

# **Breeding Heifer Project Help List**

-Developed by Amber Parkinson, Hockley CEA 4-H

## A. Feeding

- a. If your project has been on creep feed before weaning and has moderate condition then a grower ration is typically best. Monitor condition as the animal grows taking caution not to let the heifer get too much condition. Places to check for fat deposition are in the brisket and around the tail head (pones). Once desired condition is achieved you will need to add oats and/or beet pulp to the ration to maintain the desired condition. Feed twice a day and consistently. Feed 20-25 lbs per day until desired condition then reduce to 15 lbs. and increase hay consumption.
- b. Hay is critical in the heifer's diet. A slab of medium quality hay daily will help keep calves on feed by reducing the chances of digestive upsets. Hay is your insurance measure when feeding cattle. At the first sign of any digestive problems, increase hay while reducing concentrate. Once the problem is corrected, gradually decrease hay while increasing concentrate, but do not eliminate all hay. Eliminating all hay greatly increases the likelihood of nutritional ailments like bloat. Hay should be free of mold, dust and bad odors.
- c. The importance of water can never be stressed enough. Should be clean, fresh, cool and free choice.

## B. Facilities

- a. Shelter-Barns/pens do not have to be elaborate. They should be functional for all who use them. Remember animal "chores" should be easy. If tending to the animals is challenging it is a young person's tendency to not put forth as much energy and thus not spend enough time in the barn and working with the animal.
- b. Pens should be adequate in size. They should be large enough for the size and amount of cattle it will contain. During the day time hours many feeders pen their cattle up in the shade and under fans and/or misters. At night they can be turned out in small lots for exercise and movement. Placing a round bale of hay in lots at night is a good way to feed hay.

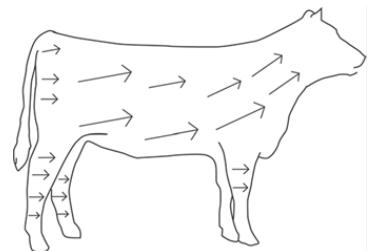
## C. Health

- a. **Disease Prevention-** It is important that cattle be vaccinated against clostridial (blackleg) and respiratory (pneumonia) diseases. Blackleg (7-way) vaccine-Clostridial vaccinations should have been completed before weaning. If not or not sure, vaccinate at the time of purchase, followed by a booster 2-3 weeks later and another booster 6-8 months later. Most illnesses are respiratory related. Consult with your veterinarian for advice on how to treat any illnesses that come up. Signs of illness may include: runny nose, loss of appetite or lethargic.

- b. **Metabolic Disorders**- Poor nutrition and feeding management can cause metabolic health problems.
  - i. Bloat occurs when gas accumulates and the animal can't belch it out. Bloat is visible on the upper left side behind the ribs and in front of the hip bone. To treat minor bloat, walk calves uphill if possible, drench with mineral oil, or pass a stomach tube through the esophagus. A severely bloated animal may die a few minutes after it falls. The best preventative measure is to avoid feeds that have a lot of dust, too much molasses, very high protein forage (alfalfa or excellent grass).
  - ii. Scouring of any kind leads to dehydration and electrolytes could be needed. Bloody scours may be caused by internal parasites, bacterial infections or coccidiosis and should be treated with appropriate medication.
- c. **Other Health Problems**- **Warts** are caused by a virus; Treat with a vaccine or cut it off and dice up and feed back to the animal to create a self-immunity. **Ringworm** is caused by a fungus and can be spread easily; apply iodine, bleach, DMSO or ivermectin. **Foot Rot** is caused by a bacteria; It is associated with swelling between the toes that progress to total swelling of the lower leg and causes lameness. Administer sulfa boluses and/or give injection labeled for foot rot. **Internal parasites**- Deworm calves upon arrival, in 21 days, and every 100 days. **Lice**- most abundant during winter and summer months. Apply insecticide in late winter and early spring months and a second application 14 days later to kill newly hatched lice. **Protection from insects**- fly sprays, fly traps and stick tapes.

