

FITTING AND SHOWING BEEF CATTLE

by

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## INTRODUCTION

Clipping and show day preparation is probably the most interesting and rewarding phase of the fitting process. Fitting really can change an animal's appearance. Realizing that each animal has different fitting needs, all animals are not fitted the same. Understanding basic important characteristics in the animal and fitting him to look his best makes a WINNER.

There is no "right way" of fitting a beef animal. The current methods change just as fashions and hairstyles do. The thoughts and ideas listed in this pamphlet are some suggestions that have worked in the past and may help you to be a successful fitter.

It takes a great deal of time to become an accomplished fitter. Practice, patience, listening and watching others and a willingness to try new ideas is important to stay abreast of new fitting techniques.

New ideas are often found at shows across the country. The ideas found there can be adjusted to your specific needs and made to work for you. An accomplished fitter can present an animal to look very natural and eye appealing by applying some specific fitting techniques.

## FITTING BEGINS EARLY

### I. Halter Breaking

#### A. Minimize stress

1. Use drag rope before tying
2. Tie for short periods of time
3. Do not leave steer unattended
4. Use show stick and brush for contact
5. Keep your body close as process progresses

#### B. Patience

#### C. Pull and release method for leading

#### D. Always work animal with his head tied up (after initial breaking process)

### II. Working and Growing the Haircoat

#### A. External parasite control

##### 1. Coppertox Extra

- a. Dip or spray as directed
- b. Winter time is important
- c. Be CAREFUL to mix as directed

##### 2. Black Leaf 40

- a. 60 days dip daily after rinsing
- b. One cap/bucket of water

#### B. Washing

##### 1. Use a mild soap

- a. Orvis
- b. Biogroom
- c. Kirks

##### 2. Rinse thoroughly--soap residues cause dandruff

##### 3. Don't wash too often--removes natural oils

4. Wash only when needed
  - a. Prior to clipping
  - b. Two days before the show
5. Replace natural oils with balsum mix always after washing

C. Rinsing Daily

1. Begin rinsing daily at least 60 days prior to show (once daily)
2. Rinse twice daily--at least 30 days if needed
  - a. Leave animal wet at night rinsing
  - b. Added rinsing stimulates hair growth
3. Spray or dip with balsum mix each rinsing
  - a. Spray--1 cap/quart of water
  - b. Dip--1 cap/bucket of water

D. Brushing and Breaking the Hair

1. Begin 60 days prior to show
2. Use rubber curry, scotch comb and rice root brush
3. Always brush on clean, damp, conditioned hair
4. Begin training new hair to go straight forward
5. Gradually increase upward angle to 45° as the hair grows
6. Electric blower is useful for straightening the hair--but will never replace the brush

E. Hair Growing Aids

1. Body clip at least 90 to 120 days prior to show
  - a. Clip down with beef head clippers
  - b. See Diagram A for example
2. Fans
3. Mist system
4. Dark place during the day

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3. Mist system
4. Dark place during the day
5. Daily rinsing
6. Feed supplements to promote hair growth
  - a. Linseed
  - b. Calf Manna
  - c. High protein feeds
  - d. Feeds high in fat
7. Adequate vitamin A
8. BRUSHING

### III. Clipping

#### A. Head

1. Many breeds are done differently (Diagrams C and D)
2. Shave about one week prior to show
3. Use method that best suits the animal

#### B. Brisket

1. One week prior
  - a. Clip down on white and red
  - b. Clip up on black
2. Blend into shoulder and head

#### C. Belly

1. Careful not to clip too high on the sides
2. Elbow and front of rear flank are guides
3. Clean up sheath and cod areas well

#### D. Tail

1. See Diagram E
2. Select best method for each animal

3. Clip one week prior to the show
4. Clip upward and close to the skin

#### E. Body Clipping

1. Use two hands when you are beginning
2. Clip with the hair
3. Trim up and slightly forward
4. Work one area at a time (i.e., shoulder, sides, top)
5. See Diagram F for other clipping methods
6. Clipping takes PRACTICE AND PATIENCE
7. Important areas of clipping
  - a. Smooth front leg into shoulder
  - b. Crest and neck hair should be very short or shaved
  - c. Straighten out top line and hip
  - d. Trim out long hair between hind legs to give set and dimension to the leg
  - e. Slip hind quarter to look muscular (steer) or flat and long (breeding cattle)

