Meadowlark District 4-H Bucket Calf Project

Purpose
1. To design a cattle project to fit the physical size and maturity level of youth being introduced into the cattle industry.
2. To teach proper health care and nutritional requirements of young cattle.
3. To care for and raise a calf without a mother either by bottle-feeding or bucket feeding.

Guidelines
a. Project is designed for youth 7-12 years old 4-H age.
b. Calves must be born from Jan. 1-May 31 of the current 4-H year.
c. Calves must be weaned and at least 60 days old by fair.
d. Bucket Calves will be only shown once in the bucket calf class. They may not be used for Showmanship in Beef classes.
e. Only one calf per year per project participant.
f. The calf may be either beef or dairy breed and may be either bull, steer or heifer.
g. Youth are responsible for maintaining the 4-H records for their Bucket Calf project.
h. At the end of the fair, calves must be taken home.

Care & Management
a. It is best to buy calves on the farm whenever possible. Calves from the sale barn may require extra care when you get them home due to stress from being moved to and from their original home, to the barn, to their new home.
b. Prices vary depending on demand, health, breed, and location.
c. Fresh water, proper food, and adequate shelter are needed to care for a bucket calf.
d. Provide a clean, dry place for the calf to lie down in.
e. Proper ventilation is recommended without being drafty.
f. Calves should be fed at least two equal feedings per day. Weak calves benefit from more frequent feeding of the same total amount.
g. Calves can be weaned when they are 4 to 8 weeks of age. Wean calves when they are consuming 1.5 to 2 lbs. of grain per day.
h. Check weight gains to determine if calves are growing at the desired rate. Lack of condition or skinny calves indicates underfeeding or poor quality feed.
i. If you think your calf is sick, contact your local veterinarian.

How to tell if your calf is sick:
1. Leaves some feed or quits eating entirely
2. Dull eyes, not alert, droopy ears
3. Diarrhea (scours)
4. Runny Nose
5. Dry Nose
6. Cough
7. Temperature
8. The swollen or puffy left side
9. Limping
10. Unusual skin conditions
Local Fair Requirements – MED-Oskaloosa (Jefferson)

a. Youth are responsible for their own bedding and care of the animal. *Only woodchips are allowed for bedding during the fair.*

b. Youth must sign & abide by the **Meadowlark Show Ring Code of Ethics** (signed once in a 4-H career) and have it on file with the Extension Office by July 1st.

c. Youth must sign and abide by the **MED Fair Code of Conduct** due July 1st each year.

d. Youth are expected to help with fair set-up and clean-up.

e. Calves must be pre-entered by July 1st of the current 4-H year.

f. The show is divided based on 4-Hers age: 7-9 year olds and 10-12 year olds.

g. Bucket Calf show is a no fit show. No adhesive, glue, painting or powder products. Just wash and comb. No show sticks allowed. Must show own calf.

h. All youth will be conferenced judged. General knowledge of the care, feeding, and management of their bucket calf will be asked of them.

i. Youth are required to identify their calf with an official 4-H ear tag, available in the office, by June 1st to be eligible to show.

j. Champion/Reserve Champion showing will be awarded in each age group.

**Important Dates & Information for Bucket Calf Project**

**Meadowlark District Web Page**
https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/4-h/

**Kansas 4-H Bucket Calf Project Page**
https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects/animals/beef.html

**Parent/Leader Manual**
https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/docs/4h/resources/kansas-bucketcalf-guide.pdf