

4-H Market Steer Handbook: Grooming for the Show Ring

Before you enter the show ring you must "groom" or "dress" your steer. You can do many final touches to have him look his absolute best.

Have your steer clean and thoroughly dry. Use a blower to remove the dust. Begin by "boning" (pulling hair up) his legs. Glycerin saddle soap (bars) or spray adhesive may be used to hold the hair up. Rub the soap downward on both front and rear legs.

Be sure to cover any area of the legs where the hair does not want to stand up by itself. Do not apply the soap any higher than the forearms in the front and the stifle region in the rear. Pull the hair up with a Scotch comb. If the hair won't hold, apply more soap.

If you use a spray adhesive, spray only a small portion at a time and immediately comb the hair up. Soap added before adhesive will allow the comb to go through, whereas adhesive alone will not allow the hair to be combed.

When the leg hair is completely combed up, spray the legs and feet with clear lacquer. The lacquer will help hold the hair and will cover the chalky look of the soap.

Next apply saddle soap or adhesive to the tail head and use your comb to pull the hair up. Use scissors or clippers to clip the tail head down as nearly square as possible.

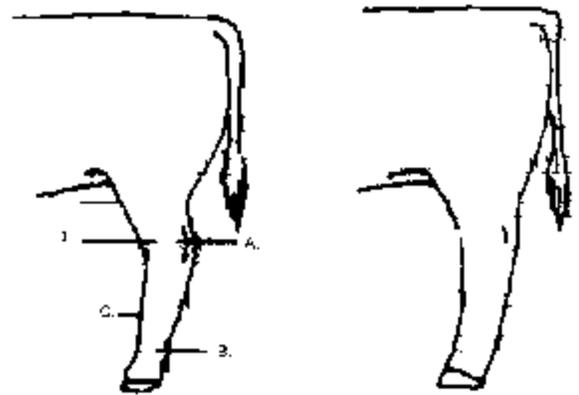
There are many livestock products to use on the body hair to help hold it, such as foam or setting solutions. However, if you have done a good job of rinsing and breaking the hair, you will not need to use much of these products.

To give the rear quarters more flare and thickness, block the portion of the leg below the quarter close. Pull the hair out on the stifle and quarter area. Clip

this area smooth, but leave the hair relatively long.

If the hair on the legs is pulled up, it can be trimmed to give an appearance of proper set and to add dimension to the leg. Because the hair must be up, you may want to wait until the steer is dressed for show to clip the legs.

Correcting the Sickie Hock



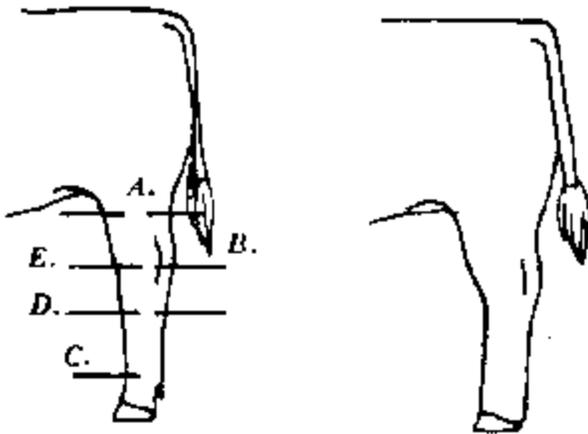
Most incorrect legs are the result of too much set to the leg, or sickie hocks. To make the crooked leg appear straighter, pull the hair up and into the crook above the hock. Clip all the hair off inside the hock and taper down the back of the leg. On the front of the leg, opposite the hock, pull the hair up and forward and leave long. From this point upwards to the flank, clip the hair relatively short.

- A. Comb hair into the crook above the hock.
- B. Taper hair on back side of leg. Clip hair off inside of hock.
- C. Comb hair up and forward and leave long.
- D. Clip hair short in this area.

Correcting Post-Legs

Legs which are too straight, or "post-legged," are corrected the opposite way from crooked legs. Clip close above the hock and pull the hair back on the hock. Pull the hair up and forward on the lower front side of the cannon. Clip the front area opposite the hock close, and from there upwards pull the hair up and leave long.

Correcting Post-legs



- A. Clip hair close to give effect of an indentation.
- B. Pull hair back on hock.
- C. Comb hair up and forward and leave hair longer.
- D. Clip hair short to generate a slight angle.
- E. Taper longer hair from flank to shorter hair at hock.

Tying Tails

The tail should be ratted and tied up to make the steer appear taller.

1. Comb all the knots out of the tail.
2. With a teasing comb, begin ratted a few strands at the top and move downward.

3. Then the tail is teased into a ball, gather up a few hairs and twist into two strands.
4. Use the strands to pull the ball up, and tie them tightly around the tail. Use spray adhesive or hair spray to help secure the hold. Plastic tail ties may be used but must always be removed.

Decide at what height the steer's tail looks best. If it is too high, he will look off balance. If it is too low, no improvement has been made. Trim the long hairs off to make it neat. A good starting point is directly in the twist.

The final step in dressing is to apply a light oil to the hair coat. The oil should be applied very evenly through spray or with a rag.

The steer should look bloomy and fresh prior to entering the show ring. Avoid a gummed up, messy appearance caused by overuse of grooming products.

Putting up a Tail

1. Comb out the tail. Then rat a small part of the hair near the base of the tail and spray with glue.
2. Put a tail tie through the knot of glued hair.
3. Turn the tail up toward you and to the tail shaft itself. Pull the tail tie tight around the tail shaft at the proper height. Trim excess tie. Strands of twisted hair can be used to tie tail up.
4. Rat the tail hair completely and form it into a symmetrical ball, using glue as needed. The hair can be pulled to one side or up around the sail bone. Spray the entire switch with glue. Streaks N' tips (no paint) and cover with a plastic bag.
5. The completed tail should be in a position to add balance to the animal. A tail too high will make the animal look heavy-fronted.