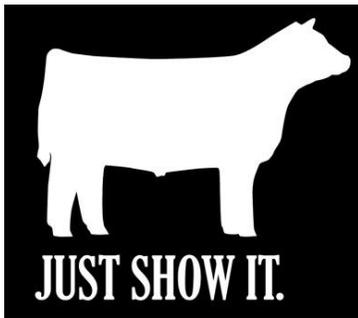


## **Tips for Showing Beef** (Source: Spotlight on 4-H July 2017 issue)



Over the past few years there has been a significant shift to Blow and Go shows at county, state and national beef shows. With the shift to Blow and Go Shows (no glue/adhesives and no paint), beginning youth and adults may have various questions and may not have the knowledge, skill level and equipment needed to properly fit their 4-H beef projects. The intent of this article is to provide some Blow and Go fitting tips in prepping the beef animal to show.

### **Grooming Equipment Needed**

The first step is determining what equipment is needed. An assortment of brushes and combs are crucial for removing dead hair; as well as, washing and training the hair of the animal. Generally, cattle should be brushed and combed forward, and slightly up, at a 30-45-degree angle. To promote hair growth, try to keep your animal cool with a fan and increase the number of times per day you wet down and brush the steer or heifer. A blower is also important, for not only drying the animal, but it will also help train and keep the hair clean. Clippers may be another piece of equipment to consider; however, before purchasing, consult a show-supply salesman to determine the correct clippers for the skill level of the youth.

Other necessary items to consider would be a show stick and leather show halter and maybe a blocking chute to keep the animal constrained while clipping and/or preparing the animal for a show.

### **Fitting**

There are various methods of fitting beef cattle, but the whole purpose of grooming and fitting beef animals is to make them look attractive. Before any clipping or fitting is done, study the animal and evaluate its strong and weak points and plan to fit the animal by making the weak points look as good as possible and accentuating the strong points. A lot of this can be done with clipping. The majority of the clipping should be done before ever attending a show. Keep in mind though that hair can't be put back on the calf after it's been taken off.

For the majority of Blow and Go Shows, adhesives/glues and paint are not allowed. Show supply dealers carry an assortment of other show day dressings and compounds such as show foams and sprays that do not have any adhesive properties. In order to know which products to use and how to properly apply it, the best advice is to experiment at home with some of these products and select the ones that do the best job.

Fitting a calf for show is something that should be done about 30-45 minutes before show time. Don't make the mistake of standing a calf in the blocking chute or getting them up to early in the stall because the calf will get tired and will not show well in the ring.