

Ideas for Dairy Cow Learning Activities

Intermediate 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 member learn to identify and spell 15 to 20 parts of a dairy cow.
- Describe how the six breeds of dairy cattle differ in size, milk production, and milk composition. Pick your favorite breed and tell about that breed's history.
- Demonstrate that you can complete a treatment record.
- List two symptoms and one treatment for each of the following disorders: mastitis, ketosis, milk fever, displaced abomasum, and hardware disease.
- Describe the differences between clinical and subclinical mastitis. For each type, give at least one method of detection.
- Describe the symptoms of Johne's Disease and hairy foot warts, and list one method of prevention for each.
- Develop a vaccination program for your cow during her production life. Compare your program with the one recommended by your veterinarian, and decide if you need to make any changes to your program.
- Using a diagram, trace the flow of a bite of hay through the digestive tract of a cow.
- Define what the following acronyms stand for: ADF, NDF, CP, and NE.
- Explain why high quality forages are important in dairy cow rations.
- Demonstrate to younger members how to read a feed tag.
- Using a diagram, locate and identify the parts of the female reproductive system.
- Observe your cow for heats and keep a daily record of activity throughout your project. Record any attempts to breed your cow.
- Demonstrate to younger members how to prepare a cow's udder for milking.
- Using a diagram, trace the flow of a drop of milk from synthesis in the epithelial cells to harvest during milking.
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- Using a diagram, locate and identify the parts of male reproductive system.
- Observe your cow for heats and keep a daily record of activity throughout your project. Record any attempts to breed your cow.
- Demonstrate to younger members how to prepare a cow's udder for milking.
- Using a diagram, trace the flow of a drop of milk from synthesis in the epithelial cells to harvest during milking.
- Learn to identify the parts of the milking system, including shell, inflation, claw, milk hose, vacuum hose, and pulsator.
- Collect pictures of the following types of herd housing systems: tie-stall (or stanchion), freestall, and corrals.
- Help a new member update his or her project records.
- Participate in a dairy judging contest.
- Participate in a dairy quiz or knowledge bowl contest.
- Demonstrate to younger members how to exhibit a heifer for show.
- Complete the Project Picture pages 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 with your project (advisors, older members, parents, etc.).