

Identifying Your Calf

Dairy Project Skill:

Life Skill:

Success Indicator:

Educational Standard:

Identifying a calf

Communicating with others

Demonstrates how to identify a calf.

NL-ENG.K-12.4 Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

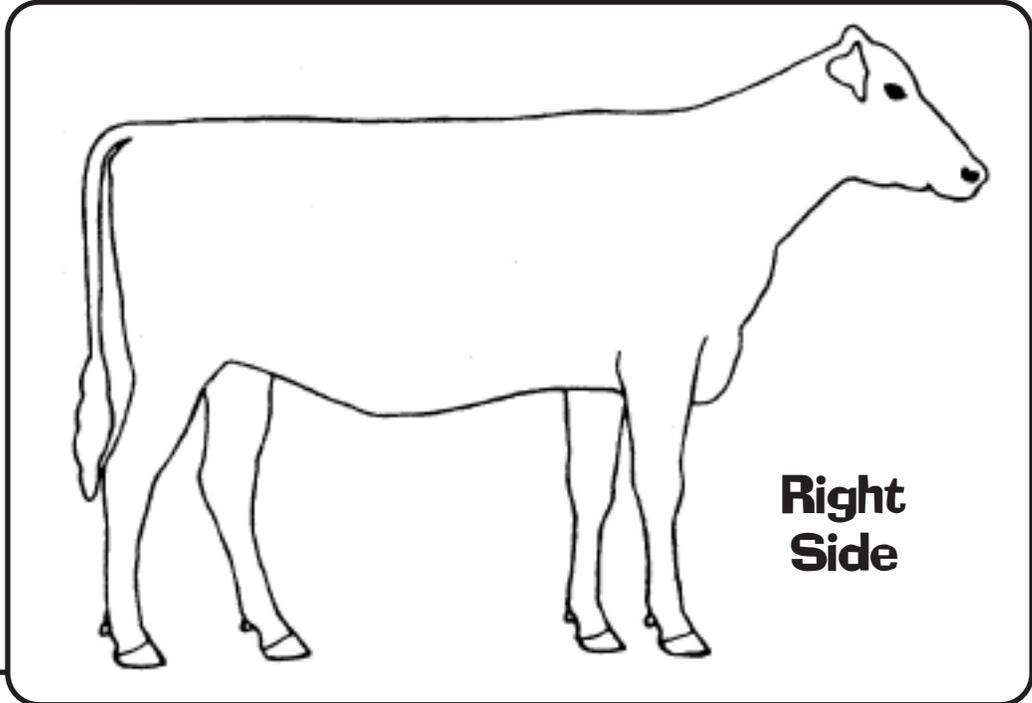
Is your calf identified? If for some reason it was stolen or lost would you be able to show that it was yours when found? The day the calf is born is the most ideal time to identify it. Today's dairy operators primarily use ear tagging. Purebred or show cattle are often identified with tattoos or by sketching both sides of the animal. This is your chance to practice identifying cattle as you sharpen your communication skills.

Taking On the Challenge

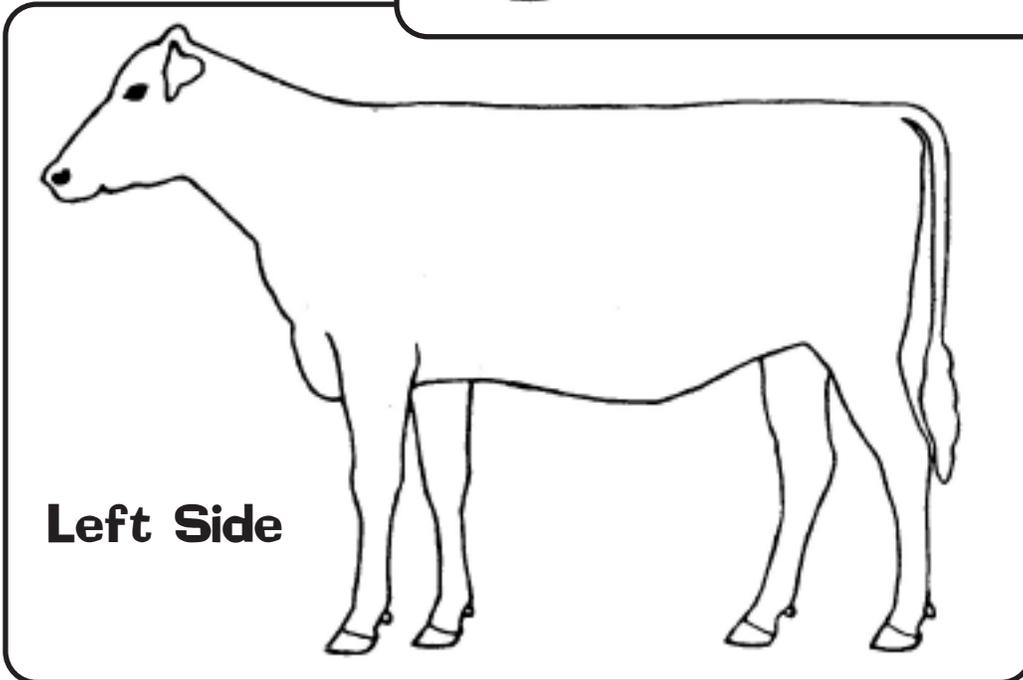
First identify a calf by sketching both sides in the space provided. See if a friend can use your sketches to find the calf you drew among several animals.

