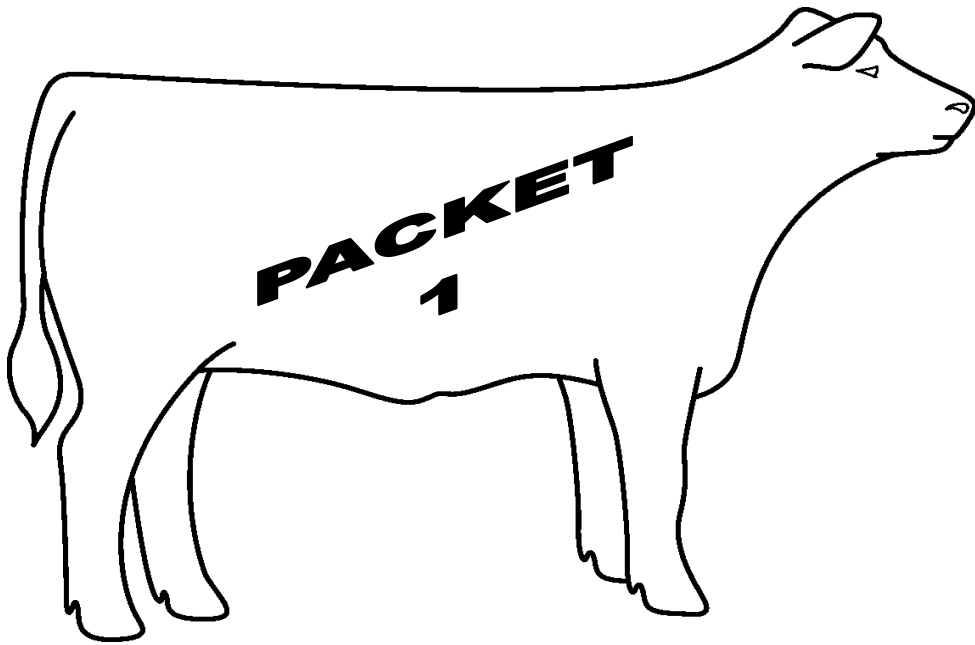


New England 4-H Beef Program



**September 24-28, 2026
Eastern States
Exposition**

OBJECTIVES FOR NEW ENGLAND 4-H PROGRAMS AT THE BIG E

The 4-H program at The Big E is a cooperative effort with the Eastern States Exposition and the Cooperative Extension Systems of the New England States working together toward common objectives. These objectives are:

1. To motivate and recognize the achievements of 4-H members and their volunteer leaders.
2. To give the general public attending The Big E a better understanding of 4-H educational efforts including the organization, program, and accomplishments.
3. To provide educational experiences for 4-H members that are not available in the individual states.
4. To make 4-H programs and activities visible to the general public across the grounds of The Big E.
5. To expand the image of 4-H as a total diverse youth development program.
6. To ensure quality educational activities both for the 4-H participant and the general public.
7. To identify 4-H as an integral part of the Cooperative Extension System and the land grant universities of New England.
8. To involve youth as equal partners in full decision-making roles at all levels of program decision-making.

