



Tips for a successful calf club day...



Selecting a calf or lamb

You've decided to exhibit a calf or lamb at your school's Calf Club Day. Before approaching a farmer to select an animal, you may need to check that you have enough space and time to do a good job.

Grazing/feeding

Calves and lambs need safe, well fenced areas to graze in. Grass should be fresh and long. Many decorative plants can be poisonous to your new pet, so make sure they don't have access to the garden.

Time

Make sure you have enough time to look after your calf, lamb, or kid. You will need at least 30 minutes in the morning and in the evening.

Looking after your calf or lamb

Keep a close eye on your calf or lamb, and if anything changes, get your parents to check it out. Make sure you keep all the gear and bedding clean and dry.

It is very important that you have good hygiene when working with your animal. There are diseases you can catch if you aren't careful, so make sure you always wash your hands and wear protective clothing, especially if your animal is sick.

Talk to your vet about the best time to get your animal vaccinated and treated for parasites. If it's a boy you'll need to think about when to get him castrated as well.

Calf horn buds need to be removed at about two weeks of age (kids earlier). It is probably best to discuss this with the person you got your animal from, or your vet.

Talk to and pet your animal. The friendlier they are, the better they will perform for you at calf club.

Start off by fitting your animal with a halter or collar. Once they seem comfortable with this you can begin teaching them to walk with a lead. Your animal should be trained to walk on your right, with its head/shoulder level with you. Don't let the lead drag on the ground, and don't wrap it around your hand.

Stopping should be slow and smooth, without tugging sharply on the lead. Practice standing still, and only allowing the animal to move forward again when you are ready. This is important so that the judge has time to look at your animal when you go to Calf Club.

Once you are happily walking straight, start practicing turning. You should lead on the outside of the curve, and the turn needs to be quite large to begin with.

Training should be fun for both you and your animal. Make sure to train every day, but not for so long that either of you get bored or tired.

Remember you are on display as well, and judges will be looking for signs that you are comfortable with, and care for your animal.

GOOD LUCK!

Calf Club

A few days before calf club make sure your animal is looking clean and tidy. You can use a cover to help keep it clean. Don't forget to keep training.

On the day, make sure you have all the gear you need:

- ✓ A water bucket so they can drink during the day.
- *This is very important!*
- ✓ Some meal/pellets and a feeding container
- ✓ A cloth and/or brush
- ✓ Clean halter and lead rope.



Looking after your calf...

Feeding

For the first three or four days of its life, your calf should drink colostrum. Right from the start your calf will need feeding twice a day – in the morning before school and in the afternoon after school. If you live on a farm you can of course get cow's milk to feed your calf. Many of you will need to purchase calf milk formula and mix it with warm water. It is very important to keep whatever equipment you use to feed your calf, completely clean – calves can get a tummy bug called scours (diarrhoea) from dirty feeding equipment, so clean everything after feeding with hot soapy water and rinse thoroughly.

How much to feed

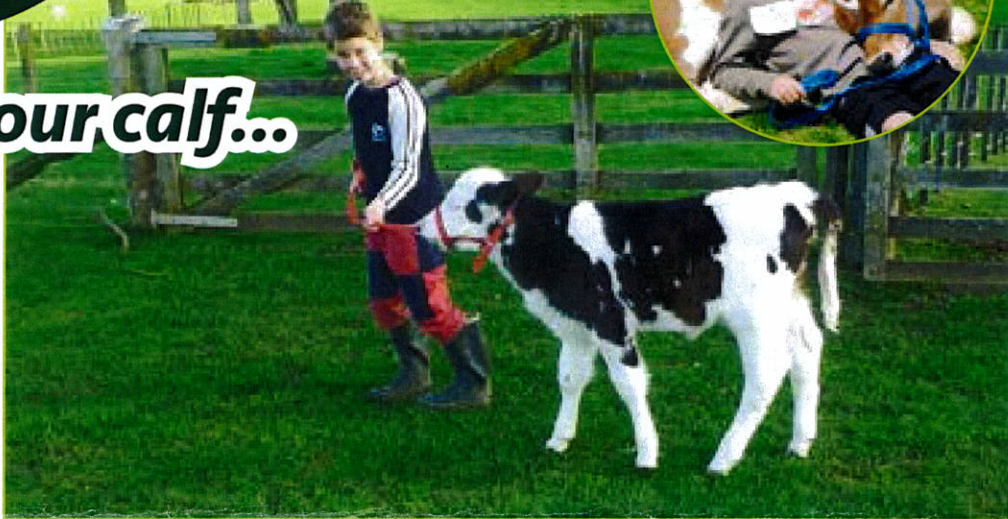
After feeding, your calf will look "full", its tummy will be round and it will be happy, not calling for milk. A common rule is 10% of body weight, so a 40kg calf needs 4 litres each day or 2 litres twice a day. It is important to mix powders to the correct levels, so make sure you read the instructions on the packet carefully. Be sure to feed your calf at the same time each day, as it won't take long for it to know when dinner time is!