#### F. Trim Feet

1. Trim at least once--1 month prior to the show
2. Use professional trimmer
3. Use nippers and sander--BE CAREFUL

#### G. Shrinking of cattle

1. Aids in appearance of wasty cattle
2. Firms up over-conditioned animals
3. Reduce feed intake 10 days prior to show to 1/2 to 2/3 of ration
4. Limit water intake to 3/4 of a bucket twice a day for 3 days prior to show
5. Feed 1/2 ration and limit water while at the show

## H. Exercise

1. Aids in muscle tone
2. Firms over-conditioned animals
3. Increases appetite
4. Can influence carcass quality
5. Some exercise is necessary--daily in moderation
6. Don't over do it

## IV. Show Day Preparation

- A. Diagrams 1 and 2
- B. Allow plenty of time--45 minutes to 1 hour per head
- C. Rinse and blow dry prior to fitting if possible (fresher appearance)
- D. Cattle are to be clean and dry before beginning final preparation
- E. Work the hair
  1. Apply oil mix and brush in (Diagram B)
  2. Apply show foam, corona or any hair products so they can adequately dry
- F. Prepare tail and tail head
  1. Use tail ties if required.
  2. Height of tail is determined by each animal's need
  3. Ball should be small and symmetrical
  4. Spray with adhesive to hold it secure
  5. Putting on a plastic bag protects the tail until show
  6. Spray with paint if needed
  7. No part of the switch should be below the hocks
  8. Tail head is glued and trimmed to give hip a level appearance (see Diagram E)

## G. Bone Legs

1. Glycerine, colored leg wax or glue
2. Front leg can be boned from elbow to hoof, knee to hoof, or not boned at all on females.
3. Hind legs are boned from just above the hock to the hoof (inside and out)
4. Apply soap in downward motion and pull up evenly with a scotch comb
5. Do small area of leg at a time
6. Hint--heat soap in water or heat lamp to soften before applying
7. Hint--if soap becomes too cold or dries too fast on leg, put scotch comb in a bucket of hot water then pull through leg
8. Block legs to give them dimension and correctness
9. Paint legs after boning when necessary