RULES FOR 2026 4-H BEEF ACTIVITIES

*denotes new or changed in 2026

PARTICIPATION

1. Eligibility: The 4-H Beef Show is for bona fide 4-H members of New England and Dutchess County, New York, who are at least 12 but have not turned 19 years of age on or before January 1 of the current year.
2. State Representation: If 4-H club membership is held in more than one state, and the same project is taken in both states, the 4-H member must compete and represent the state in which they reside. If the project is only taken in one state, the 4-H member should represent that state.
3. Attendance at The New England 4-H Beef Activity is a commitment. Emergency leave will be determined by the Committee Chairperson. 4-H participants, family members and leaders are expected to abide by all show and dormitory rules.
4. Drinking of alcoholic beverages, smoking and use of drugs by delegates is prohibited. All 4 H delegates are expected to act in an orderly manner. Delegates are expected to respect the general public and answer questions politely. Delegates will abstain from using profanity. Appropriate actions will be taken for violations.
5. Housing and Meals: Eastern States Exposition will provide housing and meals for the 4 H Beef members and authorized leaders at the Moses 4-H Dormitory. Mattresses and cots are provided. Members must bring their own bedding and towels. The Meal Schedule is as follows: Breakfast – 6:30 to 8 am, Lunch – 11:15 am to 1:15 pm and Supper – 5 to 7 pm. Those who are sleeping in the dorm will receive meal tickets upon checking in. **All 4-H youth are required to sleep overnight in the dorm for the duration of their 4-H Activity.***
6. Exhibitor Health Condition: Members must obtain a health form from The Big E website that is to be filled out and signed by their parent or guardian. This procedure gives medical staff permission to administer medical treatment if and when it is necessary to do so. Health forms are to be turned in upon check-in at the dorm, will be kept on-file in the Moses 4-H Dormitory Office. State chaperones may also request copies to keep on-file in a secure place within the 4-H Activity area.
7. Display Material Policy: Please see the Fire Prevention Regulations page.
8. Participation: All members must participate at such times and places as the superintendent may direct. In case of refusal, the exhibitor shall be barred from showing and selling at the auction, in addition premium checks and awards will be forfeited if exhibitors have already shown. **Animals that are scratched from the type show are not eligible to be shown in showmanship.***
9. Ownership: Members must own their steers beginning no later than February 1, 2026 and heifers no later than May 10, 2026 Entries from the state office to Eastern States Exposition MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE NO LATER THAN MARCH 1 at midnight FOR STEERS AND MAY 25 at midnight FOR HEIFERS. Each member may enter a total of three (3) animals in the 4-H Beef Show regardless of gender. Only one animal will be allowed in the fitting and showmanship contest. **Members are prohibited from caring for any other animals outside of the 4-H Beef program. Cooperation between program participants is encouraged. Please note that 4-H members who are not part of the current year's program may not assist in preparing or caring for animals involved in the program.**
10. Junior Leader Program: States may chose 4-H members that do not have animals entered in the New England 4-H Beef Activity to be junior leaders. These members must meet above age requirements. The Junior Leaders will participate in all contests except Fitting and Showmanship and the type show. The Junior Leaders' names must be submitted to Eastern States Exposition prior to/on August 25 postmark.

11. **Dress Code:** Activity attire will be “CLOTHES NEAT, CLEAN AND PRESENTABLE. CLOSED TOE SHOES ONLY.” While showing, members will be disqualified if they are wearing shorts, clothing advertising a farm or breed, and/or other clothing that the superintendent considers inappropriate for the event. Delegates may not appear in the barns or on the grounds barefoot. Appropriate attire is required at all 4-H Beef Show events, including the sale. In the interest of safety, sneakers may not be worn in the show ring. Please see Beef Packet 2 for more specific information.
12. **Overnight:** No cars, trucks, or other non-camper vehicles are allowed to be used as overnight accommodations on Eastern States Exposition grounds. Any vehicles used in this manner will be towed. Tents are not allowed inside the fenced-in area. As precedent is currently set in certain project areas, State approved volunteers for all 4-H animal programs may stay overnight in the barns where the appropriate animals are housed. Volunteers using canvas-sided/pop-up/tent campers will be required to sign a waiver accepting all responsibility for any theft, safety and/or personal liability. Failure to follow all rules for this show will result in disqualification and forfeiture of all awards and the right to sell an animal at the sale. See 4-H Camper Policy page for camping information.

