

BASIC SHOWMANSHIP

The Rules, The Moves, and The Tips

By Shannon Foster
2002

Introduction

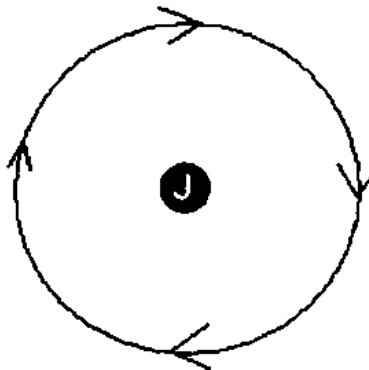
Showmanship is knowing how to show your animal in the ring to its best advantage. In many parts of the country, it is a very competitive and stressful class. In other parts, it's a fun learning experience. The most important part is to enjoy showing goats. It's hard to do well in any class if you do not enjoy working with and handling goats.

This packet is put together for the showman who is just beginning. There are tips in here for more advanced showman, but the best way to learn about showmanship is to watch and compete in the classes. Pay attention to the mistakes you make. You will always learn from them.

Basic Movements

(1) Walking

When walking, always start in a clockwise direction. Never walk counterclockwise into the ring unless the judge directs you to.



TIP: Always walk slow to give the animal a smoother gait. Do not walk too slow, but at a steady pace that a fully uddered milker can manage. Not only does walking slow make the goat look good, it gives you more time to think about your next move.

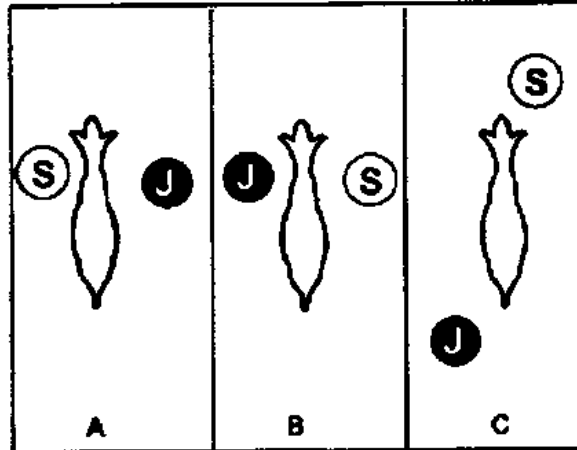
If your goat has to pee, stop and let her pee. Do not force the goat to walk when nature calls.

If the exhibitor in front of you has to stop for this reason, set your goat up and wait until you can walk forward again.

If the exhibitor behind you has to stop for this reason, walk slower so the other exhibitor can catch up, and so that the judge can compare the animals on the move.

(2) Switching Sides

The reason for switching sides is so that the judge can see the animal at all times. If you don't know when to switch sides, think of this: the judge has a water gun, the goat is your shield, and you don't want to get wet. So always put the goat between you and the judge.

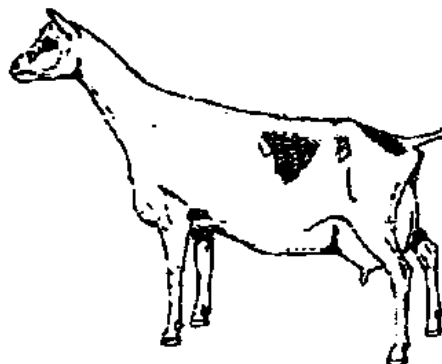


Picture C above shows what to do when the judge walks behind you. When the judge is behind you, put your leg in front of the goat. This will stop the goat if she gets scared.

TIP: Always switch sides in front of the goat.

(3) Setting-Up Your Goat

Always have your goat set up when you are not moving. Set the front legs under the shoulders and set the hind legs slightly apart. The back leg should look straight (up and down) from the pin bone. On a goat with an udder, set the back legs next to the udder.



