



Drury School

DRURY SCHOOL CALF CLUB TIPS FOR SUCCESS WITH YOUR ANIMAL

SELECTING YOUR CALF CLUB ANIMAL

You have decided to exhibit a calf, lamb or goat at Calf Club – Congratulations! Drury School Calf Club is a long standing tradition, and it is great you are participating and keeping the tradition going!

Before approaching a farmer to select an animal, you may need to check you have a few essentials. You need to put in an effort to get the rewards from your animal – and it is your effort – not Mum or Dad's!!

GRAZING / FEEDING

Calves, lambs and goats need safe, well fenced paddocks with shelter from extreme heat or cold. They also need a good supply of clean drinking water in a low trough they can reach easily. Calves need good quality fresh grass as they tend to nibble at a young age at the tips of grass. Watch your garden with the lambs and goats as they like to nibble at anything! Some of these garden plants can be poisonous to your animal, so may pay to check online if any of your garden plants may be poisonous to your animal.

CALVES

It is preferable to have a personal feeder which will allow you to feed your calf on your own so you develop a friendship with it. A bucket, or mother udder (a bucket with a special teat on it) is perfect, or if you have more than one calf a 'calfeteria' feeder with multiple teats may suit. These can be purchased from your local vet or rural farm supplies store.

LAMBS AND GOATS

A plastic 1.5l bottle (soft drink bottle is fine) with a screw on teat is perfect – teats can be purchased from your local vet or rural farm supplies store.

TIME

You will need to ensure you have adequate time with your school and extra-curricular activities to care for your animal. Allow approx. 30 minutes each morning and evening to spend time with your animal, feeding, brushing & leading. This is your responsibility – not Mum or Dad's! You want the animal to bond with you! This means you may need to get up a little earlier each morning and work around after school activities.

NOTES / TIPS FOR JUDGING

Remember to take note of when your animal was born, type of breed, milestones it may reach (such as how many feeds, how much you feed, dropping feeds, or when you start supplement hard meals feeds such as hay or meal pellets) The calf club judge may ask questions during the care and attention section of judging, and knowing the answers to these questions shows you care for your animal!

Make sure your animal is clean and tidy on Calf Club Day, this includes the lead / halter.

Keep an eye on it and spend time with it on calf club day – as the gala day is also happening some animals may spook and all the ‘new things’ you will be the animals reassurance as you are the person it is familiar with!

VET CARE

Dehorning - Most calves and goats grow horns. When your calf or goat is very young you will feel little stubs between its ears – these are the horn buds and need to be removed. You may know a farmer who can help you with this, or your vet can do it.

Vaccinations – Talk to your vet about what vaccinations your animal needs to remain healthy. The judge does look for overall health of your animal – it is common for calves to get external parasites (or lice) which needs to be treated. Franklin Vets (www.franklinvets.co.nz) usually have a ‘lets make it easy for you’ deals on docking & vaccinations for your Calf Club Day pets.

Scours – Keep a constant eye on your animal – if anything changes get your parents to check it out as your animal may need vet care. Scours (or runny poo) can quickly dehydrate an animal and may then very weak and sick or even die. Make sure you keep a scouring animal away from other stock and regularly clean its bedding or change the sawdust or hay in its pen. If your animal starts scouring – it is important to stop milk feeds and obtain an electrolyte mix from your vet and replace its milk feeds with electrolyte feeds for at least 24 hours.

Docking – Lambs tails must be docked. This should ideally be done as young as possible so it has healed prior to calf club day.

Castration of Bull Calves – Bull calves must be steered. As with the lamb docking, this should be done as young as possible so they are removed and healed prior to calf club day.

Zoonosis – Zoonosis is a name given to diseases that animals can pass on to humans. Good hygiene such as hand washing, and regular washing of the clothing you wear when tending to your animal is important. A big threat is leptospirosis – a long and unpleasant illness that can damage liver and kidneys. This is spread by contact with animal urine, the animal may be symptom free – so good hand washing is essential after contact with your animal. Another big threat is stomach and intestinal issues from sick animals with scours. Always wash your hands after being in contact or tending to a scouring animal.

