

# Farm Show Preparation

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hour to an hour and a half to dry one.

"This is the busiest time of the year with Farm Show steers plus summer show steers. Right now I have six cattle that are getting geared up to be shown."

The payoff is the coat grows better and is conditioned. Keeping the animals clean, on wood chips, and the fans going on them during the day keeps the animals cool and promotes hair growth.

"If you don't want to do it (show animals competitively), you're not going to go out and rinse calves every day," said Nate, who said that show ring preparation and exhibition teaches responsibility.

Simply handling the animals every day makes them more manageable during show time. "It helps working with them to get them halter broke. It gets them used to you when you're with them every day," said Nate. "Whenever you go anywhere with them, then they're calmer."

Nate likens working with animals at home to completing

homework. "It's like a big test. If you don't do your homework, you're going to fail the test."

"It makes a big difference," said Joseph. "When you go to fit them, they're not going to be kicking at you or fighting to get away."

The steers' feeding program is another facet of show ring preparation. Nate's Shorthorn is "a little soft, so we changed the feed around and he gets walked one mile every day," he said. Nate plans to take a steer, heifer, and pig to the Farm Show.

Preparation for the lambs includes an exercise program on the ramp three times a week, according to Joseph. "The first time they're not sure what's going on, but it's easier after that," he said. This year Joseph plans to take a steer, Angus heifer, crossbred lamb, and crossbred hog to the fair.

Besides exercising the lambs,

Joseph also routinely works with the lambs for show ring preparation. "I teach them to set their feet right, to brace into me so they will flex their top and legs," he said.

"It doesn't take too much as long as they're not too stubborn," said Nate.

"It's a matter of getting them to stand still for a certain amount of time," said Joseph.

The Tices mix their own feed for the hogs and keep a careful eye on the hogs' weight. The hogs will also be clipped just before the show.

The brothers will also move the hogs periodically before the show so they get used to handling, since managing hogs in the large Farm Show ring and maneuvering the animals through the crowd proves to be a challenge, according to the Tices.

Besides readying the animals, Farm Show preparation also en-

tails an all-out, behind-the-scenes effort. "People don't think about all the work that goes into the display," said Joseph, "Like the dividers between the stalls or the signs to hang up."

"Packing is the hardest part," said Nate. "I get nervous about what I forgot right before we're ready to leave."

He recalled the time when the Tices were headed to Eastern Nationals in Maryland. He packed the trailer but forgot his clothes, which prompted a quick phone call to another Lebanon

resident, who also unfortunately forgot the clothes the next day. "I had to make an emergency shopping trip for clothes and a toothbrush," said Nate.

Years of experience have been an important teacher for the brothers. Said Nate, "When I think I have a really good chance I get nervous, but it's not good for you or your animal when you get nervous. Just slow down and take your time."

Besides the Farm Show, the brothers exhibit their animals at

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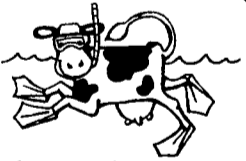
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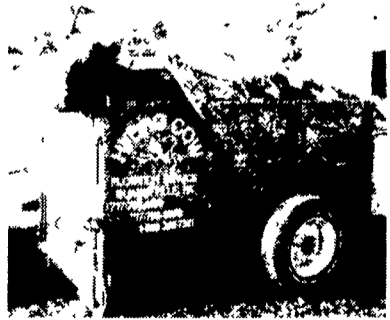
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