

Ideas for Dairy Cow Learning Activities

Beginning 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!

- Locate and identify the parts of a dairy cow.
- Create a poster with pictures of at least three breeds of dairy cattle. Present the poster to your club and tell about two characteristics of each breed.
- Attend a dairy show and watch the evaluation of the animals. Listen to the judge's comments on placings.
- Explain some characteristics to look for when selecting a dairy cow for a 4-H project.
- Using a picture or diagram, describe the nutrient content of milk.
- Visit a grocery store to find and make a list of five nondairy food products that are considered by-products of dairy cows.
- Demonstrate that you can identify the different parts of the ruminant digestive system.
- Name the six classes of nutrients.
- Collect five samples of feed ingredients commonly fed to dairy cows and tell the major use each serves in the ration as a source of protein, vitamins, minerals, energy, or water.
- Using a feed tag from a feed that you fed your cow, demonstrate that you can identify the various parts of the feed tag.
- Describe what a sick cow might look like.
- Make a chart describing the symptoms associated with each of the following diseases: milk fever, acidosis, bloat, and hardware disease.
- Define the term mastitis.
- Describe the symptoms associated with mastitis.
- Define the following terms related to dairy cattle genetics: dam, sire and inheritance.
- Draw a family tree for your cow. Identify the dam, sire, granddams, grandsires, and any offspring.



- Demonstrate that you can identify the parts of the mammary gland.
- Define the following terms: dry cow, lactation, and udder.
- List at least two types of records that a dairy producer should keep and for each one, give two reasons why the record is important. Make a rope halter for your cow.
- Wash your cow.
- Observe the birth of a calf. Describe the behavior of the calf and the dam following birth.
- Describe or demonstrate three ways you could identify your project animal.
- Teach your cow to lead.
- Make a chart that lists the top 15 dairy producing states in terms of total milk production.
- Complete the Project Picture pages in the Quality Assurance section of this book.
- Identify all parts of the Medication Insert in the Quality Assurance section of this book.
- Complete the Lactation Curve Activity in the Animal Records section of this book.
- Exhibit your cow at the county fair.
- Send a thank you note to award donors and anyone who helped you with your project (advisors, older members, parents, etc.).