

# Dairy Goat Handbook

## Show Ring Procedure

Excerpted from Dairy Goat Judging Techniques by Harvey Considine and George Trimberger. (Chapter 17, Fitting and Showing)

Suggested Uniform: Long-sleeved white shirt, regulation white pants, 4-H or FFA necktie, with matching shoes and belt in either black, white, or brown.

Enter the show-ring as directed by the ring steward and move in a clockwise direction. Walk slowly but keep moving. Try to allow the length of one dairy goat (about three feet) between your animal and the one ahead. Walk on the left side facing forward and leading with the right hand on the chain or collar. Do not use a long chain or leash. Goat should lead readily and respond quickly. Lead equipment should consist of a collar or small link chain, properly fitted. As the judge studies the animal, the preferred method of leading is to walk alongside on the side away from the judge. Lead slowly with animal's head held high enough for impressive style, attractive carriage, and graceful walk. If the judge moves to the outside of the circle of the dairy goats, each handler will have to move to the right of their dairy goat and then back as the circle moves. .

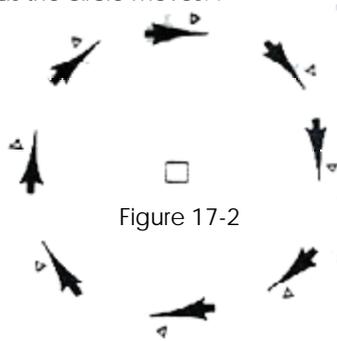


Figure 17-2

Figure 17-2: Leader is on the left side when the judge is in the show-ring.

Figure 17-3: When the judge is outside the show-ring, the leaders are on the right side of their dairy goats part of the time.

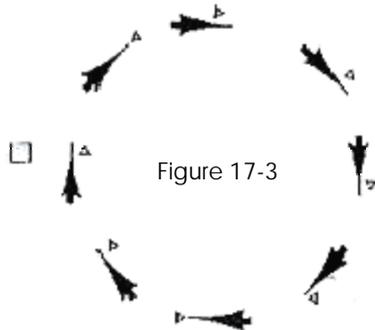


Figure 17-3

When moving to the other side of the dairy goat, the handler should face their animal at all times. Do not transfer the collar from one hand to the other behind your back, but step backward for a moment as you move in front of the dairy

goat. Keep the dairy goat between yourself and the judge, if at all possible. Lead so that the dairy goat's head is high enough to look alert and so that it can walk gracefully, but not so high that a weakness in the chine develops.

Be aware of the judges movements and directions at all times, but concentrate on the dairy goat being shown. When the judge indicates that walking should stop, respond promptly. Try to select a spot where the dairy goats front feet will come to rest on a higher elevation than the rear feet. Set the legs so they are squarely beneath the dairy goat, with the hind legs slightly spread. There are two methods of "setting up" a dairy goat.

Method 1: Move the hind feet into place by pressing on the point of shoulder with the right hand while keeping the left on the collar. If the left rear foot is to be moved backward and outward, press on the point of the right shoulder to move the dairy goat backward and to the left. As it moves the foot in response to the pressure, a quick pull on the collar will cause the foot to drop where it is wanted. Similarly, to move the right rear foot, press on the left shoulder. When the hind feet are in place, simply reach down and place one or both front feet so they will be square and straight. This method has an advantage for small showmen with large dairy goats, since the handler is never off balance and can keep more positive control. It also has an advantage when dairy goats do not like to have their hind legs touched. A showman usually looks more graceful using this method.

Method 2: Stop walking, immediately reach back with one hand, and, grasping a hind leg between the hock and pastern, move one leg at a time to the desired position. Then set the front legs. This method is a bit faster, but a small handler may loose control of a large dairy goat, and it is also less graceful for a large exhibitor with a small animal.

Avoid over-stretching a dairy goat. Dairy goats are not shown like racehorses - so stretched that they are off balance. The placing of legs should be comfortable for the dairy goat to stand for some time. Try to keep the animal alert but contented. Many showmen talk quietly to their animals or inconspicuously pet or scratch them to keep them contented. Most exhibitors look best when kneeling beside the dairy goat with one knee almost, but not quite, touching the ground.