ENTRIES

1. Entry forms are available from 4-H Staff, local 4-H club leaders or online at www.thebigE.com. Online entries close March 1, 2026 at midnight for steers and May 25, 2026 at midnight for heifers. The entry application must be filled out completely, including staff signatures and official Big E ear tag number for steers.
2. **Loss or Damage:** Policy regarding cases of loss or damage: All exhibits will be under the direction of Eastern States Exposition Management, who will exercise every reasonable care in the protection of exhibits. In no case will Eastern States Exposition or management be responsible for any loss or damage that may occur. Each exhibitor will be solely responsible for any loss, injury, or damage done to any animal; or loss, injury, or damage done by or arising from any animal they exhibit. Eastern States Exposition, New England 4-H Council, 4-H Project Committee, and the New England State 4-H Program shall be indemnified against legal or other proceedings in regard thereto. Exhibitor signature of the 4-H Entry Form for Heifers and/or Steers will indicate total compliance to this ruling.
3. **Records:** Members are required to furnish feed and management records for the animal they enter. ANIMALS WITHOUT COMPLETE RECORDS ARE INELIGIBLE FOR COMPETITION. MEMBERS MUST USE THE MOST RECENTLY REVISED RECORD to start the project. The feeding and business records will begin no later than February 1 for steers. Records must be reviewed by the local 4-H club leader, and 4-H Staff with youth responsibilities, and signed by the above indicating that they have approved the preparation of the record. A completed record with appropriate signatures must be turned in at the weigh-in.
4. **Arrival and departure** times will be listed in the schedule of 4-H Activities and distributed by the 4-H Coordinator. Animals will be permitted to leave the grounds following the 4-H Beef sale under the direction of the superintendent and upon presentation of a duly signed and official bill of sale/invoice or release.
5. **Integrity:** Any member who willfully falsifies the weight and birth date or report of his/her animal shall forfeit all awards and trophies and be ineligible to enter future shows. Use of muzzles during show is prohibited. The use of any hair pieces is prohibited.
6. **Care of Animals:** 4-H participants are responsible for their animals at all times. Neither Eastern States Exposition nor the 4-H Beef Management Committee assumes responsibility for loss or damage to livestock or injury to persons.
7. **NO DOGS** OR OTHER PETS ALLOWED in the barn at any time.

8. Emergency Procedures: In the case of a major emergency on the fairgrounds, all 4-H members, leaders, and chaperones are to report to the front lawn of their respective state buildings along the Avenue of States and remain there until released by the 4-H Dormitory Supervisor except those in the Mallary Complex. Those in the Mallary Complex should immediately find their barn chaperone and listen to the public address system for further instructions. See Evacuation Plan, Quarantine, and Emergency Protocols pages for full details.
9. Animal Identification: All animals need to be in accordance with Massachusetts animal identification and RFID requirements for federal transport. For more information, please check the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture website at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/animal-health/>

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS 2026 ANIMAL HEALTH REGULATIONS: Second Packet only.

EQUIPMENT, STALLS AND FEED

1. Stalls will be assigned by state groups. Only animals and members accepted for competition will be permitted on the grounds. Unauthorized appearance of animals on the grounds, except in those areas approved by the superintendent, are prohibited. Animals must be tied with both a neck tie and halter.
2. Bedding and hay will be provided. Members should bring all equipment needed to properly care for their animals including halter, brushes, combs, feed boxes and water buckets.
3. The use of fans and mechanical groomers are permissible, provided such use has the prior approval of the superintendent. All electrical equipment must be properly grounded.
4. Only awards earned during the 2026 Big E 4-H Beef Program can be displayed as decoration. Eastern States Exposition will provide all signage
5. Stall and tack area must be kept clean, neat, well ordered at all times.