## H. Paint feet

1. Black on most blacks and x-breds
2. Clear lacquer on all others

## I. Put on show halter

1. Clean and oiled
2. Adjust to 1/2 way between eyes and muzzle

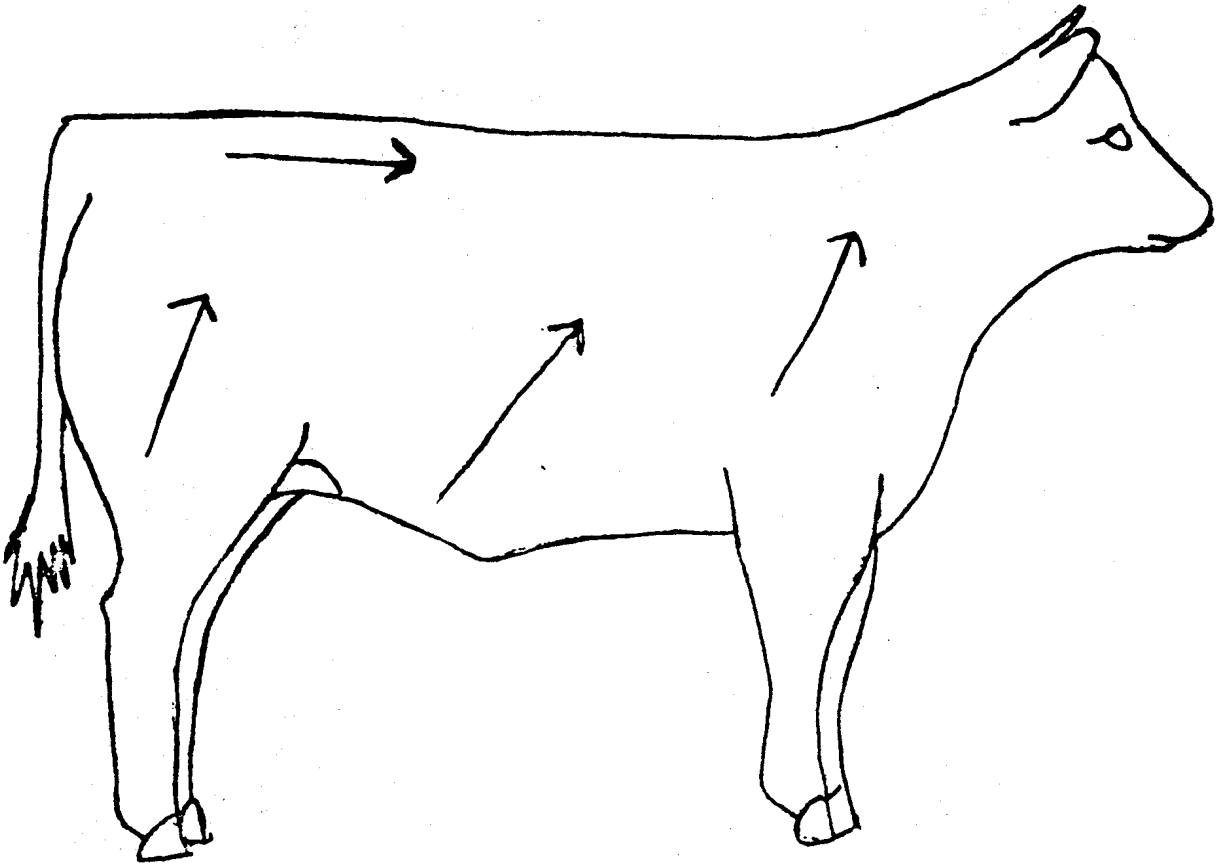
## J. Apply coat dressing

1. 10 minutes before class
2. Spray-can type
3. Purple oil and alcohol in sprayer
4. Don't make them too greasy

## K. Wash out calf after show

1. Outcast, E-Z Out, Shout
2. Soap
3. Balsum after washing





- A. Begin with rinsing the calf daily (at least 60 days prior to the fair) And brush the hair straight forward only with the rubber brush until adequate hair growth has occurred.
- B. With adequate hair, begin brushing forward at a 45° angle.
- C. As hair growth progresses, increase the **angle** gradually until the hair is pulled straight up, 6 necessary.
- D. Use of a blower (from top to bottom) helps to train the hair the last 20 days.

\*This brushing method stimulates hair growth and avoids curls and cowlicks.

## V. Hints While at the Show

- A. Establish a routine of feeding and watering tied at home
- B. Feed only some oat hay one feeding prior to moving animal to show--reduces shrinkage
- C. Feed hay only and rest for several hours after arrival
- D. Feed only 1/2 ration and limit water while at show
- E. Feeding beet pulp and hot water will aid in palatability of the feed and regularity of the digestive tract
- F. Adequate exercise daily
- G. If animal refuses to drink, try rinsing bucket with vinegar or add some molasses to water
- H. Feed alfalfa hay show morning to create a good fill
- I. Don't leave buckets or feed pans in straw with your animal
- J. Bed animal comfortably in adequate clean straw

## ESSENTIALS FOR CLIPPING

1. The animal's hair should be clean and in clipping condition.
2. Clippers should be oiled and greased and in good working order
  - A. Regular cattle clippers - 84 AU blades
  - B. C type head shearmasters preferably with four pronged forks
  - C. Shearing blades - goat combs or blocking comb (20 tooth), 13 tooth blades and 4 point cutters (any type)
3. Clipper aid or solvent to dip clippers in
4. Extension cords - adapters
5. Blocking chute
6. Spray oil mix
  - A. 30% Roseoil
  - B. 10% Purple oil
  - C. 20% Balsum
  - D. 30% Bayrum
  - E. 10% Alcohol
7. Scotch comb or brush
8. LOTS OF TIME - DON'T HURRY

It takes a lot of time, practice, and patience to be an accomplished clipper. Don't be afraid to try new techniques, watch others and ask questions. Take your time and enjoy what you're doing. It is very rewarding to change an animal's appearance by using your clipping talent.