If the dairy goats are directed into a side-by-side line, try to leave a couple of feet of space between them. This will allow for handling and for the exhibitor to be between them. When the judge comes to closely inspect each dairy goat, rise and stand ready to restrain any movement that would delay the examination. For a quiet individual, a firm hand on the collar and a knee pressed against the chest is usually sufficient. If the dairy goat is touchy or otherwise hard to

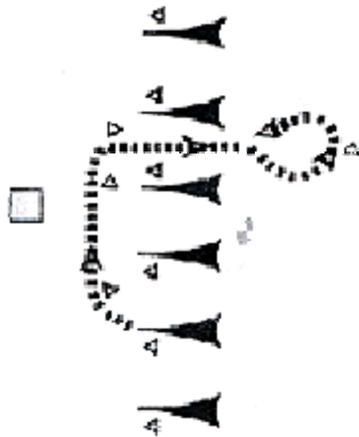
handle, lean over, grasp the foreleg between the knee and pastern, and flex it back against the chest so the dairy goat stands on three legs until the judge is finished. No judge should ever have to put up with a discourteous showman who makes no effort to restrain unruly animals. When a judge is examining an udder, it is disconcerting and irritating if the dairy goat suddenly bolts or jumps, knocking them off balance. Difficult dairy goats that are not adequately restrained should be excused by the superintendent.

While the udder is being handled, apply firm pressure to the loin with one hand so the doe cannot arch her back in her eagerness to cooperate in being milked. If allowed to severely arch her loin, she will lose much of her general appearance symmetry and also will cause the fore udder attachment to appear weaker than it actually is.

After the judge finishes inspecting your dairy goat and goes on to the rest of the class, return to a comfortable standing or kneeling position but keep your dairy goat positioned properly. The feet should be repositioned if they move from their proper position.

To step animal ahead - use slight pull on collar. If the animal steps badly out of place, return her to position by leading her forward and making a circle back thru your position in the line. When judge is observing the animal, if she moves out of position, replace her as quickly and inconspicuously as possible. Be natural. Over-showing, undue fussing, and maneuvering are objectionable.

If the judge chooses to change placings in a line that is standing side-by-side, the American Dairy Goat Association (ADGA) Showmanship Scorecard specifies the way it should be done. Lead the dairy goat being moved forward out of the line, then up or down in front of the line to the proper place, then back through the line making a U-turn behind the line before leading up into position. Be careful to keep your dairy goat between the judge and yourself. The handlers of the dairy goat on either side of the final position should be courteous enough to make room for the newcomer.



If the dairy goats are lined up in a head-to-tail sequence, and the judge orders a change in placing, lead your goat out of the line on the side toward the judge (Figure 17-5 and Figure 17-6). Then proceed up or down the line to the proper position. The showman on either side of the new position should make room for your dairy goat.

Figure 17-5: Procedure for changing placing in a lineup standing head to tail.

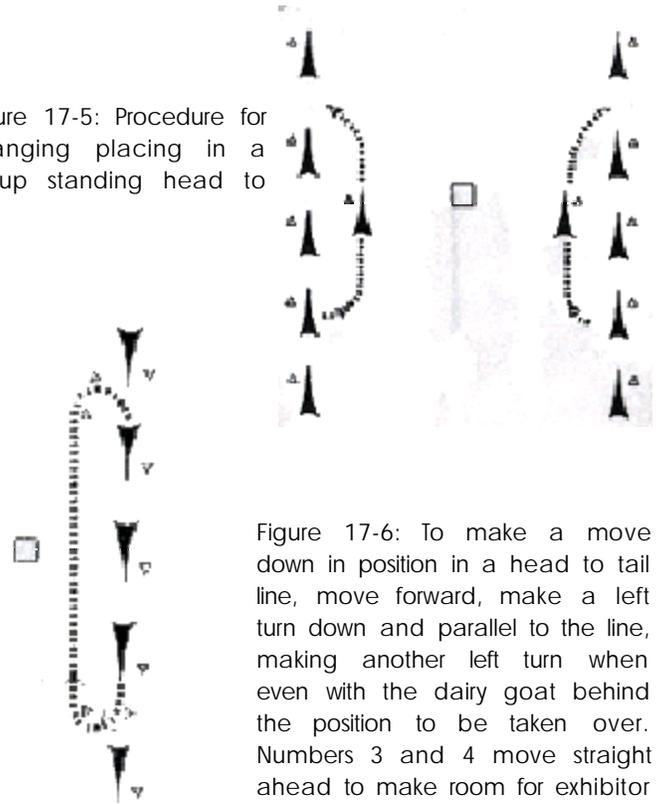


Figure 17-6: To make a move down in position in a head to tail line, move forward, make a left turn down and parallel to the line, making another left turn when even with the dairy goat behind the position to be taken over. Numbers 3 and 4 move straight ahead to make room for exhibitor to move into line.

