

Ideas for Beef Learning Activities

Beginning Level

Need more ideas for your beef cattle project? There are hundreds of things you can do! This list is organized by topics that match the chapters in the 4-H *117R Beef Resource Handbook*. You are being asked to complete **at least five** activities each year. Use this list and your imagination, and then write your ideas in your Beef Project and Record Book. Have fun!

Selection

- Demonstrate that you can identify at least six beef cattle breeds and give at least two characteristics of each breed. If you are taking a dairy beef feeder, name dairy breeds.
- Study the breed history of your calf and give a report at your next club meeting.
- Demonstrate that you can identify each of the parts of the beef animal in the *4-H 117R Beef Resource Handbook*.
- Name and describe four common feet and leg structural problems.
- Describe five ideal characteristics to look for when selecting your animal.
- Evaluate your project animal and list its good points and weak points.
- Attend a cattle show and watch the judge evaluate the animals. Then listen to the judge's comments on why they were placed this way.
- Describe the terms "spring of rib" and "depth of rib" and explain why they are important to the growth of a calf.
- Complete the frame score record on one or more of your project animals in the records section of the *117 Beef Project and Record Book*.
- Participate in a judging contest.
- Attend a livestock judging clinic.

Management Practices

- Describe or demonstrate three ways you could identify your project animal.
- Demonstrate how to ear tag your animal and explain why ear tagging is important.
- Describe two methods you could use to measure your animal's weight.
- Describe how you would wean your calf.



- Visit a feeder calf producer and observe the way feeder calves are managed.
- Give a report to your project helper or 4-H club about what you observed.
- Visit a local beef cattle farm and observe the way the animals are managed. Give a report to your project helper or 4-H club about what you observed.
- Make a rope halter for a calf.
- Ask the advice of an experienced showman on how to break your calf to lead.
- Teach your calf to lead and to stand while tied.
- Attend a hoof-trimming demonstration.

Working Safely With Livestock

- Describe what your behavior should be like when working with your project animal.
- Describe what you can look for to know when your animal is agitated.
- Describe an animal's flight zone.
- Where is an animal's blind spot and why is it important to stay out of it?
- Give a talk on various pieces of equipment used with beef cattle to help ensure safety of you and the animal.

Health Maintenance

- Explain what a parasite is and name four that are common in cattle.
- Describe what a sick calf would look like.
- Describe "bloat" and what can be done to treat it.
- Observe how to vaccinate cattle.
- Study one of the diseases that affect cattle and report on it at a 4-H meeting.
- Name two ways to prevent internal parasites.
- Name two ways to prevent external parasites.
- Name two beef cattle diseases and briefly explain them.
- Observe how a calf is castrated.
- Observe various ways dehorning is done.
-

Reproduction and Genetics

- Fill out the breeding and calving record if your cow/heifer had a calf.
- Determine the % calf crop of your herd in the records section of your *117 Beef Project and Record Book*.
- Observe a heifer or cow in heat and record your observations.

- Assist in caring for a newborn calf. This may include applying iodine to the navel, making sure the calf drinks colostrum milk, identifying the calf with a tag or tattoo, giving any necessary shots, or other tasks.
- Assist a producer with weighing calves at weaning. Pick out those you think are the best for replacement heifers.
- Observe a farmer using artificial insemination.

Nutrition and Feeding

- Compare colostrum milk and milk produced by a cow two weeks after calving.
- Describe how the two types of milk are different.
- Describe the steps to take if your animal goes off feed.
- Observe and record your calf's daily eating habits.
- Explain why fresh, clean water is important to your animal and how much your animal can be expected to drink in one day.
- Name and spell three feedstuffs commonly grown in your area for beef cattle rations.
- Name and spell three feedstuffs commonly fed to feeder calves during weaning.
- Collect samples of 10 feed ingredients commonly fed to beef cattle and tell the major use each serves in the ration as a source of protein, vitamins, minerals, energy, or water.
- Collect samples of 10 feed ingredients and place them in the proper nutrient category: energy (fats and carbohydrates); water; protein; vitamins and minerals.
- Read a label from a commercially prepared feed and identify the various ingredients.
- Visit a local feed store and view the various feeds used for cattle.
- Develop a glossary of nutritional terms and their definitions. For example, include: water, energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, trace minerals, nutrients, ration, amino acids, and etc.

Carcass Evaluation

- Name 10 beef by-products.
- Describe yield grades.
- Demonstrate that you can identify and spell the names of each of the wholesale cuts of beef in the *4-H 117R Beef Resource Handbook*.
- Visit a local grocery store to find and make a list of 10 common cuts of beef.
- Describe "marbling" and how it affects the taste and quality of a meat cut.

Getting Ready for the Show

- Demonstrate how to set up the feet and legs of your animal for a show.
- Wash your calf and care for their hair coat.
- Demonstrate how to clip a steer for exhibition.
- Participate in a pre-fair beef show to gain experience in the show ring.
- Learn how to groom your animal by observing and learning from an experienced showman. Then demonstrate grooming methods at your 4-H club meeting.
- Collect a basic set of supplies needed to groom and show your animal.
- Ask someone to video tape you practicing your showmanship. Study the tape and work with a helper to find ways to improve your showing skills.

Marketing

- Describe residue and how you can prevent residue problems in your animal.
- Describe what influences the value of market animals.
- Name and describe three different types of markets where your animal can be sold.
- List the top five beef producing states.
- List the top five dairy producing states.
- Attend a breed association show or sale.
- Participate in a breed association field day.
- Send a thank you note to award donors and anyone who helped you with your project (i.e., project helpers, advisors, older members, parents, etc.).
- Exhibit at the county fair and if you sell your steer, send a thank you note to the buyer.

Dairy Beef

- Demonstrate how to properly mix milk replacer.
- Describe what you look for when selecting your calf.
- Describe three ways to dehorn your dairy beef feeder.
- What diseases are dairy beef feeders especially vulnerable to?
- Teach your calf to drink milk from a bucket.
- Describe "navel ill" and explain what might be done to prevent it.

Caring for Animals

- What is a withdrawal time and why is it important?
- What is quality assurance?
- Describe how you could improve the care of your animal.
- Demonstrate where the proper location is to give your animal an injection and explain why.

Environmental Assurance

- Explain why it is important to properly handle livestock waste.
- How can you create a positive relationship with your neighbor in regards to environmental assurance?
- Describe what environmental assurance is.

Public Relations

- Discuss with your parents or project helper how you should react to questions from people, activists or protesters, or from the media about your project animal.

Careers in Animal Sciences

- Briefly describe five careers associated with the beef cattle industry.