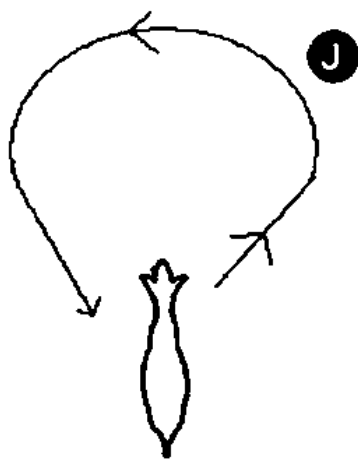
When choosing an animal for a showmanship goat, choose one that will stand still and not act up. The calmer the animal, the better.

Before you attend any shows, work with your showmanship goat. Practicing not only helps you, it helps your goat understand which moves you will perform in the show ring.

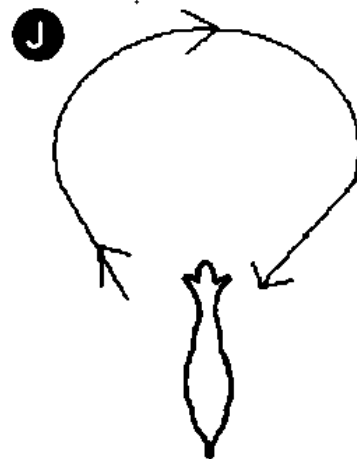
(4) The Smooth-U

This move is the basis for all the moves you will be completing in showmanship. Once you have this move memorized, it will be easy to accomplish any other maneuver.

Depending on which side the judge is on, depends on your path. Here are two examples:



1

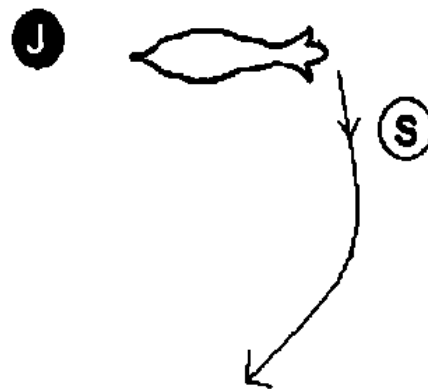


2

“But how do I stay on the opposite side of the judge without having to cross in front of the goat so many times?” The answer to that question is to have the goat do all the work. During the first part of a Smooth-U, try to stay in the center of the U at all times. (1) Imagine that your goat is doing the limbo under your arm, and you are guiding where the goat will limbo to. During the second part of the Smooth-U, pull the goat between you and the judge and walk to your destined place. (2)



1

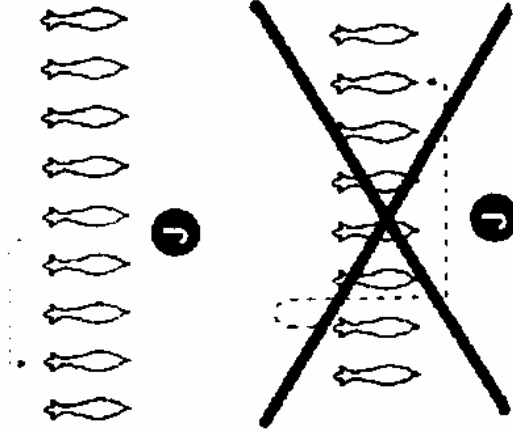


2

TIP: Try to look inconspicuous (not seen). If you make too much of a commotion to complete this move, that is called over-showing, and is not liked by judges.

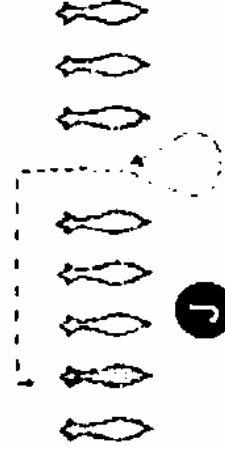
(1) The Side by Side Maneuver

In a side by side, all goats will be facing the same direction. The object of this maneuver is mainly for comparison of front ends and rear legs and/or udders.



