



SHOW SOLUTIONS

Get the look: Feeding heifers the Rite way

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By: Miles Toenyas, National Support Specialist

First, let's do a quick recap of how some Show-Rite-fed heifers did over the summer of 2019:

- Supreme Champion Owned Female, NJRAE, Hadley Hartman
- Reserve Grand Champion Heifer, Mini Hereford Junior Nationals, Preslie Henkhaus
- Grand Champion Female, National Junior Limousin Show, Kinnick Paulsen
- Grand Champion Bred and Owned Chiangus Female, AJCA, Ashley Miller
- Grand Champion Polled Heifer, JNHE, Vada Vickland
- Grand Champion Bred and Owned Balancer Female, AGJA, Grace Vehige
- Reserve Grand Champion Owned Female, NJAS, Miles Stagemeyer
- Grand Champion Simmental Heifer, AJSA National Classic, Ashtin Guyer

Keep in mind, these are only our grand or reserve champions at 2019 junior nationals; this list does not include the many top-five placings at junior nationals and state fair wins we have also seen thus far this summer. These families and exhibitors probably won't be happy that we are sharing their secrets!

I wanted to start this article with those wins simply to show you how successful our heifer feeders have been — and to show you that this stuff WORKS. So, let's dive into it: how do you feed a heifer? Here's a quick statement that I want each one of you to take to heart: "It's not rocket science." Don't try to make this more complicated than it actually is!

I could sum this up quickly by suggesting that you feed a harder-bellied one more feed and a fat one less feed. All jokes aside, though, the most commonly-asked question we get is, "What should I be feeding?" First and foremost, set a goal. Which show is the one where you would like to be the most competitive? It's honestly hard to feed a heifer — or any animal, for that matter — to look good at every single show. Set a goal and keep it constantly in mind with every day and every show, especially the ones when your project might be going through an awkward stage or just doesn't look ready. We are feeding for the goal.

With any new project, the first thing I do is study the indicators. Is she skinny? Harsher-ribbed? Fat? Is the area around her tail-head (pons) "jiggly"? Is she thick-necked? Does she have too much chest? Cattle take longer to change than any other species. Don't wait for them to change on their own, and don't say you'll do it in 30 days; understand your animal's weak points and begin filling in those holes or masking their flaws from the very beginning.

Show-Rite Cruiser gives heifers a good start. In my opinion, [Cruiser](#) is the perfect combination of corn and fiber for a young, maturing calf. Some folks start Cruiser in September and feed it all the way through the following fall. Cruiser is, without question, the go-to in our barn to start heifers, and I tell that to everyone I talk to who wants to continue to add body and rib shape while keeping enough cover on the project to compete throughout the winter and summer.

There are some cases where we get our new show heifer home and, while studying her indicators, we find that she's just a little too fat. Don't wait until she's overly, excessively fat to try to start feeding her appropriately! In my opinion, fat cover is the hardest thing to get off of a heifer.

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I would argue that 90% of heifers starting out can be fed Cruiser, but some will need another solution. In the case that you do have a “chubby” heifer — or if you have one that you think is right on target and needs to stay that way — you’re going to want to check out Show-Rite [HF](#). Our most dominant heifer feeders across the country will use HF throughout the year, and the majority of them refuse to finish their animals on anything else. HF is a complete feed designed to be a relief for feeders who used to have to mix feeds and pull fiber sources out of two, four or eight different bags. This product is loaded up with fiber to get the rib shape, body depth, flank depth and volume we’re looking for in these females — but it’s also low in corn. That means that we get the benefits of rib and spread without having our animals get too fat. Scoop out of one bag and roll on, folks. Many producers feed HF early when wanting to add more body and to keep their heifer calves from getting too “quick” — meaning, too fat — too early. HF has been an absolutely incredible complete feed to have in our lineup, and it’s been a lifesaver for our customer base and their projects. Now, if you have a skinny one, I’d still recommend Cruiser, but once she gets right where you want her to be from a condition standpoint, that’s when you start using HF — and don’t look back!

Have you ever heard a judge say, “I love this one because she’s flat-ribbed and shallow-bodied”? No? Me neither. I don’t think we will ever hear that from a judge — and if you do, RUN! So, how can we add more volume in those areas? How do we fix a flat-ribbed and shallow-bodied one? The answer is twofold: feeding Cruiser for some fat and fiber is the first part, but if you want to continue to add more fiber for that depth of rib and spring of body, I recommend [Rite Fiber](#). This is a pelleted product designed to add body fill and mass using the ever-so-popular fiber source: cob. The pellet is the perfect size for mass amounts of intake, and cattle love it! I personally use this at home to drop the mid-rib and rear-rib of the cattle.

If I need more spring of rib, I like using Show-Rite [Stretch](#), a pelleted product that expands when it touches water. And it doesn’t just expand a little — it expands a LOT. Dave Guyer said it best about Stretch when he said, “I can tell when my girls are out of it.” It works so fast, and there’s such a difference in body shape and fill that, if you are off Stretch, you can tell. More importantly, you can definitely tell when your animals are ON Stretch!

Now, imagine you’re closer to show and you go back to the drawing board; you’re reading indicators and studying your heifer. Everything looks right-on for your heifer, but if you had to critique something, you’d say she needs to be just a bit cleaner up through her front end. For that, we love using the product [Sculpt](#). This is a next-level fat burner for cattle. It’s not designed like your typical “neck trimmer”; it works rapidly, and you don’t have to use much. Most of the time, I’m using it at the rate of 1/2 to 1 pound a day. And trust me: you will see a difference if you start using it, too.

I know I didn’t break down all of the products in our cattle portfolio, and we do have a few for special occasions, because not all cattle are made alike. However, I can assure you that, if you follow the steps outlined above, you’ll be miles ahead of the competition coming into this show season. Don’t make it hard: feed a fat one less and a skinny one more. If you still have questions or need help coming up with a game-plan for your project, contact any one of our representatives and we would love to help you out. Visit us at www.showrite.com for product, ordering or contact information.

For more tips on how to be successful in the show ring, please visit www.showrite.com or contact a Show-Rite representative.

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