

# Morgan County Dairy Cattle Project

## Selecting your Dairy Cattle

Whether you are brand new to the Dairy project, or a veteran with many years under you belt, here are some tips on the animal you are looking for.

- Before starting a Dairy project you should consider that it may have a sizeable investment, often exceeding \$2000. You should develop a cash flow budget and be sure that you have adequate funding for this project.
- When selecting a heifer, keep in mind that March, June, September, and December are age breaks used at most shows. An animal born on March 1st, for example, would have almost three months advantage over an animal born on May 30th.
- Make sure you pick a reputable breeder if you are purchasing your animal.
- Know the genetic makeup of the animal you are going to purchase.
- Consider the following factors: frame size, muscle, structural correctness, balance, eye appeal, and disposition.
- Water is the most important nutrient. Always provide access to fresh, clean water to your animal.
- Holstein heifers should gain, on average, 1.7-1.8 pounds per day without getting fat, but no more than 2 pounds per day from 300 lbs. to calving.
- Provide fresh, high quality feed.
- Feed a balanced ration that will allow the calf to develop adequately and at the right body condition.
- A heifer that is not correctly fed when she is young will be more likely to have problems getting bred, calving, and producing milk upon maturity.
- Feed for a constant rate of growth.



## Additional Information

- Your Dairy animal requires about 150 to 175 total square feet of space. Ensure that the dairy heifer will have room to move at its final size.
- Fence should be minimum of 50 inches tall and Barn/Shelter should be a minimum of 20-25 square feet of space.
- House our animals in an area where you can readily observe them to best monitor feed, water, and their health.
- Trim hooves about 4-6 weeks before the fair.
- Dairy cows should be dewormed once every 2 months, leaving proper withdrawal period before harvesting.
- Warts, ringworm and hoof rot are common.
- When treatment or injections are necessary for animal health read the label, administer properly, adhere to withdrawal times, and keep accurate records.
- Ask for Help: 4-H Agent, Leaders or other members in the 4-H Dairy Project.

## Dry Matter Intake of Replacement Heifers

Age	Avg. Weight	Estimated DMI	% of Body Weight
4-6 mo.	300-450 lbs.	7-9 lbs./day	2.7-3.0%
7-12 mo.	450-750 lbs.	12-16 lbs./day	2.7%
13-18 mo.	750-1000 lbs.	17-21 lbs./day	2.5%
19-22 mo.	<1000 lbs.	22-26 lbs./day	2.0%

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## Upcoming Events:

- Dairy Cattle ID due date, 5/1/24, by 4 pm, Extension Office
- Meat Quality Assurance 5/13/24 or 5/14/24 , 4:30-6:30 pm, MCFG
- Fair entries and record books due, 7/10/24, 4 pm, Extension Office

## References

Colorado State University, 4-H Project Tip sheets  
Dairy Heifer Workbook, by Kelli Hutchings