**NOTE:** If you're having a bad day--STOP CLIPPING and try later--you might have a real wreck!

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR CLIPPING OF BEEF CATTLE  
(By breed and sex)

\*Note - heifers and bulls are usually clipped the same

ANGUS

- Always clip head, brisket, belly and tail
- Most Angus are shown slick and quartered
- NEVER clip the hair on the ears except for thinning on any breed
- Can shave shoulders for longer necked appearance

HEREFORD (polled and Horned)

- Never clip the head and horned Herefords
- Clip the brisket, belly and tail
- Be sure to grind, sand and oil horns

SHORTHORN (Polled and Horned)

- Never clip the head on horned Shorthorns
- Clip the brisket and belly
- Block tail - don't clip
- Be sure to grind, sand and oil horns

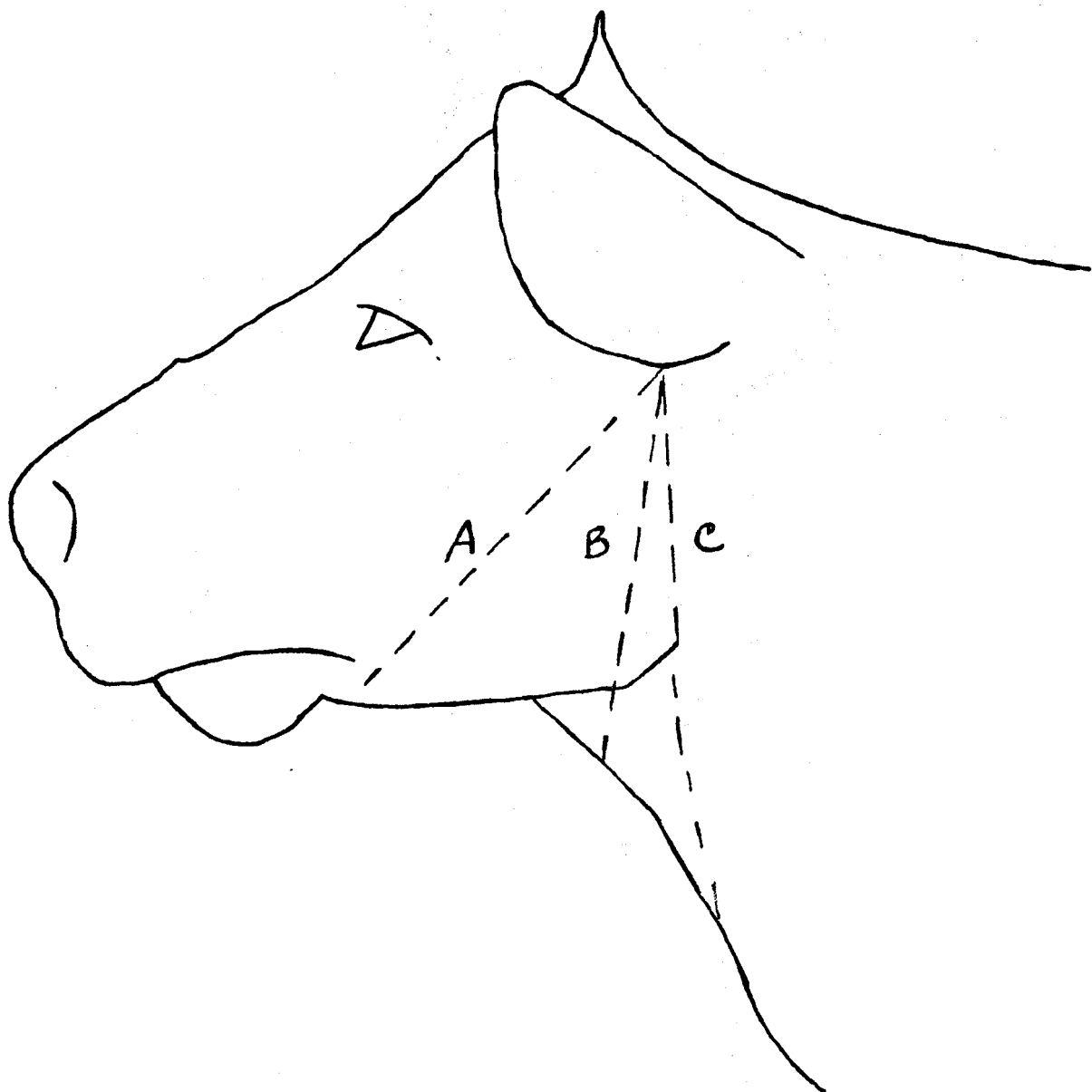
EXOTICS

- Most show with hair left on head (Limousines usually clip heads)
- Clip brisket and belly
- Can clip or block tail
- Can shave shoulders for longer necked appearance

STEERS (All breeds)

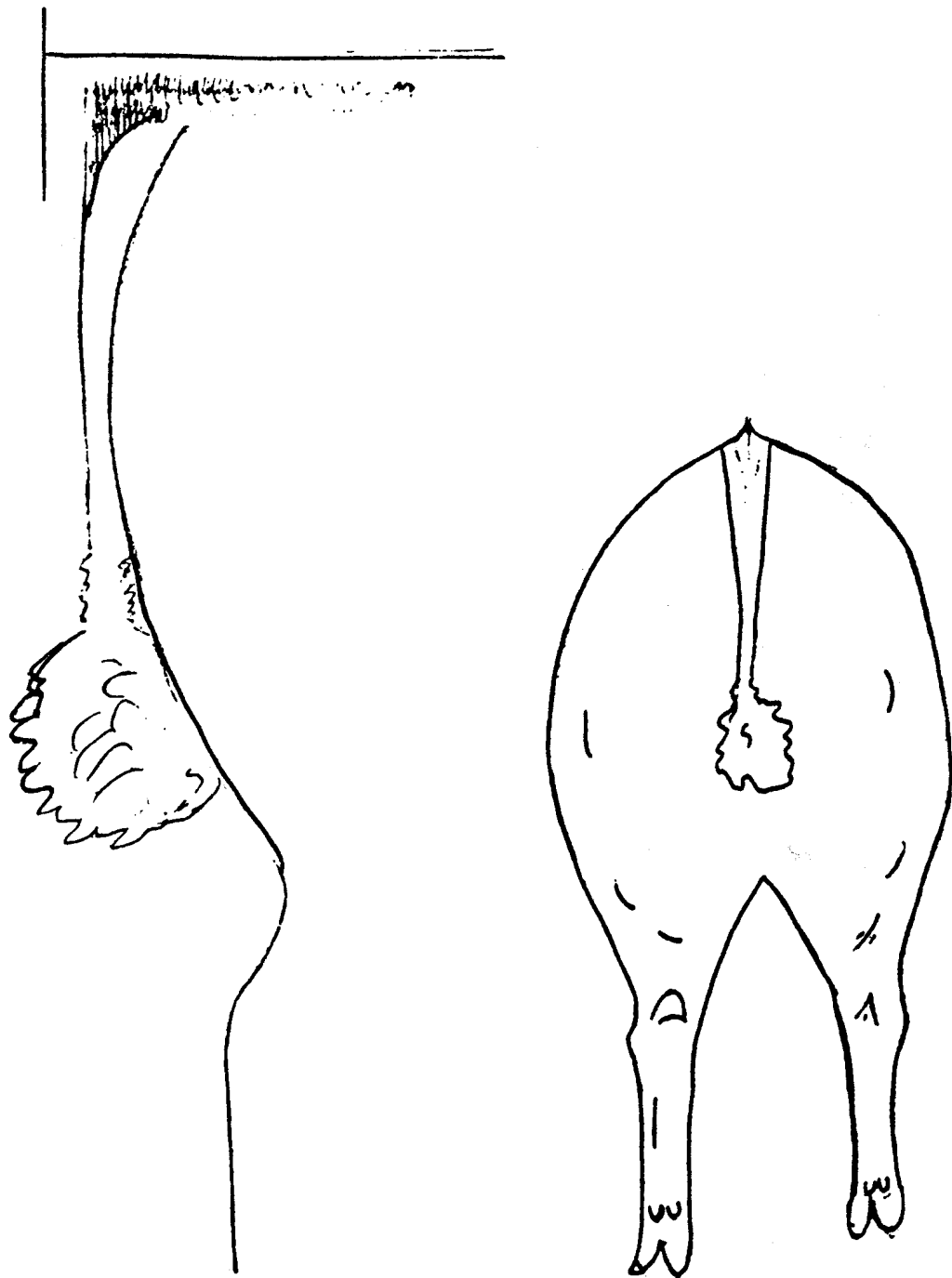
- Always clip head, brisket, belly and tail
- Can be shown slicked and quartered if hair is inadequate
- Shoulders may be clipped short