Now demonstrate to your project group or family how you would either ear tag or tattoo a dairy animal. Hints are given in Fresh Facts. The model cloth calf made from the 4-HCCS pattern makes an excellent training aid for your demonstration.

"Identify me early with either a tattoo or a permanent ID tag!"



Right Side



Left Side



Dairy Talk Words

Tattoo

Ruminations

Say Cheese! (Share)

- What did you include in your demonstration?

Chew Your Cud (Process)

- What is the difference between a permanent and a non-permanent identification?

Chore Time (Generalize)

- How does giving a demonstration help you learn to communicate better?

Mooving Along (Apply)

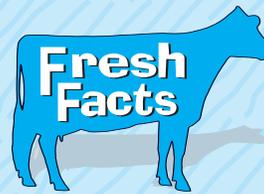
- How will you identify your animals in the future?
- How can permanent identification help reduce the spread of disease?

Resources - Model Calf Pattern

A pattern to make a model calf may be ordered on line at www.n4hccs.org. Ask for the 4-HCCS BU-07332 calf pattern. The pattern includes a paper pattern and directions for cutting and sewing the fabric. It will take an experienced seamstress two to three hours to make the realistic calf. The model calf can be used to practice many different skills: give shots • identify • castrate • take temperature • assist with calving • prepare for show • treat a navel • identify breeds • identify parts • recognizing strengths and faults • caring for the newborn • dehorning • implanting • removing extra teats



Written by Arlin Holtan and revised by Donna Durbin.



Identification Methods

Tattooing

Tattooing is performed with tattoo pliers which contain pins on one side and a pad on the other. The pins are arranged to make the identifying mark. A purebred's identification is assigned by the breed association, whereas a grade animal's identification is developed by the dairyman. A good tattoo is legible for life. To apply a good tattoo the ear has to be clean. Take a clean cloth or paper towel soaked in rubbing alcohol (70%) and clean between the ribs of the ear where you will be tattooing. Apply tattoo paste or tattoo ink to the ear. Squeeze the tattoo pliers enough so all the prongs puncture just the surface. With a rubber gloved hand, rub in the paste or ink. Wash the tattoo iron and your hands in a disinfectant solution. Then rinse in 70% alcohol and let dry before continuing to the next animal.

Ear Tags

Some ear tags are self piercing and some are not. The ear doesn't have to be cleaned, but the equipment used to mechanically pierce needs to be cleaned the same as a tattoo pliers. Ear tags come in many different styles. The large plastic type can carry the ID number, birth date and sire number. Blank tags are also available to write in information. The metal ones are fine if you have only a few animals. The placement of any ear tag is important so it doesn't get pulled out by snagging on a stanchion or small object. A metal tag should be put in approximately 3/4 of the depth of the tag so it is close to the ear but still provides room for the ear to grow. The plastic tags should be put in with the pin between the ribs on the ears. Tattoos and tags should be put in the ear opposite the bangs tattoo that the veterinarian puts in.



Caution

Dairymen are concerned about spreading disease by mechanical means. The tattoo iron or non self-piercing ear tags can be the culprit if not cleaned properly. Blood born diseases such as anaplasmosis and bovine leukemia are two examples. Viruses such as warts can also be spread mechanically. Identification of individual animals is a way to help track and control disease.

Sketching

When sketching is used for application for registration, the outline of the animal is usually printed on the application. The sketch is made by drawing in the lines where the colors differ. There are two sides and a head view to draw. You can use a fine tip pencil and then go over the pencil lines with a ballpoint pen.



Projects Online

www.n4hccs.org/dairycattle

Model Calf Pattern

Milking It for More

1. Research how microchips are now being used to identify animals and support dairy management operations. Present a short report to your helper.