



Meadowlark District 4-H Bucket Calf Project

Purpose

1. To design a cattle project to fit the physical size and maturity level of youth being introduced into the cattle industry.
2. To teach proper health care and nutritional requirements of young cattle.
3. To care for and raise a calf without a mother either by bottle feeding or bucket feeding.

Guidelines

- a. Project is designed for youth 7-12 years old 4-H age.
- b. Calves must be born after Jan. 1 of current 4-H year.
- c. Calves must be weaned and at least 60 days old by fair.
- d. Bucket Calves will be only shown once in the bucket calf class. They may not be used for Showmanship in Beef classes.
- e. Only one calf per year per project participant.
- f. Calf may be either a beef or dairy breed and may be either bull, steer or heifer.
- g. Youth are responsible for maintaining the 4-H records for their Bucket Calf project.
- h. At the end of the fair, calves must be taken home.

Care & Management

- a. It is best to buy calves at the farm whenever possible. Calves from the sale barn may require extra care when you get them home due to stress from being moved to and from their original home, to barn, to their new home.
- b. Prices vary depending on demand, health, breed and location.
- c. Fresh water, proper food and adequate shelter are needed to care for a bucket calf.
- d. Provide a clean, dry place for the calf to lie down in.
- e. Proper ventilation is recommended without being drafty.
- f. Calves should be feed at least two equal feedings per day. Weak calves benefit from more frequent feeding of the same total amount.
- g. Calves can be weaned when they are 4 to 8 weeks of age. Wean calves when they are consuming 1.5 to 2 lbs of grain per day.
- h. Check weight gains to determine if calves are growing at the desired rate. Lack of condition or skinny calves indicate underfeeding or poor quality feed.
- i. If you think your calf is sick, contact your local veterinarian.

How to tell if your calf is sick:

1. Leaves some feed or quits eating entirely
2. Dull eyes, not alert, droopy ears
3. Diarrhea (scours)
4. Runny Nose
5. Dry Nose
6. Cough
7. Temperature
8. Swollen or puffy left side
9. Limping
10. Unusual skin conditions

Local Fair Requirements – MED-Seneca (Nemaha)

- a. Youth are responsible for the care of the animal. *Sand bedding is provided.*
- b. Youth must sign & abide by the **MED Code Ring of Ethics** (signed once in a 4-H career) and have it on file with the Extension Office by July 1st.
- c. Youth must sign and abide by the **MED Fair Code of Conduct** due July 1st each year.
- d. Youth are expected to help with fair set-up and clean-up.
- e. Calves must be pre-entered by July 1st of the current 4-H year.
- f. Show is divided based on 4-Hers age:
 1. 7-9 year olds; no show sticks, combs or brushes allowed in the ring during the show.
 2. 10-12 year olds; show sticks, combs and brushes are optional in the ring during the show.
- g. Bucket Calf show will be a no fit show. No adhesive, glue, painting or powder products.
- h. All youth will be conferenced judged. General knowledge of the care, feeding and management of their bucket calf will be asked of them.
- i. Youth are encouraged to identify their calf in some form such as tag, brand, etc. but is not required.

Important Dates & Information for Bucket Calf Project

Meadowlark District Web Page

<https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/4-h/>

Kansas 4-H Bucket Calf Project Page

<https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects/animals/beef.html>

Parent/Leader Manual

<https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/docs/4h/resources/kansas-bucketcalf-guide.pdf>