## CLIPPING THE HEAD



Remember to always clip against the natural direction of the hair pattern to achieve a close, smooth job. There are several clipping patterns, three of which are illustrated above.

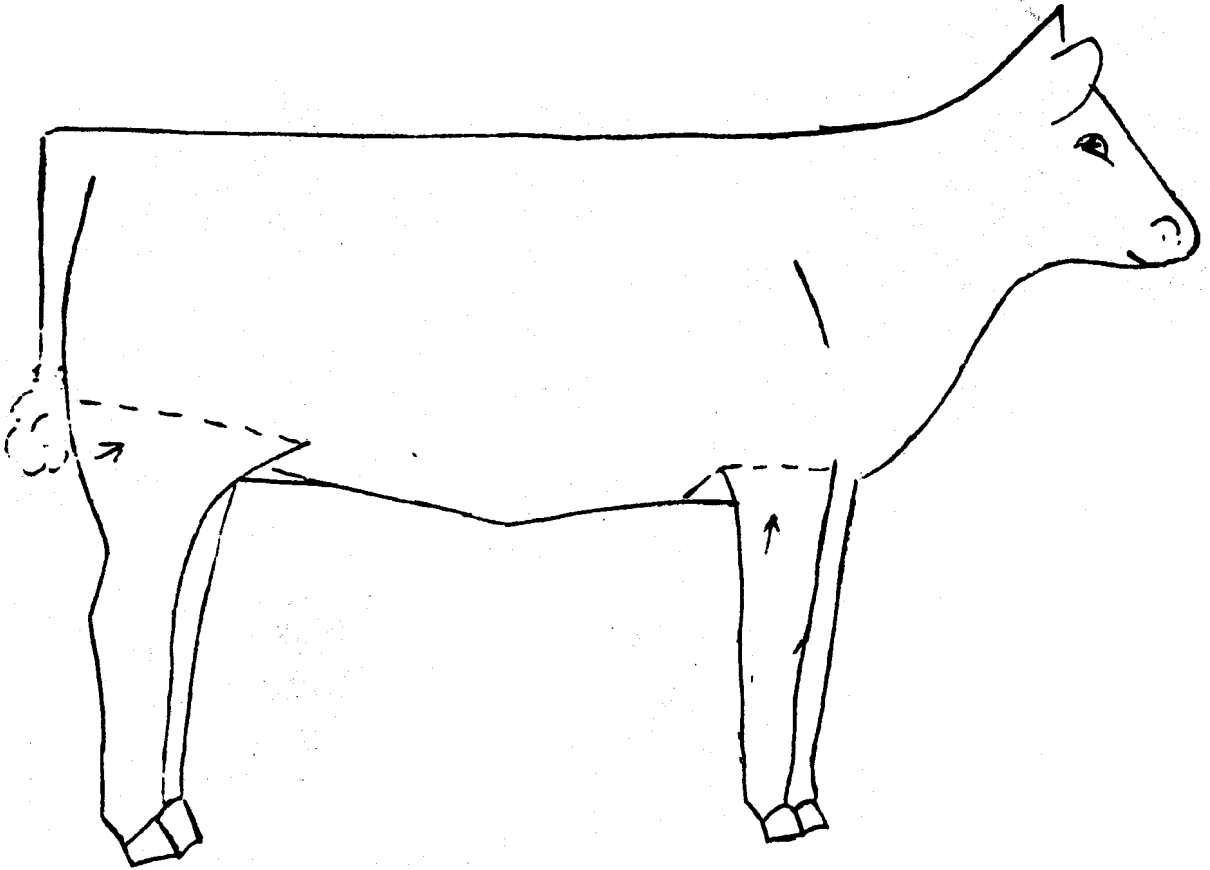
- A. This helps fill out a narrow head and works best with Angus or dark-colored cattle.
- B. The conventional clip is still a good style and works best for light-colored cattle.
- C. This clip line is often used in Angus cattle and in cattle that need their neck to appear longer and cleaner.



