Ideas for Dairy Cow Learning Activities
Advanced Level

Need more ideas for your dairy cow project? There are hundreds of things you can do! You are being asked to complete **at least five** activities each year. Use this list, the 4-H *Dairy Cow Resource Handbook*, and your imagination, and then write your ideas in your *Dairy Cow Project and Record Book*. Have fun!

- Help a new 4-H member select an animal for his or her dairy cow project.

- List at least five ways in which mastitis can be prevented or controlled.

- Using a model or a live animal, demonstrate how to properly administer an intramammary infusion.

- Demonstrate to younger members how to use a cow-side test to detect mastitis.

- Make a chart listing the symptoms and at least one method of prevention for the following reproductive diseases: brucellosis, vibriosis, IBR, and leptospirosis.

- Keep a biweekly record of the body condition score of your cow throughout her lactation. Describe any changes that you observe.

- Describe the difference between environmental and contagious mastitis and name at least two types of bacteria that are causes of each.

- Demonstrate how to determine forage quality.

- Using a computer ration-balancing program, develop a ration for a lactating cow.

- Develop a ration for a dry cow.

- Identify the essential vitamins in a dairy cow ration and describe the function of each.

- Calculate how much energy (Mcal) your cow is receiving in her ration.

- Collect at least three different feeds that can be classified as "by-product" feeds. Determine the use for each in the ration as a source of protein, vitamins, minerals, energy, or water.

- Explain to younger members how to read a pedigree.

- Explain what an estrus synchronization program is and describe two types of estrous synchronization programs that may be used for cows.

- Using a model or a live animal, demonstrate how to artificially inseminate a cow.

- List at least three advantages of using artificial insemination vs. natural breeding.

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- Define the following terms: Federal Milk Marketing Order, Class 1 Milk, Grade A Milk and Grade B Milk.

- Keep a record of the milk prices you receive during the year. Make a graph of mil prices vs. time. Determine if milk price exhibits a seasonal pattern.

- Collect labels from two types of teat dips. Compare the labels and the effectiveness of the active ingredients (effectiveness of teat dips can be obtained from the National Mastitis Council).

- Develop a checklist that you can use to maintain milking equipment on your farm.

- Describe the steps that can be taken to ensure the quality of the milk produced for the consumer.

- Describe the following systems of dairying: confinement, management intensive grazing, and seasonal. Provide at least two advantages and disadvantages of each.

- Describe a management intensive grazing system for a herd of 30 cows of your favorite breed. Specify the number and approximate size of grazing paddocks, length of the grazing season, and recommend a rotational pattern for the paddocks.

- Hold a training session about dairy cow management for younger 4-H members.

- Develop a sample budge for maintaining a milking herd of cows.

- Explain why using management groups may be beneficial.

- Select a type of manure management system for a herd of 300 milking cows and tell why you selected that system.

- Describe the steps that can be taken to assure that your waste management techniques are environmentally sound.

- Explain the importance of environmental assurance to younger members.

- Prepare a skit demonstrating how to handle questions about dairy cow production from people who are not familiar with animal agriculture.

- Help a new 4-H member with a dairy cow project prepare an animal for show.

- Help younger members prepare for a dairy quiz or knowledge bowl.

- Judge a class of four dairy cows and give oral reasons (explain your placings).

- Help teach younger members to judge.

- Help a new member update his or her records.

- Demonstrate how to groom a dairy cow for show.

- Participate in a dairy judging contest.

- Send a thank you not to award donors and anyone who helped with your project (advisors, older members, parents, etc.).