

# KANSAS 4-H DAIRYLINE

## That Stubborn Calf

The right halter breaking program can make 4-Hers' lives easier

by Audrey Schmitz, Marshall Co.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Kansas 4-H Dairy Page:** <http://www.kansas4-h.org/p.aspx?tabid=531>
- **Grade and Leasing Information:** <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MG54.pdf>
- **Livestock Safety:** <http://ylsp.bae.ksu.edu>
- **Record book form:** <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/P1106.pdf>
- **Holstein Foundation Educational Workbooks:** <http://www.holsteinfoundation.org/education/workbooks.html>

Teaching a calf to lead takes time and requires daily practice. Here are some easy steps and tips that may be useful when breaking a calf to lead.

**1. Catch your calf** and place the halter on it. The rope halter should draw up under the chin and the lead should come out on the left side of the calf's head. Then, lead the calf outside of its pen and tie it to a firm post, tree or gate. It may struggle a lot in the beginning because this will be its first time wearing a halter and having human contact. Stay nearby to make sure that it does not get tangled up in the rope. When the calf becomes calm, gently brush it on the neck and shoulder so it gets used to being touched. This will allow the calf to become accustomed to the halter and the presence of people around it. Tie the calf up for a couple days and for no more than an hour at a time.

**2. Practice leading it.** Keep a firm grip on the lead rope and hold the halter near the head with the left hand. Have your right hand hold the remaining length of rope. If the calf acts up and tries to run away you will be ready and easily able to stop it. Gently pull on the lead rope keeping constant pressure. Once the calf takes a step, immediately release the pressure. This is a way to reward the calf for taking a step. It will soon catch on that pressure on the lead

rope signals to move forward. When starting out, calves can be stubborn, ornery, or a mixture of both, and getting them to take their first steps can be hard. It is important to always remember to be patient.

**3. Teach it to stop.** Try a three steps and stop method. Have the calf take three steps forward counting the steps taken by its front legs. After the third step, apply pressure to the lead rope in the opposite direction used to make it move forward. Once the calf stops release the pressure so that it does not keep backing up.

**4. Hold the calf's head high and set the rear legs** as if it was being shown for a judge. For heifers, the rear leg nearest to the judge should be set slightly behind the rear leg farther from the judge. For cows, the rear leg nearer to the judge should be slightly in front of the rear leg farther from the judge. For both cows and heifers, the front legs should be even. Having a parent, sibling, or friend pretend to be a judge is very helpful. This allows the calf to become used to a person walking around it while it is being led. It also allows the leader to practice eye contact with the judge and setting up quickly and correctly.

Remember, practice makes perfect and with just the right amount your calf will be leading like a champion in no time.

*Providing Dairy Members with Resources to Gain Knowledge and Develop Skills*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Lease and Transfers completed and documented - June 15, 2015
- Kansas All Breeds Junior Dairy Show - August 13-15, 2015, Salina, Kansas

## DAIRY ACTION TEAM

- CC Ball
- Mike Brouk
- Gail Carpenter
- Carl Garten
- Kerri Ebert
- Stephanie Eckroat
- Jessica Hanson
- Carol Keen
- Taylor Klipp
- Trevor Klipp
- Ryan Meyer
- Steve Meyer
- Ross Mosteller
- Jake Renner
- Maggie Seiler
- Bob Seiler
- Jill Seiler
- Dee Ann Shuck
- Pam Van Horn

## HAVE SOMETHING FOR THE NEWSLETTER?

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# Getting a Jump on Show Season

For Washington County Spring Show exhibitor Ryan Meyer, an early start on the show season is a huge benefit allowed by the April 11 show that drew in 25 exhibitors in its 11th year. The single day show offers members an opportunity to get their animals out and see how they compare to other projects in the area.

However, the benefit of attending stretches far beyond the competition

as the participants also attend a clinic that focuses on things such as showmanship, judging or fitting.

The statistics say a great deal about this show, but the 4-H members that have participated in it explain even better the opportunities the show allows. The following was written by 11 year participant Ryan Meyer.

*"I enjoy exhibiting at the spring show because it is held in the early Spring before most other shows. It*

*gives me a chance to see how my cows perform and allows me to figure out areas of improvement for my animals to work on before I exhibit at other state and multi-state dairy shows.*

*I also like the fact that after the show, some kind of clinic is held for the exhibitors. At these clinics*

*held we have learned about judging animals and giving reasons, fitting and grooming skills. Many of these clinics have benefited all*

*exhibitors. Especially the judging and reasons clinics, it gives each person an idea of how it is done before actually doing it for competitive reasons.*

*Another interest to me is that with all the families that participate, it gives each exhibitor a chance to visit with each other about their animals, and dairy operations." - Ryan Meyer, River Valley District, Washington County.*



## A big name: Steve Larson

*by Jill Seiler, Sedgwick County*

Born and raised in Kansas, Steve Larson is a 1968 graduate in dairy production from Kansas State University. After graduation, Larson began working for the Hoard's Dairyman. In 1998 He was named the managing editor of the Hoard's Dairyman.

Larson served in that role until 2013. He is currently an editorial consultant for Hoard's. Larson is responsible for the magazine's coverage of milk marketing and dairy policy, dairy product

promotion, feeding and nutrition, and mastitis and herd health.

Larson's career had many distinguishing points. He is a former president of the National Dairy Shrine as well as serving on several planning committees such as Western Dairy Management Conference and National Dairy Leaders Conference.

Larson has had a tremendous impact on the dairy industry and he got his start in Kansas.

*Celebrating  
50 Years of Kansas Excellence*

**The Kansas All Breeds  
Junior Dairy Show**

*August 13-15, 2015  
Salina, Kansas*