



Dairy Showmanship

The objective of dairy cattle showmanship is to demonstrate your knowledge on your animal and the dairy industry, as well as your ability to work with your animal to showcase it in the most desirable way by highlighting strengths and correcting weaknesses of the animal. You will be expected to keep yourself and your animal clean and well-groomed at all times while remaining professional in the ring at all times. Be sure to work with a member enrolled in the dairy project and their animal to learn all you can and become comfortable working with a large animal. Dairy showmanship is about working the ring with your animal to the best of your ability while also having fun!

Handling Dairy Cattle

Dairy cattle are walked clockwise around the ring. Stand on the left side of your animal, holding the halter in your left hand, keeping your fingers out of the ring of the halter. Hold the lead strap so it does not dangle in a comfortable way that is not looped too loosely or tightly in your left or right hand. If your animal has excess throat, use your right hand to pull throat. Enter the ring walking forward in a quick fashion until all animals have entered the ring. Once all animals have entered the ring, face your animal and begin to walk backwards at a natural pace. Never sidestep. Hold your animal's head at a comfortable height that gives the most appealing profile. Keep circling the ring with animals head to tail and watch the judge for directions. If the judge approaches you, stop and pose your animal. Be sure to be aware of your animal while keeping eye contact with the judge at all times. When directed by the judge, pull your animal into the side-by-side lineup facing forward, walking quickly. Once you approach the lineup, pull in facing your animal and pose your animal when you have stopped your animal's shoulder at the shoulder of the animal next to you. Continue to watch the judge, always making eye contact. Remember to remain calm, collected, confident, and smile!

Posing Dairy Cattle

Heifers

When stopped in the ring, always be sure to pose your animal to emphasize the positive qualities it possesses. Pose your heifer so the rear leg closest to the judge is back further than the other rear leg with the front legs evenly square under her. When pulling into the lineup, heifers should have their front legs lined up evenly beneath them with their rear legs in a staggered, balanced position so the heifer is not scrunched up or stretched out. If you are the first person pulled into line, stagger the leg on the side of the leadsperson slightly further behind the other rear leg at an appropriate width as if the heifer is mid-step. If you are the last person in the lineup, switch the staging of the leg so the rear leg opposite the leadsperson is slightly further back. Hold your heifers head up while keeping her topline straight. Once your heifer is set up in an attractive position, do not move her. When the judge steps in front of your animal, step to the side while facing forward to allow the judge to evaluate your heifer.

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

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeffrey W. Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.



For additional information, visit www.canr.msu.edu/outreach

Cows

Cows following similar guidelines, with minor differences. When positioning your cow, you must move your cow's rear legs to be staged with the leg closest to the judge slightly forward, exposing her udder for evaluation. Otherwise follow all other guidelines outlined in the heifer section.

Showmanship Questions and Answers

Questions:

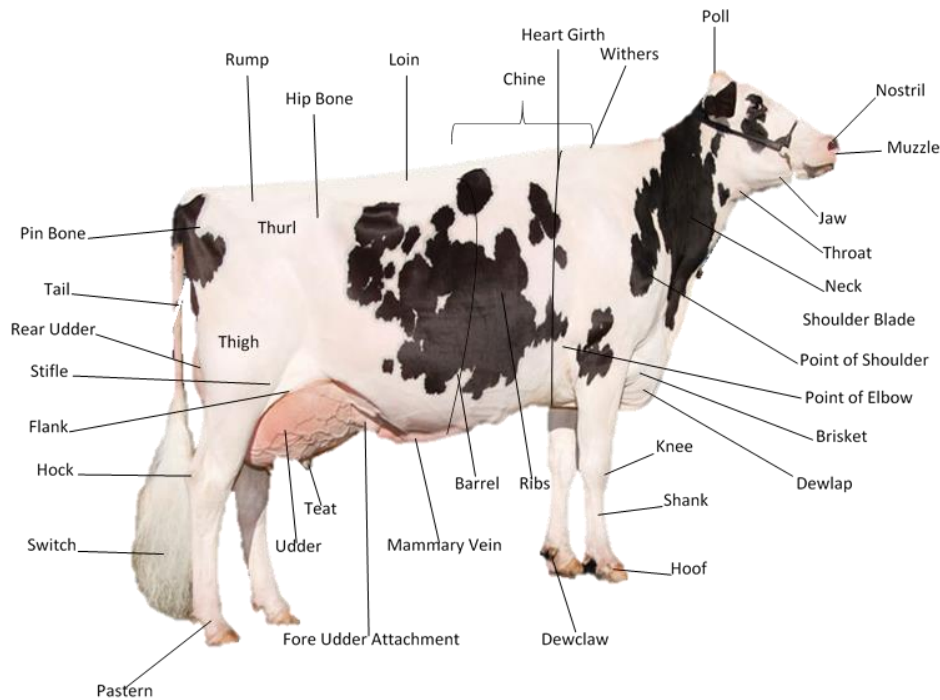
1. What is ruminating?
2. How many compartments are found in the stomach of a cow?
3. What is the length of gestation of a cow?
4. What is freshening?
5. What breed of dairy cow is this?
6. What percent fat is whole milk?

Answers:

1. Chewing the cud.
2. Four. They are the rumen, reticulum,

omasum and the abomasum.

3. When the cow has calf it freshens. This means it will give milk.
4. 280 days
5. Varies, but there are seven main breeds, the most common of which is Holstein. Holsteins are black and white and make up 90% of milking cows in the U.S. Other breeds include Red and White, Brown Swiss, Jersey, Ayrshire, Guernsey, and Milking Shorthorn.
6. About 3.5%, but it varies by breed. A 1200 lb steer will eat about 25 lbs of food per day.



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