

4-H Market Steer Handbook:

Setting Up Training

You should begin "teaching" your steer to "set up" several months before the show. "Setting up" is the proper positioning of its feet. Every calf must be taught to stand correctly in the show ring. You cannot expect a steer to do well if you haven't worked with the animal.

Patience is the most important factor in teaching your calf. Some calves learn more quickly than others and some require much more time and training.

You may begin training your calf with a work halter; however, you will need a good show stick. You don't need to have a fancy, expensive show stick. A wooden stick will do fine if it's not too heavy and is fitted with a sturdy hook on the end. The hook is used to position the feet. It should be sharp enough to get response but not sharp enough to cut. The stick should be long enough to reach your steer's back feet.

When you first introduce your calf to the stick, hold his head up high and very slowly rub under his belly with the point or hook away from the belly. The steer might want to kick at it and move about, but keep working with him until he decides he likes the scratching and will stand still.

When the calf will stand still, use the toe of your boot or the stick to place his front feet. Move the foot back by pressing on the flesh just above the front of the hoof. If the foot needs to move forward, pull up on the dew claw with the toe of your boot or the hook on the stick. Position the back feet the same way, but always use your show stick on them. You will want your calf to stand with a leg at each corner of his body. It will take practice for you to learn the correct position for the feet. Do not let him get his feet too far under him or too far behind him. Here are a few important hints in teaching the calf to set up:

- < Be patient.
- < Never lose your temper and hit the calf.
- < The steer will become angry and frightened of the stick.
- < Scratch his belly. When you stop the calf, scratch his belly to settle him and then place a foot; scratch his belly again and then place another foot.
- < Use the hook in the stick to keep his top line straight.
- < Do not overdo. If your calf is working well, set him up a few times, then leave him alone.