

PDCA Showmanship Evaluation Card (Revised 2025)

It is important that participants in showmanship ensure that their animal is in proper body condition and growth based on the age of the animal. Horns are to be removed at an appropriate age to provide a safer environment for the leadsperson. Feet should be properly trimmed to promote ease of movement for the animal. These practices will show good husbandry skills of the participant as well as a positive image for the dairy industry.

PDCA recommends the following levels of discrimination in the judging of showmanship competitions.

Slight Discriminations

Exhibitor

- Inappropriate halter (beef, nylon, rope)
- Lead strap tightly looped
- Failure to enter the ring walking forward at a smooth, efficient pace
- Has stiff outstretched arm
- Has poor posture – either overly stiff or slumped, sloppy
- Improper head carriage, animal's nose is too high
- Calf's head is not turned slightly toward judge when hide is felt
- Stepping on or kicking at the animal's front feet. (Note that a slight touch to move animal's front feet is allowed and should not be discriminated against)
- Inappropriate size of calf for competitor

Animal

- Minor instances of animal not handling well
- Is not alert
- Muzzle is not wiped clean
- Switch is not brushed and fluffed
- Clipping lines not properly blended*

Moderate Discriminations

Exhibitor

- Not wearing white clothing or show-approved professional attire
- Inappropriate or unprofessional attire that draws attention to the exhibitor
- Wearing clothing with farm or commercial advertising/logos
- Does not know birth date, fresh date, breeding date, due date
- Unable to recognize type faults of the animal*
- Halter not fitting or put together properly
- Holding the halter in the right hand
- Holding the lead strap too far from the halter
- Has fingers in ring of the halter
- Failure to hold throat when needed
- Improper head carriage, animal's head held too low
- Unable to show animal to best advantage
- Slow response to judge or ring official
- Inattentiveness
- Watching the judge too intently
- Over-showing
- Leading too slowly

- Has elbow or hands up
- Is too far to outside or inside of ring
- Incorrect spacing to the animal in front when on parade
- Sidesteps when leading calf
- Doesn't turn and walk forward quickly into line
- Failure to stop and set up your animal appropriately at the judges request. (Heifers: place rear leg nearest the judge back, Cows: place rear leg nearest the judge forward)
- Front legs not squarely positioned
- Does not keep animal straight from head to tail in lineup
- Crowding or bumping other animals when pulled in line
- Leaving extra space in line
- Failure to maintain a straight lineup
- Moves excessively in line
- Unable to back up animal
- Chewing gum

Animal

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legs not clipped | <input type="checkbox"/> Clipping too early; hair appears too long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dirt/dust in hair coat | <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete clipping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dirt/wax in ears | <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive clipping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feet not cleaned | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive use of hair sprays, powder and other fitting products | |

Serious Discriminations

Exhibitor

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lead strap looped & fastened | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor instances of unsportsmanlike conduct |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Striking the animal | <input type="checkbox"/> Is late to class |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Positioning animal's rear legs by stepping on rear feet | <input type="checkbox"/> Wearing inappropriate shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fusses with or moves calf to the extreme | <input type="checkbox"/> Chewing tobacco |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Carries or talks on a cell phone |

Animal

- Animal causing disturbances to others

Disqualification

- Violations of PDCA Show Ring Code of Ethics
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Repeated striking of the animal

Recommendation for the evaluation of topline:

- Topline is groomed, doesn't distract from the animal's overall appearance, conforms to the guidelines of the PDCA Showring Code of Ethics.*

*Expectations should be age appropriate and at some shows, these fitting criteria may be significantly downplayed at the discretion of show management and with appropriate communication to exhibitors.