

Berks Beef Club learns fitting and showing

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS
Staff Correspondent

READING — The Berks County 4-H Beef Club's spring show turned into a day of demonstrations and discussions for the 13 participating members.

Instead of competing against each other in fitting and showing their animals, the 4-Hers learned the proper fitting and showing techniques they will need for the upcoming show season.

Held in the dairy barn at the Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, on May 19th, the "Spring Show" was sponsored by the parents and leaders of the beef club. All members were invited to bring their steers to be freeze-branded for the Farm Show, wormed, and implanted when the demonstrations were over.

This spring meeting is held annually in May to provide a proper start for the 4-Hers with their new project steers. According to the leaders, this season is particularly helpful to first-year members who are unsure of the proper methods to fittings and showing their animals.

"It's basically to get the guys in gear for the fairs," said Lloyd Zook, president of the leaders.

Each steer is also freeze-branded in order for the members to qualify their animals for the Farm Show by the June 1st deadline. The club also sponsors a

weight gain contest each year and awards for the greatest weight gain by roundup are given to 4-Hers at the annual banquet. At this meeting each steer is weighed and it is recorded for this contest. For the advantage of the members, leaders worm and implant the steers if the 4-Her requests.

"Fitting doesn't start when you get to the fair," began Ted Teaford, the instructor for the day. Teaford currently works as the Field Representative for Albrights Mill. A graduate of Penn State, he was on the Livestock Judging Team and now judges beef and hogs at shows and fairs in his spare time. Teaford gained much experience with livestock as herdsmen at Devereux Farms, Downingtown, where he worked almost two years.

"I don't like to see a lot of ingredients going into a hair coat to make it look better," Teaford continued. "Keep everything natural. Don't go to all lengths buying all that stuff. It's not needed," he added.

Teaford maintained that if a steer was properly fed and raised, the 4-Her would not have to work as hard once he arrived at the fair.

"I try to stress a natural appearance," he stated and said that he looks for a bloom to the coat.

Teaford also advised clipping an animal ten days to two weeks before a show so that any clipper

marks will grow out and not be as noticeable.

Teaford advised the juniors to have their animals clean. Then, the head, brisket, underline, and a portion on the tail should be clipped. Regarding the gall of the tail, Teaford cautioned keeping it in proportion to the animal.

After Teaford's demonstration, younger members were teamed with the three older members, Greg Zook, Karen Rabenold, and Kenianne Rarick. With a steer for each team, the older 4-Hers helped the new members fit the animal. When the fitting was completed, the older juniors showed the steers in front of Teaford as he pointed out showmanship techniques. Using good judgement, checking out the ring, and showing your animal to his best advantage in front of the judge was emphasized.

Members and their parents asked many questions on showmanship as the three older 4-Hers paraded the steers in front of Teaford.

After the demonstrations, lunch was provided by the leaders and the afternoon continued with the freeze-branding and weighing in of project animals.



Karen Rabenold demonstrates clipping for younger 4-Hers at the Berks County Beef Club's Spring Show. "It makes them look longer... taller... with a square rump," she explains as she clips the rump.

4-H

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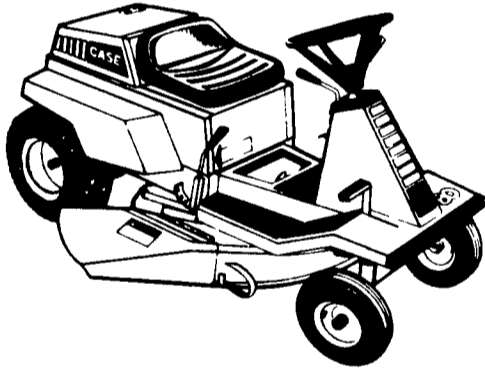
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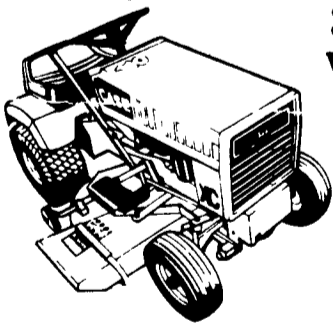
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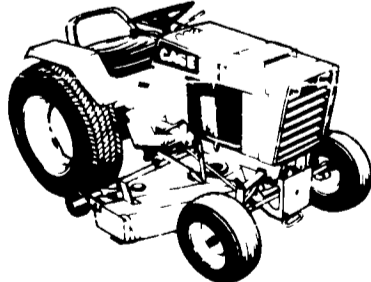
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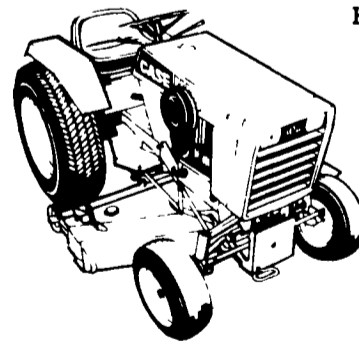
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