

# Leading to Win



Showmanship



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Note: *he* is interchangeable with *she* throughout this publication.

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Holstein Canada remains a strong supporter of youth and young adult programs and activities. It is pleased to provide this relevant resource material to enhance showmanship skills throughout Canada and around the world.

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# Showmanship ... Leading to Win

Like most competitors, you'd like to win in the show ring. Key in showmanship is showing your animal to its best advantage with natural ease and without extreme effort.

Showmanship is a complete package of little things done right, while correcting faults as best as possible.

Showmanship is an art and talent.

It is about being relaxed and calm.

The time you spend showing is the culmination of efforts made long before you enter the ring.

Your calf has been halter broken and well trained through hours of repetitive handling. It is accustomed to other people touching it and remains calm during distractions.



This competitor shows the appropriate size of calf.



This heifer is too large for the competitor.

The calf has been washed thoroughly at home and again at the show so its hide is shiny and the white is clean.

The ears and ear tags are clean.

The feet are clean and well shaped.

The muzzle is wiped free of hay and beet pulp before entering the ring.

Your animal has been recently clipped for the show.

The calf has been filled well at the show, but not to excess. She should feel comfortable and settled in the ring.

An effort should be made to ensure that the calf is not in heat on achievement day. While this is detrimental to the competitor, it also disrupts the entire class. This should be managed at home before the show. However, the judge shouldn't be too critical as many calves are not owned by 4-H members. It may be impossible to have the calf right for all shows held close together.

As a keen competitor, you wear appropriate, clean-white clothes and hard-soled shoes.

You exhibit good posture.

You do not chew gum or tobacco.

Your hair is neat and tidy.

Foremost in showmanship is a good-fitting halter, which enhances the appearance of an animal's head.

A poor-fitting halter detracts from a desirable head.

With a properly-fitted halter, your hand or part of the hand is under the chain, but fingers are not through the ring.

Approximately three loops (not a figure 8) in a short lead-strap prove manageable in one hand. This prevents the loop at the top of the 8 from being in the animal's eye. Also, you can easily reach back and set your animal's tailhead, and then regain the loop.



With this properly-fitted halter, the hand is under the chain, but not through the ring. Approximately three loops in a short lead-strap are manageable.



This halter is held correctly.



This shows a poor-fitting halter, which is also held incorrectly. The loops in the lead-strap are held in a figure 8 shape. The loop at the top of the 8 is in the calf's eye.



The lead-strap is wrapped in a tight loop; it may even be taped together. This does not display the accepted use of the lead-strap.



This competitor has the hand on the point of the calf's shoulder to steady it.



This competitor holds the calf's throat at the turn of the jaw, which gives a more dairy appearance to the animal. However, this is done only after all other faults have been corrected.

Walking into the ring, walk briskly using your left hand to lead the calf. You walk fluidly in unison with your well-trained animal.

If holding the throat gives a more dairy appearance to the animal, it should be held when entering the ring. Hold the throat at the turn of the jaw. However, if the calf doesn't need the throat held, don't do it.

If you are unlucky and have a calf with a bad disposition, you will receive credit if you get it under control and settled down during the class.

In showmanship classes, when the last calf is in the ring, turn around and start showing your calf.

The left hand should always be used to lead the calf—never the right hand unless an injury or accident prevents this.



Competitors walk forward into the ring.



Moving around the ring, there is good spacing between calves.

Ensure approximately five feet is between you and the animal ahead.

Also, allow approximately five feet between you and the ring boards, so both you and the judge can maneuver easily. This allows the judge to view your animal from both sides.



## Moving out of line and getting too far into the ring is a serious fault.



Avoid unacceptable actions that detract from showmanship.