Once you have your goat well placed, let her be. Keep your hands off your animal as much as possible when she is set up, so that you will not draw the judge's attention away from your animal to you. Talking quietly to your goat or lightly rubbing her belly or side nearest you keeps her alert and contented. Some exhibitors prefer to squat beside their goat while they are waiting in line. However, do not kneel with your knees on the ground, and be sure to stand up when the judge approaches your animal.

A judge may need information to help them in their evaluation, so the handler should have some knowledge of each dairy goat they show. The exact birth date, or at least the month of birth, in kid classes, the age by years in older classes and the month of last freshening for milking does, should be given immediately if asked for.

All good showmen know any weaknesses of their animals and will use discretion to minimize them. For example, never put undue stretch (that is, placing the front feet too far forward and the hind legs too far back) on a dairy goat with a weak chine since this position will accentuate this weakness. However, a dairy goat with too much slope to the rump might benefit from such a position if it is not overdone. A little scratching beneath the chest while standing will often help a dairy goat maintain a straight topline. For the dairy goat who like to stand in a roached position, a little scratching on the loin followed by a quick brush with the hand down the spine and over the loin may improve the profile. These and other maneuvers help to show a dairy goat to the best advantage, but though they have a definite part in showmanship, they must not be considered a substitute for

having a worthy dairy goat in the first place. Most skilled judges do most of their evaluation while the dairy goats are walking; the above suggestions are helpful only when the dairy goat is standing.

It is important to keep the dairy goats looking well as the judge builds the final line. It is extremely frustrating for a judge to work diligently at ranking a class of 20 or more dairy goats, only to come back to the head of the line for a final check and discover that the handler of the first place dairy goat has let the head drop, the shoulders come loose, placed the feet too far apart, or otherwise destroyed the symmetry of a fine individual. Some handlers let down at this point and even visit with spectators at the ringside. Never do this! Keep the animal you are showing looking well until the reasons are given and the class dismissed. Do not be distracted by anything outside the show-ring.

Poise, alertness, and courteous attitude are all desired in the show ring. Showmen should keep an eye on their animals and be aware of the position of the judge at all times - but should not stare at the judge. Persons or things outside the ring should not distract the attention of the showmen. Respond rapidly to requests from judges or officials, and be courteous and sportsman like at all times, respecting the rights of other exhibitors. The best showmen will show the animals at all times - not themselves - and will continue exhibiting well until the entire class has been placed, the judge has given his reasons, and he has dismissed the class.

When the show is over, a courteous showman should have a word of appreciation for the show officials and the judge, all of whom have worked hard to make the show a success. If you believe you have had a good, fair, competent judge, tell them so. It will be appreciated. Even if you disagreed with some placings, thank the judge for coming!

## Tips

- T** Watching the class ahead of yours will give you an idea of the judge's procedure and preferred method of lining up animals.
- T** Goats should be brought to the ringside a few minutes before start of their class, so that you are ready to enter the ring as soon as the class is called.
- T** You will need to know the birth date of each of your animals in the ring, the freshening date and number of lactations for milkers.
- T** Stay attentive to the judge but, at the same time, be aware of your goat and what she is doing.
- T** Keep your goat between you and the judge at all times. If you need to change sides, move around the goat's head and change hands on the collar.
- T** Keep the collar high on the goat's neck, holding it in your hand at the top of the neck, just behind the ears. This gives you better control over the animal's movements and keeps her head up high enough so that she has an attractive carriage.
- T** Be ready to restrain your goat if necessary while the judge examines her. This can be done in two ways: (1) put your knee in front of her shoulder so she can't move forward; and (2) grasp a front leg between the knee and the pastern and flex the leg back against the chest.