

Hints for Specific Animal Displays

All displays should meet standards set out in the Recommended Codes of Practice for each animal. The following are suggestions for some specific displays, along with sample questions which you should be prepared to answer.

You can always expect the following questions:

- What is it?
- What does it eat?
- How old is it?
- What's its name?
- How long will it live?

Beef

- Demonstrate a cow-calf and/or a feedlot operation, and identify this with signage. Use market weight cattle for feedlot representation.
- Be careful if displaying horned animals. Take measures to prevent injury to other animals and your visitors.
- Equipment such as round bale feeders and head gates or chutes can add value to this exhibit.
- Use a model or a diagram of a rumen to explain what cows eat and how beef cattle can use land and foods that could not be used for other purposes.
- Have a sample of feeds on hand to show that beef cattle eat approximately 85% hay and roughages over their lifetime.



Possible questions:

- Are they male or female?
- Do you keep them on "the range" or inside?
- Aren't they pumped full of hormones & antibiotics?
- Isn't it wasteful to raise cattle for meat?
- Aren't cattle bad for the environment?
- Should I be worried about mad cow disease?



Dairy

- Display lactating dairy cows in a tie-stalls or a pen.
- Milking demonstrations with informative commentaries are very popular. Don't forget to explain a cow must give birth before she starts to produce milk!
- Refuse all requests for samples of the milk from the public.
- Display a dry cow to help illustrate that cows are not milked year-round.
- A cow calving at the event can draw a lot of attention, but priority must be placed on the animal's wellbeing.
- A calf in a hutch is popular. Good signs can address a lot of concerns many people have as they drive by and see the 'igloos' outside on dairy farms. We recommend putting a gate or pen across the front of the hutch instead of tying the calf. This keeps kids out of the hutch, and allows the calf to get away from public attention.



Possible questions:

- How often are they milked?
- How much milk do they give?
- What do you do with the calves?
- Why can't calves stay with the cows?
- Where are the bulls?
- Isn't it cruel to keep calves outside in "igloos" (hutches)?
- Should I be worried about hormones and antibiotics in my milk?



Layer Hens

- Set up an egg laying exhibit with the proper equipment, according to the Recommended Code of Practice.
- Hens should be displayed in cages, with signs and volunteers to explain why.
- Different breeds can be used to illustrate the brown/white egg differences.
- Don't let people take home ungraded eggs!

Possible questions:

- How often do they lay an egg?
- Why do you keep them in those tiny cages?
- Why can't they go outside?
- Are brown eggs more nutritious than white eggs?
- Where is the rooster?
- Aren't free range eggs better?
- Why do you "de-beak" the birds?



Sheep & Goats



- Draw attention to this area with sheep shearing or sheepdog demonstrations with an informative and entertaining commentary.
- Display market weight lambs and mature ewes and rams. New lambs are popular, yet stress levels at a fair often make this option undesirable.
- Signs can explain shearing and lifecycles. Explain how sheep and goats can graze land that could not be used for growing other crops

Possible questions:

- Does it hurt the sheep to shear them?
- Why do you cut their tails?
- How can you eat those cute lambs or kids?

Swine

- A sow and her piglets in a farrowing unit is a huge attraction. This display should be manned and have good signage to explain why, and for how long, the animals are kept in farrowing pens. People will often leave the area with a negative impression if their questions and concerns are not addressed.
- Display or show pictures of research-based alternative designs of farrowing pens. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of different systems.
- Market weight hogs can be displayed to illustrate how quickly pigs grow and the size of a market weight animal.



Possible questions:

- Can she stand up?
- Why does she lay down all the time?
- How long is she in there?
- How long are the piglets with her?
- How often do the piglets eat?
- Why can't they go outside?

Sample sign:

"This is an example of a 'farrowing pen', a special stall designed for female pigs (sows) to give birth in and nurse their piglets. Sows are moved to this pen approximately one week before giving birth, and stay there the duration of nursing their piglets (about 3 weeks). This pen was designed to help prevent the sow from laying on her piglets while allowing the farmer to feed and check each animal."



Veal

This industry is surrounded by misinformation, and needs some preparation to effectively dispel the myths. Veal calves can create a lot of interest in the exhibit area. Like the sow in the farrowing unit, this display should always be manned and have comprehensive signage. The spokesperson for this display should spend some time preparing answers and think of approaches to deal with people that might initially have strongly negative ideas about this industry. **This display is the most difficult, but it is also the most important for educating the public with accurate information.**

- Milk-fed and/or grain-fed veal calves can be displayed.
- Depending on housing conditions at the originating farm, house calves in either stalls or loose pens with a sign explaining why.
- Market weight calves should be displayed to illustrate the size of the animal at processing and dispel the "veal comes from a newborn calf" notion that many people have.
- Display different types of feeds with an emphasis on the message that calves need a balanced diet to grow.

Possible questions:

- Can they stand up/turn around/lie down? (stalls)
- Are they anaemic?
- Why can't they stay with their mother?
- Aren't they chained up in the dark?
- How can you be so cruel? How would you like to live like that?



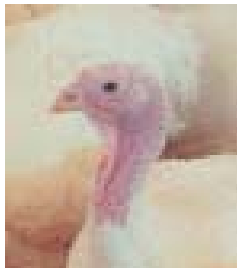
Example signs: See OFAC's "You were asking about VEAL" for more ideas.

- *Veal calves are male dairy breed calves. 50% of all calves born are male and are not capable of producing milk.*
- *It's important that all calves receive the cow's immunity-building milk (colostrum). The calves are then fed a balanced milk-based diet that meets all their nutritional needs with added vitamins and minerals, including iron.*
- *These calves are now eating grain and corn.*
- *Individual stalls are used to allow the farmer to monitor each calf individually and prevent competition for milk with 'bully' calves. Exercise has no effect on the tenderness of the meat.*
- *Calves are kept in well-lit, environmentally controlled barns."*



Turkeys/Broilers

- Display market weight/sized birds and explain this to the visitor.
- Chicks and poults can also be displayed to attract interest and illustrate growth rates.
- Poultry require especially good ventilation and temperature regulation and this must be considered prior to display set-up.



Possible questions:

- Why are the turkeys' beaks trimmed?
- Are they pumped full of hormones and antibiotics?
- Why doesn't the meat taste the same as it used to?
- Should I be concerned about salmonella?
- Why aren't they 'free range'?

Out of the Ordinary Animals

Horses, donkeys, llamas, deer, ratites, fish, bees, and fancy birds will all draw attention to the area. Be careful of the stress-sensitive nature of some of these animals and plan accordingly. You may want to point out if the animals are farmed commercially or not, and provide appropriate production information.