- 1) walking backward slowly into the ring
- 2) sidestepping
- 3) displaying a tense behaviour; your calf can feel a tense hand on the halter
- 4) projecting a no-care attitude
- 5) showing with a long, stiff arm
- 6) keeping your elbow up
- 7) crouching
- 8) positioning yourself too far ahead of the calf
- 9) holding the calf improperly with the hand and lead-strap up in the air
- 10) holding the calf's head too high
- 11) twisting the calf's head
- 12) tucking the lead-strap through the exhibitor's belt loop
- 13) having loops of lead-strap taped together
- 14) carrying a cell phone in a pocket or on the belt



This competitor is grandstanding by moving out of line and closer into the ring toward the judge.

When the judge is in the middle of the ring and you are asked to stop, set up your calf with faults minimized, as quickly as possible. Straighten the topline, set the tail between the pins, correct feet placement and, pinch the loin or other applicable spot, if necessary—do whatever it takes to make the animal look its very best.

Then, if holding the throat gives a more dairy appearance to the animal, it should be held whenever the judge is looking. The exception is when the judge is observing the animal on the left or competitor's side. However, **correcting animal faults or maintaining animal control should not be compromised for the sake of holding the throat.** And, if an animal doesn't need the throat held, leave your right hand on its point of shoulder for control.

If the animal steps out of balance or is not straight in line, place the right hand on the point of shoulder to steady and control it. Reposition the feet, if needed.



Prior to the show, ask your parents or an advisor if and where the topline on your calf needs pinching. If it's the loin, know where it is located on the animal. In attempting to straighten the topline, many competitors pinch an area too far forward or too far back.

This competitor pinches the calf's topline in the correct location. For this animal, it is the loin that requires attention.



The throat is being held by this competitor, which gives a more dairy appearance to the animal. This should be done only after all animal faults have been corrected.



The throat is not being held.



This calf shows good head carriage.

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Remember one good or bad look at an animal can change a judge's view or opinion in a second.

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Occasionally, a calf will sag through its front end, especially behind the shoulders. Use your hard-soled shoes to gently touch the calf's front foot so it slightly raises it and replaces it underneath its body. Just by adjusting the calf's weight will tighten up the entire front end.

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The competitor who should win is the one that an owner would hire to show his animals in conformation classes.

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Be mindful that the judge observes and assesses a number of things during your individual look:

- correct spacing (five feet, approximately) between your calf and the one ahead
- staying to outside of ring (five feet, approximately). While you do not want to *bug* the outside of the ring, you do not want to crowd in closer to the judge.
- clean and neat white attire with hard-soled shoes
- confidence
- on the move, good positioning in relation to the calf, allowing the flexibility to start and stop; basically, anything can be done from this position
- a properly-fitted halter with the hand or part of the hand under the chain, but fingers not through the ring. Approximately, three loops in a short lead-strap is manageable.
- a well-presented calf with no hay or straw underneath its belly or in its mouth
- the calf handling well
- a calf with the appropriate head carriage, based on the physical characteristics of the calf
- you and the calf moving in unison
- the calf's head tipped slightly when the hide is felt
- the calf set up quickly when stopped
- the calf's head straightened when the judge moves to the rear
- from behind, the calf straight from poll to tailhead



When the judge motions for a stop to walk around the calf, ideally lead it into an attractive, standing position.

As the judge moves around your animal, go ahead one short step. This gives the appearance of a long-bodied calf. A calf's hind feet should be four to eight inches apart. Competitors should know the best procedure to accomplish this.

The first competitor is the ideal distance from the outside of the ring. The second competitor stands too close to the boards for the judge to move around the calf to view it from the other side.



When the judge first approaches the competitor, the calf's head should be tipped slightly toward the judge.



When the judge nears the calf, the competitor puts his hand on the calf's shoulder to steady it.





The competitor stands in the ideal position with the calf's feet placed correctly. The calf's head is turned slightly toward the judge as he handles the hide.



The competitor has ensured that the calf's spine is straight—nose to tail. The competitor also pinches the loin (because this calf requires this adjustment) when the judge observes the calf from the rear.



The competitor allows the judge to get a full-end view of the calf.

Give the judge a front-end view of your calf when he walks around the front of the calf.

When the judge returns to the other side, or to the centre of the ring, move ahead another short step. This should be done smoothly, and not be over-exaggerated.