TALKING

Always talk to your animal and be their friend. They will respond to you and be your friend in return. The friendlier they are, the better chances of a good performance at Calf Club. Tell it when it has done a good job, give it a good rub and a scratch under the neck.

LEADING

As soon as you take ownership of your animal, put their lead/halter on it. This will get the animal used to it being on. When it is feeding put the lead/halter on and tie it to the fence. The best way to teach the animal to lead is to do a little bit every day, and don't force the animal or tug the animal – not only is this cruel but it becomes unenjoyable for you and the animal.

The calf, lamb or goat will need to walk on your right, and for its head/shoulder to be alongside you. Your right hand holds the lead close to the halter (approx. 15cms from the side of their head) with the rest of the lead in your left hand. Be sure not to have it trailing on the ground, or wrapped around your hand. If it is wrapped around your hand, and the animal gets spooked you could get dragged with it and hurt your hand as it attempts to run away.

Begin your lead training by walking in straight lines. Once you and the animal are happy with this, then you can teach it to turn by gently turning its head the direction you would like it to go. From there you will also need to teach your animal to stop – on the lead course there is a compulsory stop. You can teach the animal to do this by giving gentle tugs on the lead, fix your feet to the ground and lean back slightly. This is a good cue for the animal to learn 'ok we need to stop now'. Simply start again by leaning forward and another gentle tug on the lead, and away you go.

The lead course map is available at the school office, so once you are confident with leading your animal you may like to set up a ring and practice at home.

REARING AND GROOMING

Calves, lambs and goats will be judged on how well it has been cared for (fed, groomed, and looked after) the judges will look for:

Clean and thoroughly brushed coat – no loose hairs, dust, mud or poo (calves)

Clean feet, ears, nose, and eyes and tail (all animals)

Clean halter/lead (all animals)

Clean wool – no debris or dags (lambs and goats) do not clip lambs coats or attempt to brush.

Well behaved animals – the judge wants to see a cool and calm animal and allow the judge to run its hand over their body.

The judge may ask questions about your animal – when it was born, what its name, what breed it is and what you have been feeding it.

CALLING – LAMBS AND GOATS

The judge will be looking at how quickly the animal responds to your voice/call. You will need to practice this at home. Have an adult remove the lead from the animal and you call it. It will be best to do this in a confined space the first few times as the animal may see it as an opportunity to run!

DAIRY TYPE

The judge will be looking at your Heifer calf to see if it is a good example of its breed, and a great example of a future dairy cow.

Its mouth will be checked to ensure its teeth are in a line so it can chew grass well.

Its head will be checked to be sure it has alert eyes and its ears are on the same angle.

Its legs will be checked to ensure they are straight and strong.

The judge will run their hands over its back and ribs and will check its udder to make sure it has four teats.

The judge will then want to look at the calf from the front and rear to be sure it is balanced and may ask you to walk away from him/her to see how the calf moves.

BEEF TYPE

All the points above as for dairy type, but the judge will be looking for its potential for rearing/growth. The judge will not need to check their udder.

RESOURCES

There are many resources online you may want to research about how to care for your animal:

http://www.lic.co.nz/lic_Learn_about_Calf_Club.cfm?lid=150

<http://www.franklinvets.co.nz/Lifestyle/Animal+Husbandry/Rearing.html>

CONCLUSION

Rearing a calf club animal is a very rewarding experience for your animal husbandry.

Calf Club is an annual tradition for rural families and schools throughout New Zealand. Drury School has a long history of Calf Club, some trophies having been won by 3 generations of families at school. That's pretty special!

Calf Club fosters life-long values in children such as motivation, commitment, compassion and responsibility - they are a great entry-point into agriculture and for many, the stepping-stone to a career in farming.

If you would like to know more information, contact the Drury School Office who can put you on to the calf club committee to answer your queries.



GOOD LUCK!