SHOW CONTESTS

1. The animals will be judged at a time to be announced in the schedule. Rope or leather halters may be used in Type and Fitting and Showmanship at the discretion of the 4-H member. **WIRE HALTERS PROHIBITED.**
2. An identification number will be provided by the superintendent and must be worn during the type show, the fitting and showmanship contest, and the sale. It is the responsibility of the 4-H member to display the correct number for the contest and animal being exhibited.
3. No animal may be exhibited in competition that cannot be managed and led in the show ring by its owner alone. Exhibitors only are to present their animals in the sale ring. Exceptions to rules must be approved by the Superintendent)

Any of the above rules may be changed as deemed necessary by the 4-H Beef Management Committee. The interpretation of all the 4-H Beef rules will be determined by the 4-H Beef Management Committee.

The Cooperative Extension System 4-H Youth Development program prohibits discrimination in education, employment, and in the provision of services on account of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, disabled veteran status, physical or mental disability, mental retardation, [and] other specifically covered mental disabilities, [and criminal records that are not job related].

2026 4-H BEEF ACTIVITY ADDITIONAL STEER SHOW RULES

1. Classes will be broken according to weight into lightweight, mediumweight and heavyweight classes. **All steers regardless of breed will show together.** Champion, Reserve Champion, Highly Commended and Commended awards will be selected from each weight division. An overall Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion will be selected from the previous champions in the three weight divisions. The Management committee shall determine the class into which the animal shall be accepted for showing based on weights taken at the weigh-in.
2. All steers must be officially identified by a representative of the 4-H Beef Committee on or before March 1 of the program year. Method of identification is up to the discretion of the committee and may include RFID tagging, hair sampling, and/or blood DNA typing. If RFID tags are being used, a representative of the 4-H Beef Management Committee or their representative must attach the tag to the left ear of the animal. In case a tag is subsequently lost out of the ear of an animal, it is the responsibility of the 4-H Club member to report the fact to the person who inserted the tag, within 24 hours after the loss is noticed; failure to do so will be cause for disqualification of the animal.
3. All steers will be weighted according to the 4-H Beef Program Schedule. **STEERS WEIGHING LESS THAN 900 LBS, and/or for any reason not approved by the Superintendent, AND/OR NOT HAVING COMPLETE RECORDS WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.** Exhibitors should be aware of shrinkage, which may occur as a result of hauling.
4. Steers cannot be leased and they cannot have gone through a prior market sale.
5. All steers must have been born on or after January 1 of the previous year.
6. Each animal is subject to being inspected by a veterinarian or other competent authority, as may be determined by the Chairman, for the purpose of verifying the age of the steers; steers with two permanent teeth shall automatically be entered into the heavyweight class, regardless of their weight. If steer exceeds two (2) permanent teeth, the steer is disqualified. **ALL STEERS MUST BE NATURALLY POLLED OR DEHORND WITH NO HORN REGROWTH.** No permanent or temporary nose rings are permitted during the 4-H Beef shows. Health papers will be checked and animals are subject to being checked for health conditions upon arrival. All animals and their corresponding health papers must be presented to Eastern States Exposition animal health inspectors prior to entering the barn.

AUCTION

1. The auction will take place at the Exposition grounds at a time to be announced in the schedule. Each entry in the auction will be charged a commission of the sale price, which will not exceed 3%. All funds received from sale commissions are used to help defray expenses of the beef show over and above the appropriation made by the Exposition. If a member wishes to buyback a steer, it must be purchased in the member's name.
2. Every member must put one steer through the sale. If a member has more than one steer, they may opt out of putting the additional steer(s) through the sale. The Eastern States 4-H Beef Committee will provide rope halters for sale animals.
3. Liability for steers rests with the owner until the animal is struck off by the auctioneer after which time liability becomes the responsibility of the buyer.
4. Sale Terms are as follows: Buyer's record is identified by bidder number at the time of sale. A bill of sale is issued upon payment. ALL BILLS SHALL BE PAID TO THE TREASURER ON THE DAY OF THE SALE. The Treasurer will issue checks to the sellers by October 15 PENDING RECEIPT OF MONEY FROM BUYERS. By act of entering in the 4-H Steer Show at The Big E, 4-H Club members, their parents, guardians, leaders and agents thereby indicate their full accord with the terms of the 4-H Beef Auction.
5. **All 4-H'ers entering steers please note the following:** The 4-H Beef Committee determined at its November 2017 meeting that steers that are not sale quality, will not be sold. The 4-H'er can still participate in all the shows with their steer, but not participate in the sale. What does sale quality mean? The biggest determination is adequate finish. Thin steers do not sell well and do not grade well. Each state will check the quality of steers by the time fair season starts and participants will be told whether or not the steer will make the sale.