Calf meal and hay

Your calf will grow quickly and begin to nibble grass and drink water. At around two weeks of age you will want to introduce calf meal and hay to its diet, so it grows well and stays in good condition. Meal is fed in the mornings, after the milk feed. You will need a large flat bottomed feeder for the meal, which your calf can't push around the paddock. Although the supply of grass, meal and hay increases as your calf grows, it is still important to keep feeding milk as it ensures your calf will have a "bloom" on its coat when it competes at Calf Club.

Weaning

At two or three weeks of age, milk feeding can be reduced to once a day preferably 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 until after Group Day.



Fitting a calf cover

Calf covers serve two purposes – they keep your calf warm and dry and also flatten and polish its coat, preventing fading from the weather, meaning your calf will have a shiny coat when it gets to Calf Club. Calf covers are easily made from empty meal sacks – but first check that the sack is not made of plastic as it doesn't "breathe". A light soft blanket sewn into the inside of the cover will ensure your calf is warm. Velcro straps sewn onto the front and back will allow you to remove it easily for grooming and will also allow for the increase in size as your calf grows. The ideal cover should cover your calf from its shoulders to its rear. Be sure to watch for rubbing.

Fitting a halter

Calf halters and leads can be purchased from your local veterinary centre or supply store. They are made of soft leather and can be adjusted to fit very small and large calves. Halters are only left on for around one hour each day, leaving it on longer would rub hair off. As soon as possible after your calf arrives, fit the halter. When fitted correctly, you should be able to fit two fingers between any part of the halter and your calf's skin. It should be firm if the calf pulls back.

The best time to put the halter on is just before feeding, when the calf is distracted by the milk and so will forget about the halter.

Calf Club Competition Calves

Leading

A Judge will be watching your calf to see how obedient it is, so you will want your calf to be leading well and obeying your instructions, to turn and stop. Never walk in front of your calf.

Rearing & Grooming

The Judge will be looking to see how well your calf has been reared (fed, groomed and cared for). You must present the calf in spotless condition.

- ✓ Clean, thoroughly brushed coat, so there are no loose hairs or dust.
- ✓ Clean feet and ears and around its nose and eyes and under its tail.
- ✓ Clean halter and lead.

The calf has to be well behaved and stand still to allow the Judge to run his/her hands over its body.

The Judge may ask you some questions about your calf – its name, when it was born, what breed it is, and what you have been feeding it etc.

Looking after your lamb/kid...

Lambs And Kids

Most of the lambs and kids that become available for Calf Club are orphans. Usually the farmer will nurse them through the first few days and then they can be passed over to you. Make sure the animal is healthy with no diarrhoea and has been fed colostrum in the first 6 hours of life.

You may still need to help your lamb or kid as it learns to suck from an artificial teat for the first few days. For very young lambs or kids you will need to provide shelter such as a pen or an old dog kennel, especially for night time.

For the first few days as you become friends, it will help to have a small area, so wherever you are in the pen, you are close to your lamb or kid. It can hear your voice and will soon begin to trust you. The best way to become friends is of course by feeding it. Right from the start your lamb or kid will need feeding at least four times a day. You may need Mum or Dad to help out with this while you are at school. If you need to purchase lamb milk formula, mix it with warm water. It is very important to keep whatever equipment you use to feed your lamb or kid completely clean - lambs or kids can get a tummy bug called scours (diarrhoea) from dirty feeding equipment, so clean everything after feeding with hot soapy water and rinse thoroughly.



How much to feed

After feeding your lamb or kid will look "full", their tummy will be round and the lamb or kid will be happy, not calling for milk. It is important to mix powders to the correct levels, so make sure you read the instructions on the packet carefully. Be sure to feed your lamb or kid at the same time each day, as it won't take long for it to know when dinner time is!

Weaning

Refer to the instructions on the milk formula packet for reduction of feeds. Eventually four feeds will be reduced to three, two and then once a day. Lambs or kids generally remain on once a day milk feeds until after Group Day.

Fitting a collar

Collars and leads can be purchased from your local veterinary centre or rural store. When fitted correctly, you should be able to fit two fingers between any part of the collar and your lamb or kid's skin, and it should not pull off, if the lamb or kid pulls back. The collar can stay on, but as your lamb grows, check the collar regularly and loosen it off as you need to.

Calf Club Competition Lambs And Kids

Leading

The Judge will be watching your lamb or kid to see how obedient it is. Your lamb should be leading well and obeying your instructions to turn and stop.

Most Obvious Pet

The Judge will be looking at how quickly your lamb responds to your call, and how easily you can re-attach their lead.

Rearing & Grooming

The Judge will be looking to see how well it has been reared (fed, groomed and cared for). You must present the lamb in spotless condition.

- ✓ Wool clean so there is no debris, or dags.
- ✓ Feet clean - remember to wipe any earth away from its hooves.
- ✓ Clean under its legs and around the outside of its ears.
- ✓ Clean around its nose and eyes.
- ✓ Clean collar and lead.

The lamb or kid has to be well behaved and stand still to allow the Judge to run his/her hands over its body.

The Judge may ask you some questions about your pet - its name, when it was born, what breed it is, and what you have been feeding it.

