

The Purebred Dairy Cattle Association

Show Ring Code of Ethics

Adopted February 2025

The showing of registered dairy cattle stimulates and sustains interest in the breeding of registered dairy cattle. It is also an important part of the promotion, merchandising and breeding program of many breeders. For these reasons, the Purebred Dairy Cattle Association (PDCA) believes that it is in the best interest of all breeders of registered dairy cattle to maintain a reputation of integrity in dairy cattle shows and to present a wholesome and progressive image of dairy cattle in the show ring.

PDCA endorses this Show Ring Code of Ethics for all dairy breed shows and pledges its full cooperative support for its enforcement to show management, show judges, and the national breed associations.

The application of this Code of Ethics provides for absolute responsibility for an animal's condition by an owner, exhibitor, fitter or participant whether or not he or she was actually instrumental in or had actual knowledge of the treatment of the animal in contravention of this Code of Ethics. Dairy cattle exhibitors shall, at all times, deport themselves with honesty and good sportsmanship.

It is recognized that there are certain practices in the proper care and management of dairy cattle that are necessary in the course of moving dairy cattle to and between shows that are advisable to keep them in a sound, healthy state so they might be presented in the show ring in a natural, normal condition. At all times, exhibition livestock shall be treated in a humane manner and in accordance with dairy quality assurance practices so as to protect the health, safety and welfare of the livestock and the consuming public. No person shall present for exhibition or exhibit an animal which he or she knows, or has reason to suspect, is affected with or has been exposed to a dangerously contagious or infectious disease, or illegal or non-approved use of drugs, medication and/or prohibited substance, or residue.

The position of the Purebred Dairy Cattle Association is that all animals presented for exhibition shall be in their natural conformation and structure, free of any alteration or modification by injection or internal or external administration of any substance or by any involvement in unethical fitting.

Grooming and Preparation

Dairy cattle exhibitions are conducted under standards for evaluating conformation established by the PDCA *Unified Score Card (2025)*, with specific breed characteristics taken into consideration by the show judge. In this connection, animals will be groomed and prepared for the judge's evaluation in order to display the animal's natural contour, conformation, performance and mobility. Specifically:

1. Changing the natural color of the animal is prohibited (*effective 6/1/2015*). However, external applications of cosmetics that affect only appearance may be used, including by way of example hoof polishes and false switches.
2. The maximum allowable length of naturally growing hair anywhere on the topline is not to exceed 1 ½ inches. Exhibitors will be required to comply with this rule before the animal is allowed to enter the ring.
3. Addition of foreign objects, including but not limited to hair or hair substitutes, cloth or fiber, to change the natural contour or appearance of the animal's body is prohibited.
4. Externally sealing the teat end with a preparation that does not harm the animal's skin is permissible.

5. Natural teat placement will be given preference over artificially positioned teats.
6. The practice of over bagging the udder, or allowing excessive fill of milk in the mammary system, is strongly discouraged due to the harmful impact on animal comfort and health. Any signs of this could result in competition disqualification.

Violations: False, Deceptive or Unacceptable Practices

These practices are violations of the Code of Ethics and will be reported to show management and may be reported to the respective national breed associations:

1. Misrepresenting the age, milking status and/or lactation number of the animal for the class in which it is shown.
2. Treating the animal, particularly the udder, internally or externally:
 - a. with an irritant or counterirritant,
 - b. using a device to artificially create or enhance the udder crease,
 - c. using other substances as detected by testing that causes changes in the udder to artificially improve the conformation.
 - d. no substance that is not approved by FDA or prescribed by veterinarian may be administered to the mammary system including the teat canal.
3. Surgical or unethical insertion of any matter under the skin or into body cavities, performed to change the natural contour or appearance of the animal's body (e.g., administration of fluid via a stomach tube or other similar apparatus to fill the rumen), though not to preclude practices required or involved in normal management.
4. Criticizing or interfering with the judge, show management or other exhibitors while in the show ring or other conduct detrimental to the breed or the show.
5. Challenging, threatening or interfering with an ethics committee appointed by show management to monitor the animals on exhibit on the show grounds.

Exhibitor Responsibility

The act of entering an animal in a livestock show is the giving of consent by the owner, exhibitor, fitter and/or absolutely responsible person (hereinafter referred to as "Exhibitor") for show management to obtain any specimens of urine, saliva, blood, milk, or other substances from the animal to be used in testing. Materials may also be collected by ultrasound and photographic methods and by direct examination of animal.

The act of entering an animal is the giving of consent by the owner, exhibitor, fitter and/or absolutely responsible person (the "Exhibitor") to have disciplinary action for violation of this Show Ring Code of Ethics taken by show management, the state in which the show occurs, and/or the national dairy breed association without recourse.

Show Ethics Committee

Each show should have an Ethics Committee. The make-up of this committee should include official breed representatives, representative(s) of show management (e.g., dairy cattle show superintendent, General Manager), the official show veterinarian, and Extension representative.

The Ethics Committee will be responsible for monitoring violations of the Show Ring Code of Ethics. The Ethics Committee will investigate the report of any violation and determine the accuracy of the allegation. The Ethics Committee will have the authority to inspect animals and related material to determine if violations have occurred.

Violations: Reporting and Investigation

Complaints of alleged violations can be reported to the breed superintendent, the show superintendent, show management, and/or the Ethics Committee.

Before An Animal is Shown

If the Ethics Committee suspects that a violation of the Show Ring Code of Ethics will occur if the animal is shown, and that violation is reasonably well established before the animal is shown, the Ethics Committee will submit a report to show management.

Show management will discuss the violation with the Exhibitor:

1. If, at the Exhibitor's discretion, the animal in question is not shown, no violation will have occurred.
2. If the Exhibitor wishes to challenge that a violation occurred, he/she/they will have opportunity to appeal to the Ethics Committee. If its decision is not changed, the Exhibitor will be denied opportunity to exhibit the animal in question.

During and After An Animal is Shown

All animals are subject to examination during judging. The judge and Ethics Committee are instructed to examine the top five (5) animals in each class closely for violations of the Show Ring Code of Ethics. When a violation may have occurred, a milkout may be called for. This call may be by breed association rule, or by request of an authorized representative of the national breed association, the judge, the Ethics Committee, or show management.

If an animal is exhibited and a violation of the Show Ring Code of Ethics is subsequently suspected, investigated, and determined to have occurred, the violation will be reported to the Ethics Committee and show management for action. The Exhibitor will be notified of the violation and the supporting evidence and invited to defend or explain the allegations.

Violations are subject to the disciplinary provisions of show management, the state in which the show occurs, and the national dairy breed association. Sanctions may include any one, or combination of the following:

- forfeiture or return of awards, prizes, premiums or proceeds;
- written letter of reprimand to the owner, exhibitor, fitter and/or absolutely responsible person (the "Exhibitor");
- disqualification of the exhibition livestock from an exhibition;
- disqualification of the Exhibitor from the show;
- publication of offense.

Disqualification may include any or all shows and classes and may be for any number of years.