EQUIPMENT AND FEEDING DIRECTIONS:

1. Set of scales for weighing feed
2. Brush & curry comb
3. Salt/mineral lick
4. Water before steer at all times
5. Feed grain & hay twice per day
6. Do not put in stanchion, but have a box stall ready when the steer arrives at the farm. Keep the stall clean & well bedded.

THE FOLLOWING ARE FOUR SUGGESTED FEED RATIONS

- A. 150# 14% dairy ration
150# ground or crimped corn
300# Total
- B. 165# Whole corn & cob (ground)
105# Oats ground or crimped
30# Protein supplement (linseed pellets)
300# Total
- C. 150# Cracked corn
100# Crimped oats
50# soy bean meal or pellets
300# Total
- D. 175# Coarsely ground ear corn
65# Crimped oats
60# Soybean meal or pellets
300# Total

Begin by feeding 2 pounds of an above mixture twice a day for a total of 4 pounds per day. This should be continued for a week, then increase each feeding a half or 1 pound a day for 2 or 3 days and let this suffice for a week. Then increase again as the steer's appetite dictates.

The best quality of hay, leafy and green, will give best results. A little handful in the morning and evening will be just right. His appetite will determine the amount. Do not permit him to waste the hay. In your feeding operation, your calf when on full grain should not eat over 2 or 3 pounds of hay per day.

If corn silage is available, a double handful mixed in the grain morning and evening is fine to induce the steer to eat. No feed should be left in the feed box while getting onto full feed, from one feeding to the other. Plenty of water to drink and trace mineral/salt mix before the steer is very essential. (may be loose or in blocks)

HALTER BREAKING - this is where the fun begins. If the members become acquainted with their steer by quiet handling with no abuse whatsoever, they will soon have his confidence and things will go along smoothly. In 2 or 3 weeks after the steer has become acquainted with his new home and surroundings, the halter can be put on and he can be tied up for a few hours at a time. When he becomes used to being tied up, then he can be taken out on a longer rope to be given the first rudiment of leading. Some will learn quickly and some will be stubborn, but in all, education, patience and carefulness must be your motto.

2026 4-H BEEF ACTIVITY ADDITIONAL HEIFER SHOW RULES

1. Registered heifers and commercial heifers can be shown. Registered heifers must be registered with the proper breed association and meet the show criteria for their breed. (Example: Angus with American Angus Association). Registered heifer classes will be broken into separate breeds if 5 or more heifers are entered. Breeds with less than 5 heifers entered will be shown in All Other Breeds (AOB) Class. Un-registered or non-registerable or crossbred heifers are considered commercial heifers, and will be shown in the commercial heifer class.
2. **All Heifers, including commercial heifers will need to be tattooed.**
3. To qualify for Bred and Owned animals, youth must have cow in their name at the time of breeding.
4. The 4-Her must own or have signed lease agreement by May 10 the year of the show (Example: 5/10/2026 for 2026 show). The heifers must also be entered by May 25 of the current year. This procedure is identical to that used to enter steers in the show with exception of the entry date. Registration or record certificate or lease agreement determines ownership.
5. Class age breakdowns are as follows:

i. Junior Calf(must be weaned)	1/1 – 02/29/26
ii. Senior Calf	9/1 - 12/31/25
iii. Summer Yearling	5/1 - 08/31/25
iv. Spring Yearling	3/1 - 04/30/25
v. Junior Yearling	1/1 - 02/28/25
vi. Senior Yearling	9/1 - 12/31/24
6. All heifers will be shown in rope or leather halters for type classes and fitting and showmanship classes.
7. Heifers and steers will be shown together in the same classes for fitting and showmanship contest.
8. Exhibitors of heifers must attend and participate in all regular contests.
9. A **PHOTOCOPY** of the registration must be included with the entry for all heifers (including leased animals), when it is sent in May.
10. There will be no entry fee for heifers.
11. Each animal is subject to being inspected by a veterinarian or other competent authority, as may be determined by the Chairman, for the purpose of verifying the identity of animals. No permanent or temporary nose rings are permitted during the 4-H Beef shows. Health papers will be checked and animals are subject to being checked for health conditions upon arrival. All animals and their corresponding health papers must be presented to Eastern States Exposition animal health inspectors prior to entering the barn.
12. Horned or heifers exhibiting horn regrowth are not allowed- with the exception of breeds where horns are accepted (i.e. registered Scottish Highland cattle, registered Longhorn cattle and horned Herefords).

MAKING A ROPE HALTER

Rope halters are practical, serviceable, and inexpensive. By following these instructions and illustrations, you can make a rope halter easily.

1. Start with a piece of rope 12 - 13 feet long.

(Ends of rope should be secured by whip splice, hog rings or melting.)

Using the newer "poly" ropes make more sense than manila, or sisal rope. Poly-rope does not shrink when wet and can be burned to finish the ends. If hog rings are used, make sure they are bent/crimped into rope - so if rope is drawn through your hands - it will not cut you.

Securing the rope ends is probably the most important part in making a halter. **IF OPEN FLAME IS USED TO SECURE END, BE SURE IT IS DONE IN A PROPER AREA.**

2. Holding the rope in your hands - (fig.1) Make an eye, leaving 14 - 18 inches of rope on the short end. Do not put rope through to start at this point. This eye is held to let you get the correct length of the "short end".
3. Pass the long end through the short end at the intersect of the eye (fig.2) This long end should pass under one strand only - always in the direction of the lay of the rope.
4. Size the eye - the eye should be only large enough for rope to pass through freely. Care should be taken at this point so eye is not too large or too small.
5. Without turning the eye - always keep the rope in the same position after each step. Pick up one strand only on the long end, usually the first full strand, pass short end under this strand. (fig.3) Be sure you pass rope through in the direction of the lay.
6. After passing both the long through the short and the short through the long - take time to adjust the braid it should be adjusted and looks neat with four (4) strands on one side of eye and two on the opposite side. (fig 4 & 5)

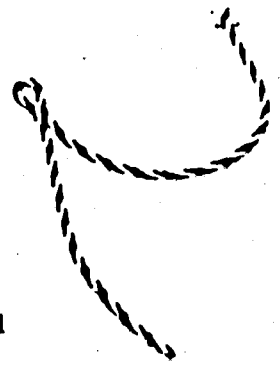


Fig. 1

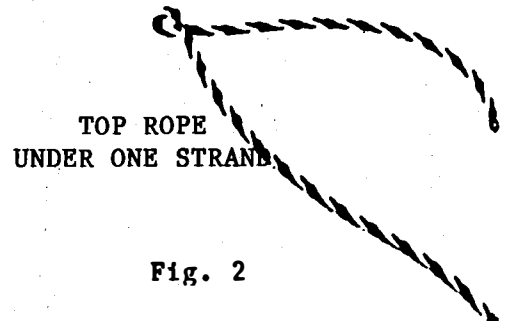


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

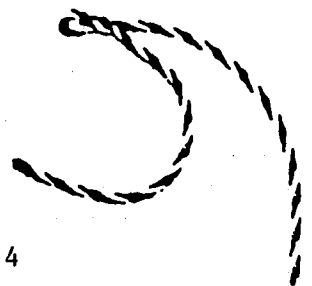


Fig. 4



Fig. 5

7. **NOTE** - This halter will end giving you two (2) strands on the inside of the halter. (Next to the animal) and four (4) strands on the outside. Some prefer the four (4) strands on the inside and two (2) on the outside. To get the opposite, just reverse step 3, 4, & 5. The short will go through the long first, then long through the short.