#### D. Daily Hair Care

- a. Brushing, especially in summer helps promote hair growth. Wash weekly with a mild soap and rinse thoroughly. Rinsing often, daily if possible promotes new hair growth and helps train the hair. Begin by blowing all the dirt and debris out with a blower. After washing or rinsing, brush all of the hair downward removing all curls. Make a part down the top from shoulder to tail head, then brush in the angles shown in the illustration. Blow the animals hair in the same direction that the animal was brushed, keeping all the hair laying in the same direction will make your animal look smoother and is the key. If you do make a line or curl with the blower, simply brush the area down and then forward and blow again. When the animal is dry, mist with show sheen and comb and blow in. Use an oil product, pink oil or Revive, once a week to keep the hair from drying out. If the hair is blown consistently it will begin to train and will become easier to manage.



## E. Showmanship

- a. As with grooming, the more a youngster has practiced showing the animal at home, the better the animal will act in the show ring. The animal should be trained to stand in a rear view as well as profile view and practice leading and turning circles that they will have to do in the show ring. Both steer and kid will most likely be frustrated the first few times of practice, but start with small expectations and progress with more work. It is sometimes helpful to use a show halter and do not practice right before feeding time so they will not be as anxious. Practice walking the animal into the profile position which is most natural for the calf.

## F. General Information

- a. **Registration Papers:** Always check the exhibitor's handbook for the show you are attending to be aware of registration deadlines. Major livestock shows registration deadline is November 1st. All shows require you to have the original registration papers with you when you check-in, except for calf scramble participants and in that case the show will return to you a copy of your papers with an official stamp.
- b. **Health Papers:** Be sure to check the exhibitor's handbook for each show to know health requirements. They may be different from show to show and are different for various ages of heifers. Consult with your veterinarian for any testing that may need to be done ahead of time. Some tests may need to be sent off for results and some may take days for the results. For example a TB test must be read three days after it is given which requires another trip to the vet. Also check how current health papers need to be for each show. It is possible that if you go to several shows that your health papers may expire and new ones including new tests may need to be done. When you get your health papers from the vet, double check them before you leave to make sure they are correct.
- c. **Breeding:** This can be a whole other topic, but know that it is recommended that heifers calve at two years of age. Plan appropriately to have your heifer bred so that she will calve at or close to two years of age or it may hurt you in the show ring and delays profits for the exhibitor the longer it takes for the heifer to calve. Breed to a low birth weight bull. Consult your breeder or County Extension Agent for advice.
- d. **Registration Tattoo:** Double check tattoos before you leave home to make sure they are readable. There should be a breeder's prefix and identification number that includes year letter code. This information can be found on the registration certificate.
- e. **Brucellosis Vaccination/Tattoo:** All heifers must be vaccinated for brucellosis (Bang's) before 1 year of age. If you purchase a heifer the breeder should have this completed but it is a good idea to check. They will all have a tattoo in the right ear that will be RV\_. In the blank will be a number that corresponds with the year of vaccination and the V will have a shield around it. Some also put an orange metal tag in the ear however others do not especially in show cattle because of the tendency of infection.

# **MAJOR STOCK SHOW SCHEDULES FOR 2013**

## **Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo**

- Stock Show Website: <http://www.fwssr.com/>
- Junior Heifer Show (January 24–February 28)
- Entry Deadline: November 15, 2012

## **San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo**

- Stock Show Website: [http://www.sarodeo.com/livestock\\_show/](http://www.sarodeo.com/livestock_show/)
- Junior Heifer Show (February 11–15)
- Entry Deadline: December 1, 2012

## **San Angelo Stock Show**

- Stock Show Website: <http://www.sanangelorodeo.com/livestock.php>
- Junior Heifer Show – February 9–10 (Angus, Brangus, Chianina, Hereford, Limousin, Maine, Maine-Tainer, Red Angus, Shorthorn, Simmental, Simbrah)
- Entry Deadline: December 1, 2012

## **Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo**

- Stock Show Website: <http://www.rodeohouston.com/access/livestock/index.aspx>
- Junior Heifer Show (March 7–10)
- Entry Deadline: December 1, 2012

## **Star of Texas Fair and Rodeo (Austin)**

- Stock Show Website: [http://www.rodeoaustin.com/events\\_detail.aspx?id=16](http://www.rodeoaustin.com/events_detail.aspx?id=16)
- Junior Heifer Show – March 21–22
- Entry Deadline: December 1, 2012

## **Activities within the Project**

- Stock Shows (Local, Area, County, Majors)
- Livestock Judging
- Beef Quiz Bowl
- Quality Counts
- Record Book
- Youth Beef 706 course
- Livestock Ambassador
- Breed Association membership