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**Never touch the rear feet**

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If asked to move ahead by the judge, pass briskly on the inside of the ring.

Respond promptly, if motioned to move ahead when circling the ring. Move up quickly on the inside. An animal of manageable size is quite often easier to handle, especially in this situation.

When pulled into line from the outside of the ring, walk smartly the same way as you entered the ring.

Upon reaching the lineup, turn, and lead the calf into place, setting it up to advantage. Adjustments are made to the loin, crops, and tail setting, as necessary. Use the halter to move the animal ahead or back, if rear feet require repositioning.

Maintain a uniform lineup with the front feet of the animals in line.

Keep your animal alert, and be aware of the judge's location at all times.

The first calf in the lineup should have its left (outside) hind leg back. The last calf should have its right (outside) hind leg back.

For all other placings, the feet should be solidly positioned to show the calf's least amount of faults and to display it to its very best advantage.



The competitor's hand is on the calf's shoulder. The left (outside) hind leg is back. The competitor lightly uses her own foot to correct the front feet of the calf.



The positioning of the feet on the first and last calves is correct. All other calves in line have their feet placed solidly under their bodies, displaying them to best advantage.

As the judge moves behind and down a lineup, keep your animal straight with good spacing between it and others.

The competitor should place the right hand on the point of shoulder to steady the calf.



The judge is behind the lineup. The competitor, with his hand on the animal's shoulder, does not need to hold the throat the entire time. However, the first place may want to hold the throat, if needed, as this animal is in full view of spectators.



All calves are standing solidly on their feet. There is good spacing between calves.

Correcting animal faults or maintaining animal control should never be compromised for the sake of holding the throat. And, if an animal doesn't need the throat held, leave your right hand on its point of shoulder for control.

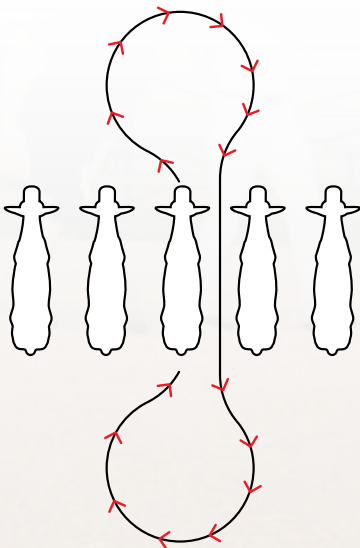
The practice of moving calves up or down the line is not recommended in showmanship classes unless the competitors are very close. However, if asked or you must correct how your animal is standing, the following procedure is advised.

Take the halter in the left hand, walk forward, continue clockwise around the calf, and back through the hole.

Go around the calf and, upon reaching the lineup, turn and walk backward as you lead it into position.

Calves in line should move to make room for your animal.

An alternate, permissible method of changing position, if easily managed, is backing your animal out of line. This should be practised at home.



If you are first or last and your calf is out of line, lead the calf forward giving yourself enough room to circle before turning and walking backward to lead your animal into its original position.

If asked by the judge to move out of line at the top of the class so he can get a better look at the animal, lead the calf forward. When coming into view of the judge, or asked to stop, turn and walk backward while the judge is looking, until he indicates for you to move on.



If the judge desires a better look at the top animals in a lineup, he has the option of pulling out a few for closer inspection. Moving counter-clockwise off the top of the class, the competitors walk backward to display their calves to the judge.



After the judge has viewed the top animals and motioned for competitors to return to the lineup, competitors turn and walk forward back into line.

You will be very seriously discriminated against if you move excessively in and out of line without instruction from the judge.

**Don't**

- continuously circle with your animal without instruction from the judge
- leave big spaces in the lineup
- crowd animals too tightly side by side

When the judge is moving down the front of the lineup, stand to the side where, with minimal movement, you can observe the judge easily. This allows the judge to view the front end of your animal.

The calf's head slightly follows the judge.

After the judge has moved by and has observed the front end of your animal, you should hold the throat, if needed. If the judge takes one last look back down the lineup, he expects to see a nice lineup of heads and necks.