Whenever possible, extend the hair at the tail head so it has the appearance of a 90° corner. This method provides the animal with a longer look and a more nearly level hip.

The tail itself is clipped like a "V". This method helps the animal appear thicker behind.

\*The tailhead hair may be held up with wax or glue and then trimmed to the desired shape.



Sometimes beef animals look better slick and quartered. However if an animal's hair is not of the best quality over the entire body, it is probably better to show it quartered. Also, if your animal is not long or trim enough, you might resort to this type of fitting method. Breeding cattle are often presented in this matter.

Just brush the hair straight down and clip, except for the quarter and forearm, which is pulled up. You can use a generous amount of wax or glue to make the hair stand up.

\*Make sure the animal is clipped down with the clippers. Many cattle that are clipped in this manner are also shown with their front legs slicked down to exhibit a cleaner more angular front.

## EQUIPMENT SUPPLY LIST

Washing Supplies

Neck chain	Apron
Scrub brush	Hose
Soap	Nozzle
Dip	Nylon halter
Balsum	

Grooming Supplies

Rice root brush	Balsum
Soft brush	Bone soap
Rubber brush	Black, white, red wax
Soctch comb	Keyston glycerine or Amway
Tail comb	Glue
Sprayer	Corona, Sweet Georgia Brown
Hoof brush	Slick black
Blower	Coat Dressing
E-Z out or outcast	Rose oil mix
30% Rose oil	Tail ties
20% Balsum	Paint - streaks and tips
10% Purple oil	Lacquer
30% Bay rum	Scissors
10% Alcohol	Shaving creams

Show Ring Supplies

Show halter (brown or black)  
 Scotch comb  
 Show Stick  
 Nose lead

Other Supplies

Feed pans  
 Buckets  
 Extension cords  
 Clippers  
 Blades 84 VA, 20 tooth goat  
 Arizona Thin Company  
 Baggies  
 Broom, fork, pliers



