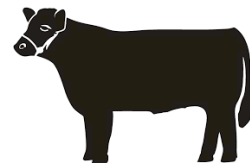




# **HEIFER PROJECT GUIDEBOOK**



## ***Species-Chair:***

***Drew Alpers \* drewalpers@gmail.com \* 231-642-0859***

## ***Assistant Species-Chair:***

***Kelly Kraeft \* verykraefty@gmail.com \* 231-735-6366***

<b>IMPORTANT DATES</b>		<b>IMPORTANT INFO</b>	
Registration	January 6 <sup>th</sup>	Minimum Weight @ Fair	900 lbs
Birth Date	After January 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2019		
Possession	January 1 <sup>st</sup>	Record Book	Required
Tagging	January - March	Thank You Note	Required

## **General Requirements**

- ◆ Participating youth must abide by all general rules and regulations listed in the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council's Member Guidebook. This includes, but is not limited to, Code of Conducts, registration deadlines, showmanship and market requirements, etc.
- ◆ To participate in a 4-H heifer project, youth must attain the age of thirteen (13) or older by January 1<sup>st</sup> of that calendar year.
- ◆ Registration is due to the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council Auction Committee no later than the January council meeting.
- ◆ Youth are required to complete a project record book depicting their experience from beginning to end of the project. It is recommended that youth weigh and photograph their project at time of purchase.

## **Animal Requirements**

- ◆ All cattle **MUST** have an official radio frequency identification (RFID) electronic tag in their ear before they leave the farm on which they were born.
- ◆ Calf must be an open heifer (not pregnant)
- ◆ Heifer must be of a beef breed (no Holstein, Jersey, or other dairy breed).
- ◆ Heifer must be no more than 19 months at fair time. The one exception is Scottish Highlander cattle, which can be 20-24 months at fair time.
- ◆ Heifer must be in possession or under the care of the 4-H member by January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ◆ Horns can be no longer than 3". If horns are present, there must be signs of dehorning. Scottish Highlander calves are allowed to have horns.
- ◆ Heifer must weigh a minimum of 900 pounds at fair check in.

## **Fair Week Requirements**

- ◆ Protective boots are required at all times when working with your heifer (tennis shoes or sandals are not permitted)

- ◆ Weigh-in takes place the first Saturday of fair.
- ◆ Youth are responsible for providing enough grain and hay to care for their heifer throughout the entire week. No feed, feed bags, or supplies are to be left in the barn (everything must be stored at the campsite).
- ◆ Members are responsible for feeding, watering, and caring for their own animal the entire week.
- ◆ Show Requirements:
  - Members are required to show in the appropriate showmanship and market classes in order to auction their heifer.
  - A leather show halter, show comb, and show stick are required for showing.
  - Use of false tail heads or adding hair or hemp is prohibited. Coloring agents may only be used on the legs and tail head. Use of powders is prohibited. No forced administration of fluids to create gut fill will be allowed.

### **Helpful Info**

- ◆ Cost:
  - Animal: \$800-2500
  - Feed: \$1000-1500 (figure \$1500 if you must purchase all your feed)
- ◆ Housing:
  - Shelter: From rain, snow, and sun
  - Exercise: Ensure that the heifer will have room to move at its final size
- ◆ Nutrition:
  - Fresh water at all times. Ensure that it does not freeze throughout the winter
  - Purchased heifer should weigh between 450-600 lbs in the fall
  - Heifer should be fed 2 to 2.5% of its body weight per day in order to gain 2.25 to 2.5 lbs of weight per day (approx. 750 lbs of gain)
  - Feeding from November to August (280 days) will require approx. 5000 lbs of feed
  - Feed hay at all times
  - Most grain mixes contain 14 to 16% protein. If feeding straight corn or oats you will need to feed about 1 to 1-1/2 lbs of a protein supplement each day
  - Different Feeds:
    - Energy – corn (cracked or whole shelled), processed grain from feed mill/store
    - Roughage – hay, silage
    - Supplements – soybean meal, processed supplements from feed mill/store
  - A finished heifer will have 0.2 to 0.3 inches of fat cover over his back and ribs. As fair approaches, cut back or increase the grain to control the amount of fat finish
  - Be sure any changes to the heifer's feed and nutrition are done gradually
- ◆ Health:
  - Observe daily: Note any difference in behavior (not eating, not getting up, sluggish, ears down, etc) or any difference in appearance (bloating, runny nose, mucus eyes, etc). Changes in behavior or appearance usually indicate something is wrong; seek help or advise from a veterinarian immediately
  - Wash and clip your heifer several times before the fair so it gets used to it
  - Trim hoofs about 4-6 weeks before the fair

- Vaccination boosters are highly recommended: injection should include IBR, BRSV, PB and BVD type I and II vaccines
- Heifer should be wormed once every 2 months, leaving proper withdrawal period before slaughter
- ◆ Training:
  - Start slow: Begin by just watching and talking to your heifer
  - Tie your heifer to a fence post or secure object for an hour or two at a time. This will get her used to being restrained and standing still. This is also a good time to brush her down so that she gets used to being touched. For safety reasons, never leave your heifer alone when she is tied up
  - Expose your heifer to as many sights and sounds as possible; i.e. play a radio in the barn
  - Be sure to practice with the show halter and show stick that will be used during fair
- ◆ Fair Week Show Attire:
  - Clean pants or jeans (free of rips or holes)
  - Long or short sleeve dress shirt (button-down is recommended)
  - Protective boots or leather shoes

### **Tips**

- ◆ Things To Know:
  - A market heifer is shown and slaughtered like a steer but it will have a more powerful appearance with a wider rump and a longer rib line
  - A Freemartin is a heifer that is a twin to a bull calf. She will always be sterile.
- ◆ ASK QUESTIONS!!! If you encounter a situation or a question that you don't know the answer to, be sure to ask for help. Reach out to the species-chair, your club leader, another member raising a heifer, or any member of the Livestock Council board. If that person does not have the answer, they WILL help you get it.
- ◆ Education – Attend as many education sessions and events as possible to help further your knowledge of your species
- ◆ Heifer Selection – Always focus on a looking for good structure: sturdy legs, sound hooves, a straight back, a wide and long loin, and a full/meaty rear leg. Heifer should look free from illness and walk without any noticeable stiffness.
- ◆ Hot Weather – A heifer will tend to lose its appetite when it is too hot. If the temperature outside is above 80 degrees, cool down your heifer with water or a bath; Remember to always start by putting the water on the legs and working up toward the back.
- ◆ Keep Good Records – Use a calendar to track purchases, weekly feeding schedules, weight gain, and medications. This information is important for your record book and also is a great guide to use for the next heifer project.