Each competitor places his right hand on the calf's shoulder as the judge is about to walk down the front of the lineup. Competitors move fluidly to the side to give the judge a front-end view of the animal. The calf's nose slightly follows the judge.

After the judge motions for you to circle from a lineup, walk ahead with the lead-shank in the left hand until the judge focuses attention back to the moving animals. Then turn and walk backward.

When the judge indicates for you to move into line, move briskly into the designated spot.

You could be requested to lead counter-clockwise off the top of the line in conformation or showmanship classes. If this happens, walk backward with the left hand holding the halter. The right hand should be used to hold the throat (if needed) or placed on the point of shoulder to steady the calf.

When motioned, turn forward and walk quickly back to line.

Leave at least five feet between your calf and the calf ahead when you are asked to move from one lineup to another second lineup ahead.

Turn around and walk backward into line so the judge can see your animal, once the previous animal is in line.



Walking forward, competitors lead their calves out of line.

It is left to the discretion of the judge whether he wants top championship competitors to switch calves—this would only be done in very close situations and in head-to-tail positions.

*Good showmanship isn't tough. It's actually quite easy if you follow these pointers.*

*Remember—the most important thing is to remain relaxed. Also, know your heifer's faults and how to correct them before coming into the ring.*

*Never presume the outcome if involved in a championship class. The judge has the option to change placings in showmanship.*

*A contestant should not be upset if an animal, causing a problem, is asked to stand to the side or leave the ring. This is done for the safety of other competitors and calves.*

*Have fun.*

*Don't let up until you've left the ring. For the judge and spectators, it's very disheartening to see competitors let themselves and their animals fall apart after final placement.*



Thanks to keen competitors (l-r) Shea O'Neill, Cindy Hill, Davina MacKay, Ellen Hargreaves, Becky Quickfall, and Matt Van Osch

# Showmanship Discriminations

## Slight

### Competitor

- has too long or too short a lead-strap
- has halter improperly looped
- uses a tie or tape to keep lead-strap rolled
- wears inappropriate footwear with pants tucked in boots
- is inappropriately dressed
- has inappropriate size of calf for competitor

### Calf

- head not turned slightly when hide felt
- is not kept alert
- older heifer is in heat

## Moderate

### Competitor

- has poorly-fitted halter
- holds halter incorrectly
- not in correct position to calf
- spends too much time looking at calf
- concentrates too much on watching judge
- doesn't see or obey signals
- leaves insufficient spacing between calves on move
- allows insufficient spacing between calves in line
- crowds in line
- has stiff, outstretched arm
- sidesteps when leading calf
- is uptight and not relaxed
- exhibits poor posture

### Calf

- feet not trimmed
- feet not reversed
- throat not held, if required
- switch not brushed and fluffed
- muzzle is not wiped clean
- is not straight, head-to-tail

## Serious

### Competitor

- does not display calf to best advantage
- is late for class
- chews gum or tobacco
- carries or talks on a cell phone
- displays poor sportsmanship
- walks slowly backward into ring
- projects lack of interest
- has fingers in ring of halter
- has hand and lead-strap above calf's head
- has arm and elbow up
- crouches
- does not walk quickly into line
- does not allow sufficient space for animal changing position
- uses own feet to reposition calf's rear feet
- walks wrong way around calf
- fusses with calf to extreme
- moves excessively in line
- is too close to outside of ring
- is **too far into ring**

### Calf

- is not well washed, including ears, tags, and feet
- not trained
- not clipped recently
- nose in air
- rear feet not positioned correctly
- has hay/straw on stomach or in its mouth

# Attributes of Top Competitors

## Competitors:

- appear relaxed—not robotic-like
- are competitive, but not overconfident
- remain calm and cool, regardless of situation
- possess good posture, indicating they are confident in their skills
- know the faults of animals they show and have the ability to correct them
- choose the appropriate-size animal to complement their size
- select a halter that fits the animal and that they are comfortable using
- move neither too slow or too fast as they don't want to create any distraction
- keep the animal moving in the ring as much as possible—rather than standing. Most cattle look better in motion.
- look professional in appearance and clothing

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Showmanship is a complete package—the combination of a lot of little things. Good competitors use cow sense and common sense.

