

COW-CALF PEN POSTER INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Exhibitor** – Your name.
2. **Calf birth date and birth weight.**
3. **Sire information** – Breed, sire name (if available), any other information.
4. **Breed and history of dam** – Breed. The history may include: cow's birthdate, date she was bred back, number of calves and their birth weight, weaning weight, etc. The same information goes on your record book form, "Iowa 4-H Beef Cow Lifetime Record." Save yourself some time by completing this section of your records while you do your poster.
5. **Cost to feed cow for year** – This part is easy if you've kept detailed feed records for your cow. The "4-H Breeding Animal Project Worksheet" provides you a place to keep these records. If you haven't kept detailed records you can still estimate your costs. Usually you can divide your feed costs into two periods – wintering and summer grazing. The best way to figure a wintering cost is to calculate what you fed your cow (hay, corn, cornstalks, mineral) on a typical day this winter. Find the cost per day and multiply times the number of days you used this feeding program. For the summer grazing period you need to figure pasture costs per day and multiply by the days on pasture. A typical pasture cost per day is \$1.00 or more. Make sure that you account for 365 days between your wintering and grazing costs.
6. **Labor** – Another variable cost of producing calves is labor. During the year the typical Iowa cattle producer spends around 8 hours for each cow-calf pair they have. You may have spent more or less time than that for each of your pairs. Estimate how many hours you have spent and multiply by what you would consider a fair wage. Think about how much you might be paid per hour if you had a job. Multiply your hours times the rate of pay (i.e. 10 hours X \$14.00 = \$140.00).
7. **Other variable expenses** – The type of expenses you would include here are ear tags, implants, vaccination, breeding fees, veterinarian, bedding, insurance, and interest. If you are creep feeding your calf those costs should be included. These expenses should also be recorded on your "4-H Breeding Animal Project Worksheet."
8. **Management notes** – This is a place for you to include information about how you have cared for your project. You may want to include a listing of date of vaccinations, dehorning, implanting, etc.

(over)

9. **Estimated calf weight at weaning** – There are two ways you might choose to estimate weaning weight. (a) If the cow calves at about the same time each year you could take the average weaning weight of her calves. (b) Another method would be to determine the average daily gain of the calf. Take your calf's current weight and subtract off the birth weight, then divide by number of days since the calf was born. That will give you the average daily gain. To predict the weaning weight simply figure how many days of age your calf will be at weaning and multiply by your average daily gain figure. Add your birth weight back into the weight and you have the estimated weight at weaning.
10. **Estimated calf price per pound at weaning** – Check out feeder calf prices in the newspaper or visit with a local sale barn representative about what they think the cost per pound of feeder calves the size your calf will be at weaning.
11. **Estimated calf value at weaning** – Multiply your estimated weaning weight (line 9) by estimated price per pound (line 10) to figure the estimated calf value.
12. **Estimated total variable costs** – Add the total cow feed costs (line 5), labor costs (line 6) and other expenses (line 7) to figure your total variable costs.
13. **Variable costs per pound of calf weaned** – Divide total variable costs (line 12) by estimated weaning weight (line 9).