8. Approximately 1 - 2 inches from the short end, pull and twist one strand at a time in a counter-clockwise direction. Do this to the other two (2) strands to complete the step. (fig. 6 & 7)

a. Another way to do this is to place three (3) full strands between your thumbs, as illustrated, and give a twist against the lay of the rope, pushing thumbs towards each other at the same time, three (3) strands should pop up - with a little effort.

These steps will probably take a little practice, but once accomplished, it is a simple quick and easy step.

9. Before going further, be sure that the three (3) strands are not too close to the end. It will be best to leave at least 1 - 1 1/2 inches beyond these eyes to the end. This end should point down in the direction of the lay.

10. Pass the long end through the three (3) eyelets that have been lifted. At the start of this step - both ends should be pointing in the same direction. (fig.8)

11. Continuing pull the long end through the eye made in the first steps. (fig.9)

12. With a little twisting and turning you should end up with a good looking, strong, and long lasting halter. (fig.10 & 11)

Few points to remember -

a. If you are going to burn the end of the rope - be sure it is melted through, so end will not fray after use.

b. to make a halter for breaking animals, you may want to start with a piece of rope 15 feet long - or more.

Fig.6

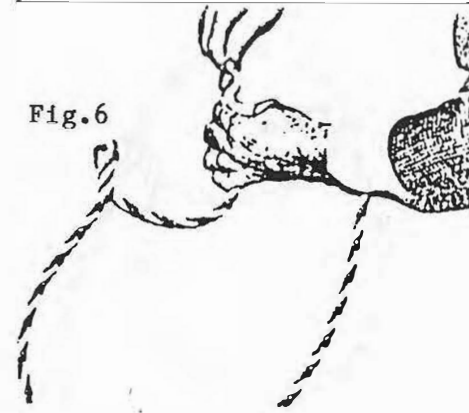


Fig.7

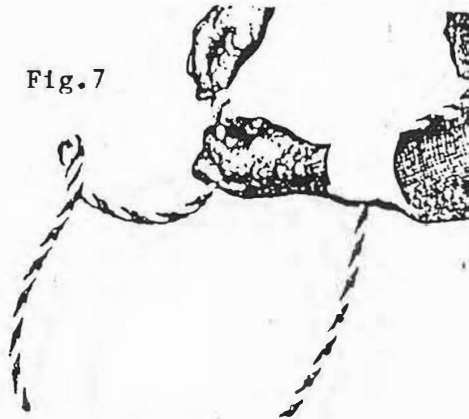


Fig.8

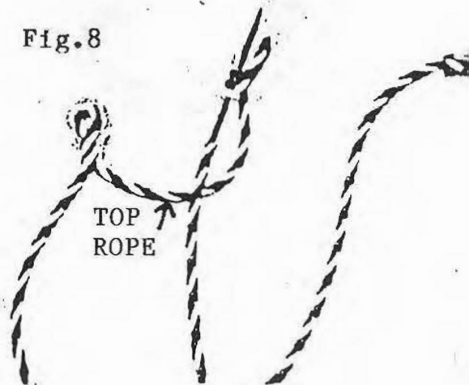
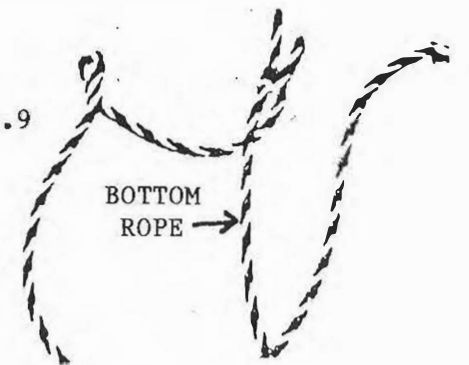


Fig.9



c. After making the eye - if it is too big or too small - remake it, the size of the eye is very important

d. In step two, the 12 - 16 inches of rope to the short end can be increased or decreased for calves or aged animals.

