

## DAIRY MERIT HEIFERS

*Chairmen: Mike Smaistrla, Scott Valenta, Danielle Smith, Denise Anderson & Annie Gold*

VALIDATION & ENTRY FEE:	Saturday, October 28, 2023	8 - 9 a.m./\$30.00
FAIR CHECK-IN:	Monday, March 18, 2024	11 a.m. – 12 p.m.
SHOW DATE:	Thursday, March 21, 2024	10:30 a.m.
CHECK-OUT:	Sunday, March 24, 2024	8 – 9 a.m.

The purpose of the Dairy Merit Program is to develop interest and enthusiasm in the WCYF Dairy Department and to provide participants interested in raising a project for the WCYF an opportunity to participate in a breeding program. This program is not a terminal project; that is, it is not designed for ending with the sale of the animals. Rather, it is hoped that the award of a Dairy Merit Heifer will be the basis for many years of participation in the WCYF. After the initial Dairy Merit Show, the Dairy Merit Heifer can be shown in the regular Dairy classes for years to come.

1. Exhibitors must read and be familiar with the "General Livestock and Poultry Rules and Regulations", including Drug Policy, Parent Work Rule, Sale and Livestock schedule.
2. In addition to WCYF eligibility requirements, applicants must be a 4-H or FFA member, prior to submitting an application. 4-H Clover kid's years will not be recognized. To enter, a member must submit an application and essay, entitled "Why I Want a Dairy Merit Heifer." Applications are available through the WCYF Office. The essay must include how many years they have previously had a Dairy Merit Heifer. Exhibitors may have a "Dairy Merit" certificate no more than two times or at the committee's discretion.
3. Essays must be submitted to the WCYF office by the Thursday, July 6. **(Extended to Friday, July 21)**
4. Applicants who are selected for the Merit Award must adhere to certain guidelines. Parents must sign the applicant's application indicating commitment to the following rules:
  - a. Participants will properly care for, feed and train their heifer.
  - b. Participants must show their heifer at the WCYF, the heifer **MUST** remain on the fairgrounds until Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - c. Participants will also keep thorough and accurate monthly records, mailing copies to their sponsors, ag teacher/extension agent and the Fair office by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. **IF AN EXHIBITOR FAILS TO COMPLY WITH THIS RULE, HE/SHE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO SHOW IN THE FAIR AND WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE RESTITUTION OF \$300 TO EACH SPONSOR.** Monthly reports must be submitted on time (10<sup>th</sup> of the month) to be considered for award money.
  - d. Dairy Merit exhibitor **MUST** turn in a record book following these guidelines:
    1. Nice exterior cover
    2. Inside cover page with your name, animal name, club/chapter name.
    3. Table of Contents with corresponding tabs
      - Monthly expense reports
      - Monthly correspondence to and from donor
      - Pictures relating to project
  - e. Scholarships will be awarded for 1st – 3rd place record book winners.

f. Record books are due in the Fair office by Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

5. Participants must have their heifers validated Saturday, October 28, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at the Fairgrounds.

6. Participants may miss only one learning lab scheduled by the committee.

7. The Dairy Merit Committee will select the recipients and assign sponsors no later than August 15.

8. Award winners will be notified and mailed a \$600 certificate no later than August 15. They may use the certificate to purchase a Dairy Heifer, registered or non-registered purebred. Only prominent Dairy breeds will be allowed (Jersey, Guernsey, Holstein, and Brown Swiss horn short). The heifers must have been born between March 1 and May 31, 2023. All Merit Heifers for 2024 will show together in class 301.

9. All heifers must be de-horned.

10. Be prepared to show the heifer at the WCYF OR make restitution of \$300 to each of the sponsors, AND NOTIFY THE DAIRY MERIT HEIFER CHAIRMAN IMMEDIATELY. If decided by the committee, the exhibitor may forfeit as well, any participation in WCYF events. This also applies if the exhibitor is INELIGIBLE to show due to failing grades. Exhibitors must make restitution of \$300 to each of the sponsors within 30 days upon forfeiture. Checks must be sent to the Wharton County Youth Fair office.

11. Registration papers, if applicable, must be presented at check-in.

12. Texas dairy cattle, regardless of age or sex, must be identified prior to movement in Texas.

13. Dairy Merit Heifers will be stalled together with a sponsor's sign placed in prominent view for all WCYF visitors, heifers must be in the stalls in the Ammann Barn from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

14. Exhibitors must wear appropriate dress: white shirt, white jeans or slacks, and black tie.

15. All Dairy Exhibitors must clean out stalls and tie outs on Sunday, March 24, 2024 or be charged a fee of \$25.00.

16. All heifers must remain on the fairgrounds until checkout on Sunday, March 24, 2024.

## **LIVESTOCK SHOWMANSHIP**

Showmanship refers to the presentation of a livestock project by the exhibitor. It refers to the grooming and handling of the animal in the arena, as well as dress and conduct of the handler. All Merit exhibitors will participate in the showmanship class. All ages will show together. Exhibitors are required to show their own animal during showmanship.