirt tucked in, long jeans, close toed shoes, belt, scotch come in back pocket (with teeth facing toward your body).
- Be sure to watch the classes before you.
- Observe what the judge is looking for and watch what older/more experienced showman are doing.

### Going to the Ring

- Listen for your class – BE EARLY!! you don't ever want to be late!!! (MAKE SURE TO CHECK THE SHOW ORDER THAT MORNING POSTED IN THE BARN TO SEE WHAT CLASSES YOU WILL BE IN)
- Don't fight other exhibitors for a spot in line, be patient and calm – your animal can sense it.
- The judge is always watching – even when you're in the makeup area.  
(Keep your eyes on the judge when you're in the holding area, entering the show arena and during the class as much as possible).

### In the Ring

- As you enter, make solid eye contact with the judge.
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Stay in line with the other animals
- If the judge touches your calf, pull out the comb and brush up where they touched
- Get your calf set up as quickly and effectively as possible, and then watch the judge as you rub the calf with the show stick and set the front legs even with each other, and the back leg closer to you about 6 inches further forward than the other back leg

### Grooming/Fitting

- It is a good idea to identify some of the exhibitors that have taken the project before and ask some basic questions on what they do to prepare their feeders for the show.
- To get the animal ready for the show, clip the animal's head (but not ears!), trim some of the longer hairs along the animal's topline, clip the tail, and clip roughly one strip on the rump on each side of the tail (right next to the tail)
- **Fitting a dairy feeder can make a difference, but don't feel like it is something that is essential for you to do; as the most important aspects of your project the first year are to bring a healthy, well broke animal to the fair that is within the weight limits (400-700 lbs). If you want to get more advanced, feel free to try the steps below:**

### How to fit your animal

- To fit your animal, you will want to pull, or comb up, the hair on the front and back legs.
- It is best to practice at home a few times before you take the calf to the fair.

- First, you will want to wash and dry your animal.
- Then, you can use a comb to come the leg hair (again, from the knees and hocks down) up.
  - Lightly spray some adhesive on the legs, then comb it up
  - Spray a little, comb a lot
  - A little adhesive can go a long way
- After pulling the legs, use your clippers to cut off any stray leg hairs and to even out the leg hair. You want the fit leg to blend into the rest of the animal's body – look natural and proportional
- When you have finished fitting the dairy feeder, do not mess with the legs or let the calf lay down until after it has finished showing
- Once the animal is finished showing, you need to break down its leg hair to get the adhesive out. First, spray the adhesive remover on the leg (ex. – Weaver's Pro Remover and Sullivan's Hocus Pocus). Rub the adhesive remover into the leg to work out the adhesive and then wash the adhesive remover out of the leg, with soap, water. Dry the leg hair with your blower

### **Jr Fair Livestock Sale**

The Richwood Fair Jr Fair Livestock Sale is held on Monday, the last day of the Fair.

Exhibitors with market animals are eligible to sell ONE animal through the Jr Fair Sale, if they have met eligibility criteria (shown their animal, animal is within correct weight range, turned in Sale Designation form on time, etc).

During the Jr. Fair Beef / Dairy Feeder Show; Sale Designation Forms will be made available to all Exhibitors. If you want to sell a calf through the Jr Fair Sale, you must complete the Sale Designation Form, indicating which animal (ear tag #) you want to place in the Jr Fair Sale, and turn in the Form by the end of the Beef Show.

You **MUST** be present during the Jr Fair Sale on Monday in order to sell your animal. A Sale Catalog (list of animals for the sale) will be created and posted for exhibitors in the Beef Barn on Sunday of the Fair. Check the posted Catalog to see where you are in the Sale order so you can be ready.

Once your animal is sold through the Sale; the Sale Committee will handle loading and transporting your animal on behalf of the buyer. Your responsibility is to keep your animal watered and comfortable until it is loaded.

### **Extra Animals**

Some exhibitors will have an "extra" animal, because you can only sell one animal through the Jr Fair Livestock Sale. It is your responsibility to decide and make arrangements for your extra animal(s). Options usually include:

- Take the animal home.
- Sell the animal to the Re-sale bidder arranged by the Sale Committee. To do this you will complete a form, in the Jr Fair Office. The market price being offered will be posted there.
- Sell the animal privately. You would be entirely responsible for loading, transportation and all other aspects of the sale if you sell your extra animals privately.

**It is important to have a plan for the animals you have brought to the fair and to let the Jr. Fair Office know asap.**

### **Where do the calves go when they leave the fair?**

- At the conclusion of the fair, a single buyer that has been selected by the sale committee will arrive and collect all the remaining calves left in the barn that have been designated to be sold, either through Jr. Fair sale or as an "extra" animal (being sold for the pre-determined market price only). The buyer is a local farm owner that is planning on taking the calves back to their feedlot and finish feeding them out over next year until they achieve

market weight of 1,400-1,500 lbs. Please Note: whatever rope halter you leave your calf tied up with, will go with your calf with the new owner so that it can be properly tied during transport. Jr. Fair sale committee members are the ones that will load the calves being sold onto the buyer's trailer, you do not need to be there to assist.

### **Finishing your dairy feeder project**

When the project year is concluded its time to thank the people that have helped you with your project. It's a great idea to send thank you notes to:

- The buyer(s) of your animal, if you participated in the Jr Fair Sale
- Your 4-H Advisors
- Other folks who helped you with your project (helped clip your goat for example)
- The sponsors of any awards, ribbons, banners or other recognition you received