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#6



After winning the class, this professional-looking exhibitor turns and walks forward at a good pace out of the ring. All the while, the animal continues to look its best.

# Judges Share Secrets for Success

## Competitors:

- remain professional at all times, regardless of the situation, in and out of the ring. They respect other peers, participants, spectators, and judges.
- are on time for every class
- continually follow the judge's requests and directions
- act relaxed and confident, but look like they want to win
- respect the ring steward, as well as ring custodians
- work the ring well and allow adequate spacing between animals to show an individual animal to its best advantage
- ideally, spend as much time as possible walking the animal; it always looks better on the move
- ensure the animal looks comfortable when standing, with its feet solidly underneath its body
- position the animal so the judge can see it at all times
- walk the animal into the ideal position in line. After adjusting the topline, front feet, etc., they don't fidget with it unless it moves and needs repositioning.
- refrain from talking to the judge, unless asked a specific question. However, a 4-H member should know the name, age, and sire of his heifer.
- never give up! Because someone is always watching, they show their animals to their best advantage for the entire time in the ring.
- always make time for photography requests; world-wide exposure is great for everyone



Don't become discouraged if you are not pulled first. Every moment is a second chance to turn it all around.



This competitor firmly holds his animal with the left hand. He uses his right hand to correct the animal's faults, to steady it, and to ensure that his exhibit looks its very best at all times for the judge.



These mature competitors have studied their entries before entering the ring and have identified what weaknesses need protecting. If needed, they know exactly where to pinch topline. They can also discern when to stop fidgeting with their exhibit and be ready for the judge's inspection.



Look natural and remain relaxed—don't move like a robot!



# The Ideal Showmanship Judge

## You are judging showmanship—not conformation

The Canadian showmanship judge:

- has viewed and digested the contents of the Showmanship ... Leading to Win manual and DVD prior to each showmanship judging assignment (competitors and parents have also studied the teaching guidelines carefully)
- has agreed to follow all showmanship guidelines as presented in the manual and DVD. If a judge does not agree with any guidelines, he is requested to decline the showmanship invitation as competitors and parents follow them closely.
- is cautious about accepting showmanship duties that include close family members and friends. A judge should always be viewed as unbiased.
- prepares mentally for showmanship—the same as for conformation. Competitors take showmanship very seriously.
- is well rested and has a clear mind

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Competitors should be placed on their abilities, not mistakes. If a competitor can recover from a minor mistake, he shouldn't be penalized too heavily.

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- has the cell phone number of a contact person at the show in case of travel or other problems. For the entire show, the judge turns off all electronic devices and does not take or make calls between classes.
- arrives at the show at least 30 minutes prior to starting time.
- discusses with show management prior to the show 1) total number of entries, 2) total number of showmanship classes, 3) allocated time and conclusion time for all showmanship classes, and 4) maximum number of animals to return from each heat so final (championship) group is not too large to manage effectively

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Showmanship judges should encourage show committees not to overload classes. There should be sufficient room for competitors, calves, and the judge to move easily.

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- only uses ring steward to 1) ensure competitors get into the class, 2) indicate where to start lineups, and 3) where competitors should exit ring
- never consults with the ring steward about placings
- displays confidence and professionalism, without arrogance
- places competitors as they perform at the time of showing, discounting previous performance. Competitors may perform differently from show to show.
- dresses professionally—no blue jeans. Men wear a suit, or sports jacket/pants, with tie. Women wear a suit, or dress pants and jacket/vest. Judges do not chew gum or tobacco in the ring. Showmanship judges are professionals, which provide an opportunity for young people to look up to in the dairy business.
- uses **competitor** to describe each contestant, whether male or female. However, **showperson** or **leadsperson** can be used for variety.

#11

The showmanship judge selects competitors who have the natural ability to show an animal. Keen competitors must be identified and placed on top, rather than those just going through the motions.