FITTING SUPPLIES

The Grainery  
430 Brundage Lane  
Bakersfield, CA  
327-7569

Wasco Livestock Supply  
Wasco, CA

Patterson Supply Co.  
Collins, Iowa

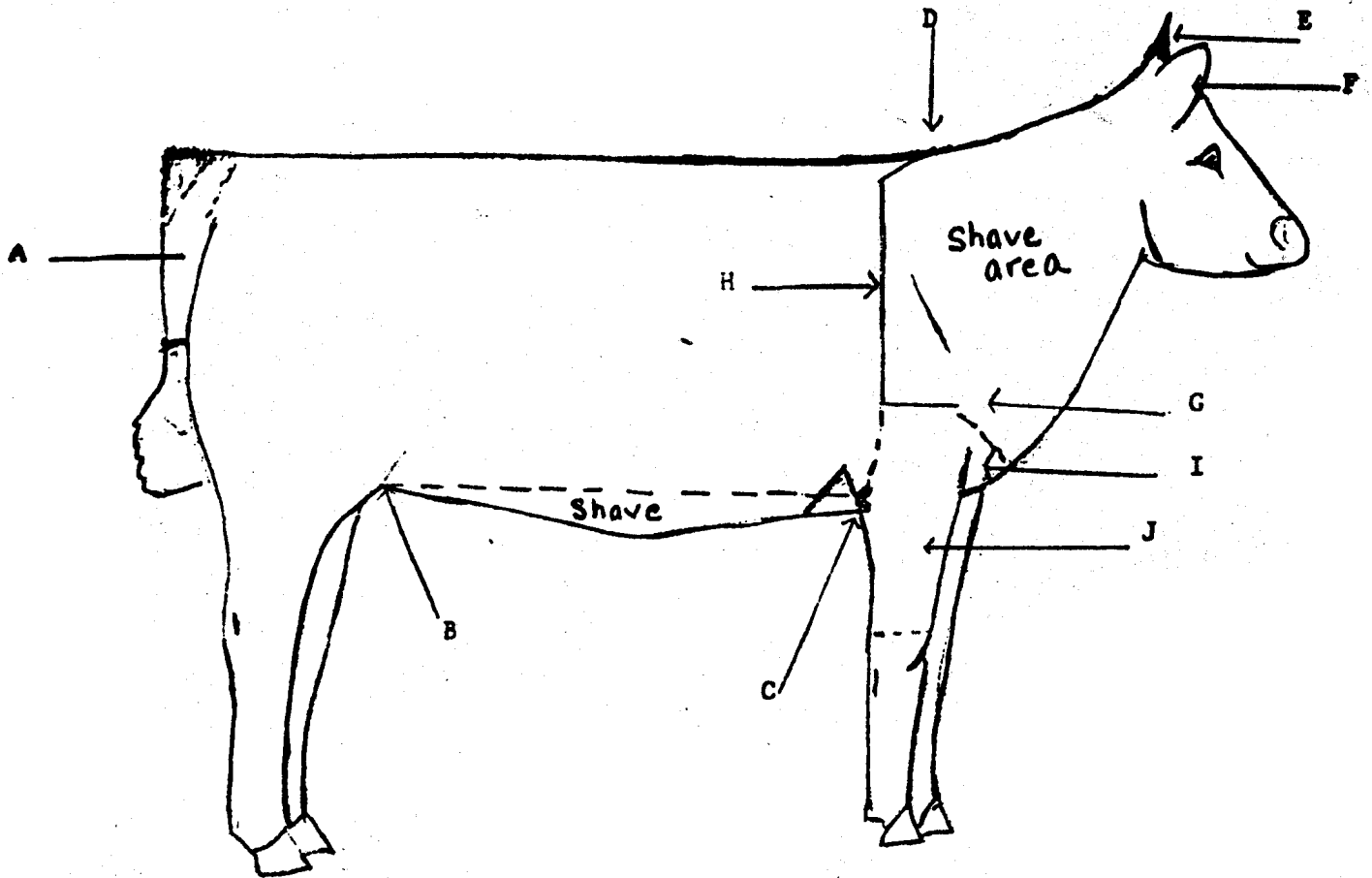
Hams Supply Co.  
Rt. 4  
Frederick, OK 73542  
(405) 335-2892

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Madera, Ca  
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## GUIDELINES FOR CLIPPING CLOSE AREAS



- A. Shave up on tail area except where indicated - makes the animal appear thicker.
- B. Rear flank - used as a guide for beginning of clipped belly line.
- C. Point of elbo - used as a guide for ending of the belly line.
- D. Top of shoulder joining neck - hair should be utilized in this area to give the appearance of a smooth joining of these two parts.
- E. Poll - leave this hair on the head to give added head length and youthfulness.
- F. Ear - leave most of the ear hair on the animal - thinning is acceptable.
- G. Point of the shoulder - used as a guide point to shave the front end - the horizontal line should go through this point.
- H. Vertical shave line - should be right in front of the area where side and shoulder join - this line is to be blended to make a smooth blending shoulder - line can be slanted either way if the animal type requires it.
- I. Under the shoulder point - this hare should remain when shaving the front if the point of the shoulder is to prominent.
- J. Upper front leg area - this area may be shaved along with the front - usually it is done on heavy fronted animals and most heifers. Usually the leg hair below the knee remains.

\* Usually the front end is shaved with beef blades going downward with the hair. It can be shaved up if time is allowed for some regrowth.