(The best size for a 1,200 lb. steer will measure 12 inches between the eyelet and the three loops.)

e. When passing the long end through the three loops, be sure both rope ends are pointing in the same direction.

(a finished halter will leave the short end facing toward the nose and away from the eye of the animal.)

Take time to make your halter correctly, and it will give you many years of service.

Fig.10

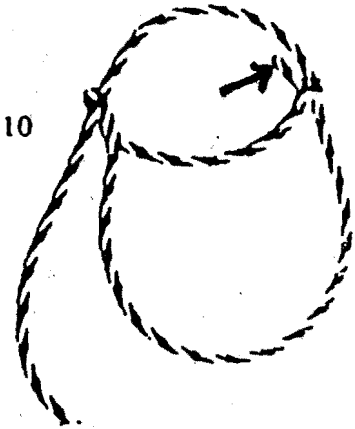
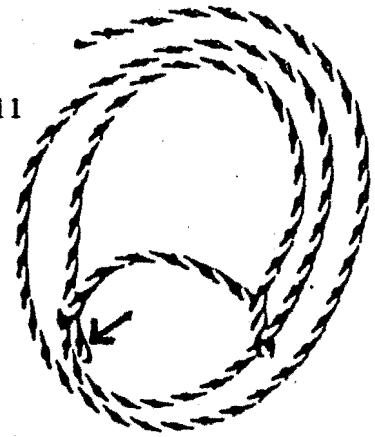


Fig.11



4-H BEEF BREEDING HEIFER NON-OWNERSHIP CERTIFICATE

NAME OF ANIMAL _____ DATE ANIMAL BORN _____
NAME OF SIRE _____ NAME OF DAM _____
REGISTRY/BREED _____ REG. NO. _____
COMMERICAL HEIFER _____ BREED MAKE-UP _____
TATTOOS: LEFT EAR _____ RIGHT EAR _____
LEASOR'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

1. The animal must be leased prior to May 10, and submitted to the appropriate 4-H Agent.
2. All animals must be properly identified by legible tattoo.
3. The lessee (4-H member) shall bear all livestock expenses normally incurred in raising such an animal, including transporting and or exhibiting, for the duration of this agreement.
4. The lessee shall breed the animal at the direction and expense of the owner, if necessary.
5. The lessor (owner) agrees to assume all legal responsibilities as owner of the animal listed and will not hold the lessee liable for any injury or death loss to the animal, except those due to negligence on the part of the lessee.
6. Lessor (owner) agrees to allow the lessee (4-H member) to exhibit above animal at 4-H fairs and The Big E and other fairs BOTH owner and 4-H member agree to.
7. A leased animal may only be exhibited by the 4-H member during the time this agreement is in effect. Only 4-H member can show the animal they are leasing. If the Farm owning the animal wants to have animal shown in open; the animal needs to be entered in the 4-H youth's name. The Farm will still get points.

By signing this agreement, owner, 4-H member, parents and 4-H leader agree to the terms stated above and are officially designating this animal as his/her 4-H project.

NAME OF 4-H'ER _____ 4-H LEADER'S NAME _____
ADDRESS _____ ADDRESS _____
CITY ZIP _____ CITY ZIP _____
MEMBER'S SIGNATURE _____ LEADER'S SIGNATURE _____
PARENT/GUARDIAN _____ 4-H STAFF _____
ADDRESS _____ ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ CITY ZIP _____
TELEPHONE _____ TELEPHONE _____