

Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show – A Really Great Idea



4-H is all about bringing great ideas together, and this year at the Provincial Beef Heifer Show (PBHS) in Olds, Alberta, a *really* great idea came together: Alberta 4-H, along with the Olds Agricultural Society, Calgary Stampede and Olds College, created a new event that combines many areas of youth livestock showcasing. This event brought youth together from all over Western Canada with various breeds of cattle. The program's title is "Summer Synergy". Summer Synergy tries to bring together a variety of livestock events including Beef Heifer Show, 4-H Provincial Dairy Show, the Youth Draft Horse Show as well as various Junior Beef Breeds Associations. All of them come to Olds to compete, learn and create new understanding of the livestock industry.

Summer Synergy officially kicked off on July 12 at the Olds Agricultural Society's MegaDome with the Opening Ceremonies and Parade of Clubs for the Provincial Beef Heifer Show. There were over 40 clubs representing from all over the province, including one club from British Columbia. After a few words of welcome from Rob Smith, PBHS organizer and 4-H Specialist for the Calgary and South regions, it was on with the show.

The first day of PBHS had the members working on their judging and marketing skills. There were classes of yearling heifers and cow-calf pairs that the members had to assess and were to give oral reasons on. For marketing, members had the chance to give a presentation to a panel of judges. Each age category was given a different scenario on how to promote beef and cattle to large markets. The competition was fierce and when it came down to selecting a winner, the judges said that the ideas the members gave and the way that they presented didn't make their jobs as judges any easier.

Junior and Intermediate members were also put to the test in team grooming competitions. They had a certain amount of time that they used to clip, comb and create a great-looking heifer. They were also evaluated on how well they worked together.



On Day Two the rainy weather put a damper on the day but not the member's spirits. For the showmanship competition, members were put into teams to judge the classes. One person worked as the ring man and the other person was the judge. The judge would then pick the winners of the class who would move on.

During this time senior members were participating in the "You're Hired," competition. Senior members submitted a resume and cover letter to apply for one of three jobs. Then, applicants were selected to go through an interview process to see who would be awarded the made-up positions, based on the strength of their interview. The job recipients were then given special prizes at the daily awards presentation.

After the evening meal, there was entertainment from hypnotist JayDee. JayDee put on a hilarious show made up 4-H members who were put under his total control. The audience had a great time watching the participants on stage dance, pretend to fish and think they were horse racing.

Wednesday saw the conclusion of Beef Heifer Show with the conformation classes. The Pure Bred classes were judged by Caleb Crosswhite of McKinney, Texas. Caleb did very well at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colorado, held in January and because of this, was able to come to Olds to judge PBHS.

"I am very impressed at how professional the members are, and how well they know what they are doing," remarked Caleb.



At the closing ceremonies, the Aggregate awards and last minute thank-you's were handed out to the volunteers who helped throughout the show. One of the most unique awards is the "Gerald Kujala 4-H Spirit Award," which was awarded to Justin Matile of the Crowfoot Livestock Club.

"It was really surprising (to get the award)," says Justin, "I just try to get my stuff done then help others out. I remember getting help when I was younger, and now it's nice to help others achieve."

Provincial Beef Heifer Show is sponsored by Alberta Beef Producers, AMA Insurance, ATB Financial, Government of Alberta, Growing Forward, Gas Alberta, Kubota Canada, Lammle's Western Wear & Tack, Penn West Energy and Westgen Endowment Fund.