Ideas for Dairy Heifer Learning Activities

Beginner Level

Need more ideas for your dairy heifer 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 Heifer Resource Handbook, and your imagination, and then write your ideas in your Dairy Heifer 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 heifer for a 4-H project.
- Describe the nutrient content of milk.
- Define pasteurization, and tell why milk is pasteurized.
- Visit a grocery store to find and make a list of five dairy products. Describe how these different products are packaged and stored.
- Describe what a sick calf might look like.
- Make a chart describing the symptoms associated with each of the following diseases: navel ill, scours, and pneumonia.
- Define the term ruminant and give at least three examples of animals that are classified as ruminants.
- Demonstrate how to mix milk replacer properly.
- Name the six classes of nutrients.
- Compare colostrum milk and milk produced by a cow two weeks and calving. Describe how the two types of milk are different.
- Collect five samples of feed ingredients commonly fed to dairy heifers. Tell the major use each serves in the ration as a source of protein, vitamins, minerals, energy, or water.
- Teach a baby calf to drink from a bucket.
- Using a feed tag from a feed you fed your heifer, demonstrate that you can identify the various parts of the feed tag.
- Define the following terms related to dairy cattle genetics: dam, sire, and inheritance.
• Draw a family tree for your heifer. Identify the dam, sire, granddams, and grandsires.
• Assist with the care of a newborn calf (ex. dipping, the navel, feeding colostrum).
• Observe the birth of a calf. Describe the behavior of the calf and the dam following birth.
• Describe or demonstrate three ways you can identify your project animal.
• Make a rope halter for a calf.
• Teach your heifer to lead.
• Wash your heifer.
• Complete the Growth Record in the Animal Records section of this book.
• Exhibit your heifer 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.).