



Beef Showmanship

The goal of beef showmanship is similar to every other large animal species you will show, to demonstrate your knowledge on the animal you are showing, your ability to work with your animal in the ring, and your knowledge on the beef industry. Whether you are showing a steer or a heifer remember you want to show your animals strengths and hide its weaknesses while remaining calm and professional. Beef cattle are judged on their confirmation and production qualities, so you want to present your animal with carcass characteristics in mind. To learn more about the beef industry and to work with an animal find a fellow member enrolled in the beef project to help you. Remember to smile, keep yourself and your animal presentable, and have fun in the ring!

Handling Beef Cattle

Whether you have a heifer or a steer, you will first need to make sure you have the proper equipment to show your animal. Beef showmanship allows you to use a show stick to properly pose your animal in the ring. You will hold the halter in your right hand on the left side of the animal and the show stick in your left hand. Hold your show stick high enough slightly in front of you while walking the animal. You will enter the ring and walk at a natural, fluid pace in a clockwise fashion with animals head to tail. Be sure to hold your animal's head high so the animal looks balanced. Always keep eye contact with the judge and watch for further directions. When stopping your animal, turn to face the animal and switch the halter lead into your left hand and the show stick into your right hand. Using the hook, soothe your animal by scratching the belly just in front of the navel as you pull it into position. Then set your animal up, using the show stick to keep your animal calm. If you need to reset your animal or it starts to act up, pull your animal out of position in a circle and set it back up in the same way. If the judge feels your animal, wait until they are done and use the comb in your back pocket to fix the area that was felt before returning it to your pocket.

Posing Beef Cattle

When posing your steer or heifer you will want to keep your animal appearing at its best. It is important to note that a judge would evaluate an animal on beef characteristics so keep in mind what an animal should look like to allow you to visualize how to set up your animal. Using your show stick, halter, and feet, set the front feet square. Set the rear legs staggered so the leg closest to the judge is slightly behind the one farthest from the judge when standing head to tail, giving the judge a profile view. With a steer, when pulled into line make sure all legs are square under the body. If your animal will not stand in position, use the show stick as much as needed or circle your animal back into position. When your animal is standing, scratch the belly of your steer or heifer to keep it calm. If your animal roaches its back, gently scratch its back with the show stick. Always remember to remain calm yourself and watch where you move your show stick to avoid causing injury or hurting others.

To contact an expert in your area, visit msue.anr.msu.edu/experts or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464)

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Showmanship Questions and Answers

Questions:

1. How much does a steer this large eat per day?
2. What breed of beef is this?
3. What is the average weight gained per day of a steer?
4. Where/ how is fat thickness estimated?
5. What is the average yield grade of a steer?

Answers:

1. A 1200 lb. steer will eat about 25 lbs of food per day or about 2% of its body weight
2. It varies so be sure to ask the owner and review breeds, but most beef steers today are crossbred.
3. About 2.75 lbs. per day.
4. The rib fat depth is measured at the thirteenth rib on the steers topline, the average ribeye fat depth is .4 inches.
5. The average yield grade of a steer is 2.5