The judge gives clear direction to competitors.

- keeps calves moving around the ring as much as possible, rather than having them stand. Most cattle look better in motion.
  - wants competitors to keep circle on outside and stay straight in lineups
  - never judges a competitor in a corner. He allows the competitor to work his way out of the situation without the judge's attention—then he is assessed.
  - never judges a competitor in front of the entrance or exit as the calf may want or attempt to leave the ring. This also applies to groups of animals that warrant further inspection.
- is not too critical of a competitor with a calf in heat as many calves are not owned by 4-Hers. It may be impossible for the calf to be right for all shows as four or five shows may be close together.
  - decides during the championship class whether to have top competitors switch calves. This would only be done in very close situations. It is recommended that calves be switched (maximum four) in a head-to-tail lineup, starting with the lowest-place animal. The ring steward holds the fourth-place animal, while the fourth competitor moves to take the third calf; the third competitor moves and takes the second calf; the second competitor moves and takes the first calf; the first competitor moves on the outside and circles behind to take the fourth calf from the ring steward. This allows each competitor to quickly analyze the animal he is going to lead.

#12

Before studying each individual competitor for showmanship abilities, the judge should quickly assess the calf to ascertain what traits the competitor should try to protect.

- is willing to give a second-place competitor a second chance to win in a championship class. While animals do not change, the second-place competitor may have corrected all faults indicated by the judge and actually excel over the first placer in the championship class. If this is the case, this competitor should win as long as good reasons can be given to support the placing. Remember that if you have given two or three reasons to the second competitor, you must also tell the top competitor how he can improve.
- *shakes* up the way he judges showmanship within the general guidelines. For example, rather than just looking at one competitor at a time doing the same routine (competitor leads calf up to judge, judge goes around calf, competitor moves foot, etc.), he lets two or three calves go by. The judge does not always want competitors to know what he's doing—keep competitors on their toes and make them think.
- visits the barn following the show to talk to exhibitors and parents

# Giving Good Reasons

Give reasons one-on-one to all competitors at smaller shows as everyone wants to learn and discover how to improve himself. These reasons must be positive and accurately explained. You should start at the bottom and make your way up the line to where you would give reasons over the microphone—usually first to sixth place. The first to sixth competitors will hear reasons for their placings over the microphone.

At larger shows, you may want to talk to the lower-placing competitors as a group. Then make your way up the line to where you will give reasons over the microphone. The first to sixth competitors will hear reasons for their placings over the microphone.

Taking the microphone, briefly stand behind the top six competitors to organize your thoughts before delivering your reasons. You should test the microphone ahead of the show.

Stand straight, but relaxed.

Be positive. Be accurate. Give reasons that reflect the class being judged.

Speak slowly, crisply, and confidently into the microphone so competitors, parents, grandparents, and spectators can absorb your reasons for placings.

Start your first set of reasons of the day with a cordial statement indicating your pleasure/honour to be invited to judge the show.

Use only descriptive terminology at the beginning or end of a set of reasons to generally describe the contestants, or the first-place competitor. For example, there are many great competitors in this class; the first three competitors caught my attention as soon as they entered the class.

Always start with the most important reasons as to why a competitor places over another. Use **comparative** terminology that compares one competitor to the next competitor.

The obvious points of difference should be your primary concern.

Do not get into the routine of using the same reasons and phrases for every class. All classes are different.

On close placings, grant an obvious advantage to a lower-placing competitor.

Recognize the competitors are the main attraction; do not grandstand.

Conclude the entire show with complimentary remarks about the quality of competitors, etc. Everyone involved with the show wants it to conclude on a positive note.



Before giving reasons on a showmanship class, this well-dressed judge briefly stands behind the top competitors to organize his thoughts.



This judge projects confidence; he stands straight, but relaxed. He speaks slowly and crisply into the microphone to ensure that everyone can absorb his reasons.



This judge uses comparative terminology to compare one competitor over another. Speaking positively and accurately, he grants an obvious advantage to a lower-placing competitor.



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