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# PREPARING CATTLE FOR SHOWS

## Foot Care and Grooming are Important

By T. PARKER

**I**N the days before motor-cars and tractors were in general use, there was an old saying "A horse is only as good as his feet," or more briefly "No foot—no horse." Feet are just as important to cattle, and foot care is a necessary part of show-ring preparation. Without good feet, cattle cannot walk freely and a bad gait has put many a good animal out of the prize-winning groups.

If the toes pinch or rub together; if they are too long, or the walls of the hooves are too high the gait is sure to be affected. The animal is thrown off balance and forced to take short steps. Painful feet cause it to change step and prevent the free stride that the judge likes to see.

Even in the paddocks, neglected feet exact their toll as the animals cannot move around and feed freely, so that they lose condition. The care of the bull's feet is particularly important as he must be able to move freely and he cannot work properly if attempting to balance on painful hooves and legs.

Feet should be trimmed carefully to suit an individual animal's gait, and a good hoof dressing should be used frequently. Neatsfoot oil is quite effective for this purpose.

### SOME GROOMING HINTS

Most cattlemen use the rubber currycomb and a soft brush for grooming. May I suggest two alternatives which I have found even better.

Instead of the currycomb I use a pair of cricketer's batting gloves in reverse—putting the left-hand glove on the right hand and the right-hand glove on the left so that the rubber guards are on the palms of the hands.

Used in this manner, the gloves are ideal for lifting and placing the long hair on beef cattle or for applying just the right degree of pressure on the shorter-haired

dairy breeds. The gloves are excellent for combing and polishing the tail hairs, and I find that by gentle rubbing I can tone up the skin and remove all dust and dirt. The cattle respond well to the treatment and enjoy the gentle friction on their skins.

I am having a special pair of these gloves made with elastic round the wrists and the rubber placed inside the hand on the fingers only. I think that these will be even more effective than the orthodox batting gloves.

The soft brush for finishing off the grooming can also be improved upon. For many years I have used pieces of sheepskin from pelts carrying about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. of wool.

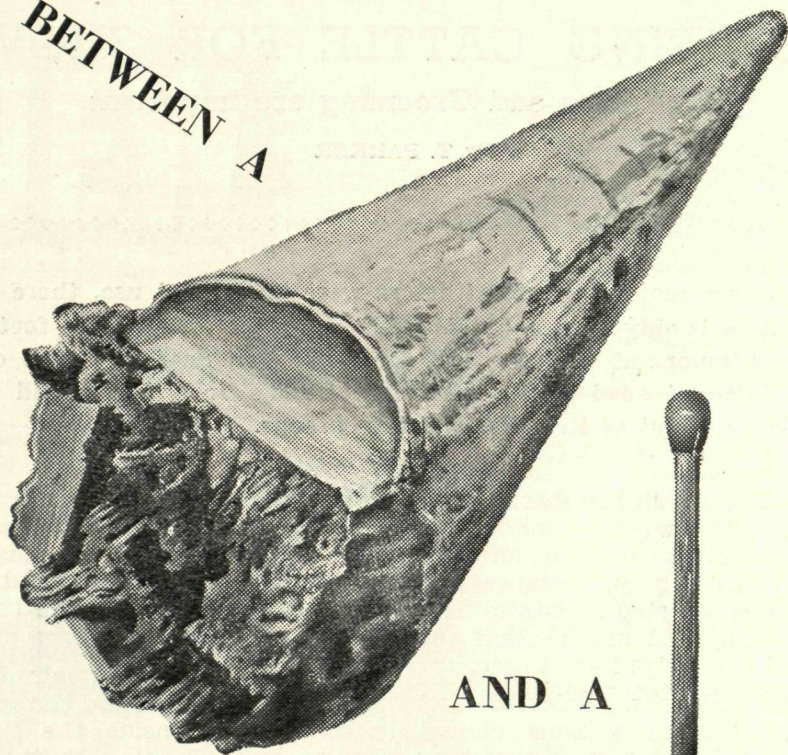
The pelt is cut into rectangles measuring about 10 in. x 5 in. and slits are made across the 5 in. width to take the first and third fingers.

After using the batting gloves to remove dust and scurf I rub the animal with the skin side of the pelt. The friction between the skin and the animal's hide generates sufficient heat to encourage the natural oils to flow. I then continue the grooming with the wool next to the hide.

The wool grease (lanoline) gives a pleasing gloss to the animal's coat. When the natural oil in the skin side of the pelt has been used up, I paint it lightly with olive oil which is readily absorbed. The sheepskin lasts for years and does not wear out like the brushes, and I can recommend this method of grooming which I have tested thoroughly over a number of years.



BETWEEN A



AND A

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