



SHOW SOLUTIONS

The importance of routine

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A consistent daily routine is one of the major pieces of the puzzle for finding success with your project. You may be wondering what that looks like for your respective species, so we asked our specialists to share their routines and practices with you here. Check it out below!

Sheep (by Cooper Newcomb)

In my opinion, establishing a good routine starts with getting support from everyone involved. Whether that includes a driver who will get you to the next show or someone who will feed your project while you are playing ball, you must all be on the same page about this project and what you hope to accomplish. The bigger your support group, the more fun and successful your show season will be.

When it comes to the details of a routine, here is what must be included:

- **Feeding:** Start by feeding your project before you go to school. Make sure you give yourself enough time to watch them eat, and make sure they clean it up. This is important because it lets you know that they are feeling good and aren't eating so fast that they choke.
- **Homework:** Upon returning home from school, get your homework finished before going to the barn. We highly encourage kids to keep school as their main priority, because the less homework you have to do later, the more time you will have in the barn.
- **Leg work:** Upon finishing your homework, halter all the sheep, remove their leg wraps, rinse their legs, blow them dry and spray some type of hair conditioning product on them.
- **Exercise:** While their legs are wet and the conditioner is soaking in, exercise your lambs. This can vary from lamb to lamb, but to give an example, this may entail using a circle walker for 20 minutes and treadmilling backwards for 3 minutes. If the lambs are fat, also treadmill forward for 5 to 10 minutes for extra conditioning.
- **More leg work:** Following exercise, dry their legs completely and then wrap them.
- **Showmanship:** Now it is time to focus on the showman. Each exhibitor should work with their sheep for approximately 20 minutes. If the lamb does not behave, work with them longer.
- **Feeding:** The grand finale is their dinnertime meal. Just like with the morning feeding, be sure to watch them eat to ensure that you do not have a sick or unhappy lamb.

Goats (by Glen Martin)

The financial investment and effort you put into your goat project can directly affect the way that they mature, as well as their quality. It's important to note that the value of your project stems from not only their quality at time of purchase but, moreover, the time you spend with them through the duration of the season.

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What you do — as well as when you do it — can make for a greater experience and, ultimately, a more enjoyable time with your goat project. Establishing routines in life can be a struggle due to the tedious repetition involved; however, it is well-proven that timing and consistency can lead to a better project.

Consistent feeding intervals and scheduled training/work sessions are paramount. We like to feed three times a day, but if feeding only twice a day works better for you, feed at intervals of between 10 to 12 hours. I've often described goats as finicky eaters, and staying consistent when mixing feed/supplements and with the times of the feedings will greatly enhance their ability to continue with solid feed consumption. Over-feeding or changing rations at odd or different times will certainly upset the goats' consumption and pH and, ultimately, will kick them off feed.

Timing when you work them and any training protocols are also critical for project success.

Throwing a goat off its routine has caused plenty of misery for many families. Just like young children, your projects need a schedule and a regular routine. The time of day that you feed and exercise them and the method/timing of your work sessions are very important. For example, working or exercising too close to mealtime will knock your goat off feed and create undue stress on your project. We work our goats in mid-afternoon on specific days, like Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This is enough exercise to train them to walk/show but not so much that the goats become sour from overwork. Likewise, underworking them leads to bad experiences in the ring, because it's almost impossible for children to show unruly or untrained goats.

Now, more than ever, hair care is also extremely important for a goat project. We rinse and condition their legs and work their hair multiple times a week — normally, every other day for their legs and once a week for their bodies.

In closing, establish a routine that fits your family and your schedule, and stick to it. A consistent routine will spawn more consistent success in the show ring.

Cattle (by Dave Guyer)

"Routine" may have a different definition for different people, and how well you keep your routine may vary based on how important your project's success is to you — but a good, consistent routine is of the utmost importance when it comes to influencing the end result.

Let's start by talking about feeding. Feeding on a normal basis and at routine times during the day — such as at six in the morning and six at night, or whatever times you prefer — would be good. When I receive a phone call about a calf being off feed, oftentimes, it can be traced back to not having a routine or to a lack of consistency. For example, if you skip a meal, when the next meal rolls around, you will be hungry and might overeat to compensate for what you missed. On the other hand, if you eat lunch at 2:30 or 3:00 in the afternoon, you are probably not going to want to eat much for supper. The point is that sticking to a consistent routine and feeding schedule for your calf will help them stay on feed better, eat better and gain better.

Another important part of a routine is working hair on a consistent basis. For people in the North who have projects that are showing in the summertime, the routine of getting up early and getting your calf out of the sun is of the utmost importance when it comes to them growing and keeping their hair.

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If you get off of your normal schedule just one time and leave them out too long or turn them out too early in the midst of heat and humidity, it only takes one slip-up to cause your project to slip their hair. The same goes for people in the South who are showing in late winter or early spring and are trying to hold their hair; if you slip up and get off of your routine and let your guard down, you will have a rub spot. Hair and skin care must be incorporated into your routine. For example, if you get dry skin, you start to itch, right? Your project is no different. As such, you need to use oils and conditioners and keep their skin in good shape in order to keep your calf from rubbing. The same goes for their hair: If you want your project to have healthy hair, you have to treat their hair just like your own and use products that help them keep a healthy hair coat.

In conclusion, the most successful families are the ones who work as a team and establish a daily routine that they do not waver from. That daily routine should start at least 120 days out from showing. It must consist of getting your calves in and out of the sun in a timely fashion; feeding them consistently at the desired time, twice a day; working their skin and hair for a healthy hair coat on a daily basis; training them to stand to build stamina in preparation for show day; using a show stick daily to continue preparing for show day; and turning them out when the heat and humidity have decreased for the day. If you do not follow a consistent daily routine, it is hard to compete at the highest levels. On the other hand, if you choose to stay consistent with your routine, you will give yourself and your project the best opportunity to hang a banner. Work hard and stay focused. The harder you work, the better they will look, and the better they look, the harder you will want to work — and that hard work will ultimately lead to success.

Swine (by Ryan Sites)

We can be so much more successful at getting our show pigs prepared for that target show when we focus on the small things, like establishing a routine. When it comes to feeding, it is very important to keep them on a schedule and feed them at the same time each morning and night, every day. This schedule also gets you in the rhythm of doing your daily health checks and allows you to train, brush and condition their hair while they are eating. Here is the routine that we follow at home when we get to the 2-month mark leading up to our target show:

- Feed them and do health checks in the morning. Keep them out of the sun during the day.
- Come back in the evenings and feed them again. While they eat, brush and condition their skin and hair.
- Once they are done eating, begin exercising them, and follow that up with showmanship work.
- Once a week, weigh your pigs. Monitoring their weight helps ensure that they're on the perfect growth track.
- Wash them two to three times a week (weather permitting) and recondition them afterwards.

If you'd like these topics broken down into more detail, check out Show-Rite's Stock Show Classroom [here](#). Good luck!

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