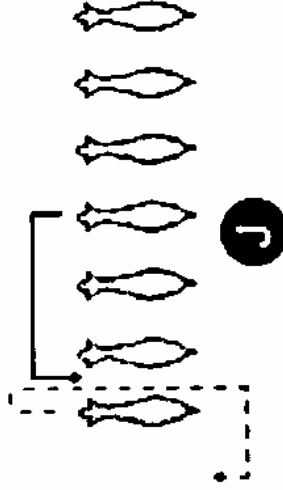
No matter where the judge is standing, you will move your goat in front of the others. Never move your goat behind the group. You may spook the other animals.

When the judge asks you to move, pull your goat out, walk through the spot where you will end up, complete a Smooth-U, and walk your goat into place.



TIP: Make sure that you line up your goat's front end with the rest of the class.

If you are not moving your goat, make sure that there is enough room for the other goats that are moving into positions near you.



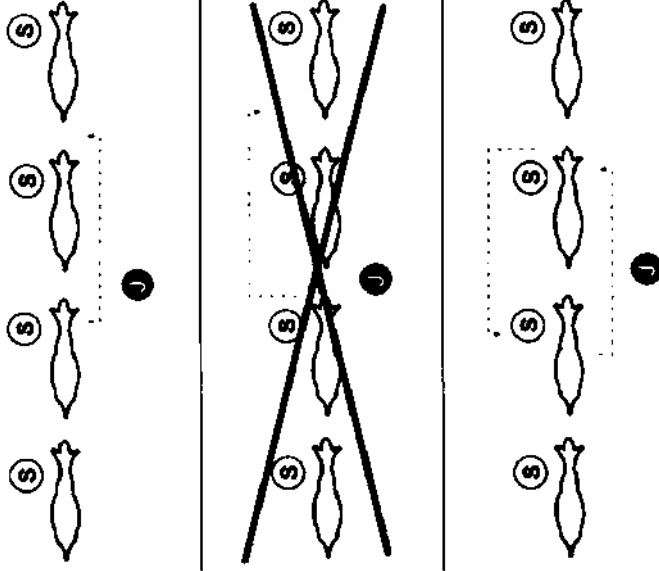
If the judge asks another person to move their animal between you and another person, move your goat over to make room for the incoming goat.

(2) The Head to Tail Maneuver

In a head to tail, the goats will be one behind the other, facing the front goat's tail. The object of this maneuver is mainly for the comparison of the goats' side profiles.



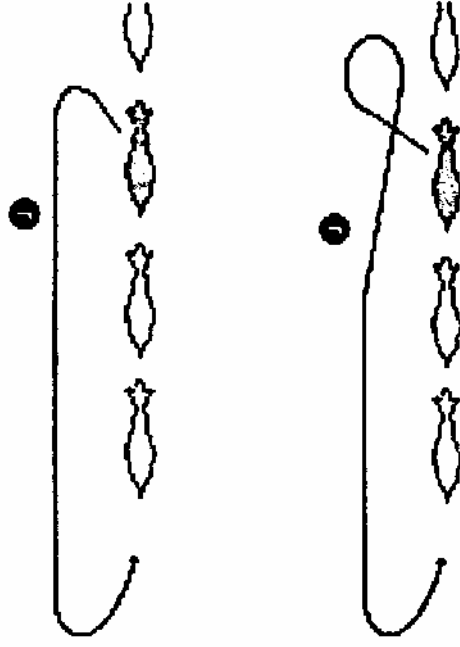
When the judge asks you to move up in the line, always move on the side of the judge. Never go behind the line.



TIP: When moving from a side by side to a head to tail, the lead goat should pull up two goat lengths ahead to allow room for the rest of the class.

When two goats are being switched, the goat moving up will move in front of the line while the goat moving back will move behind the line.

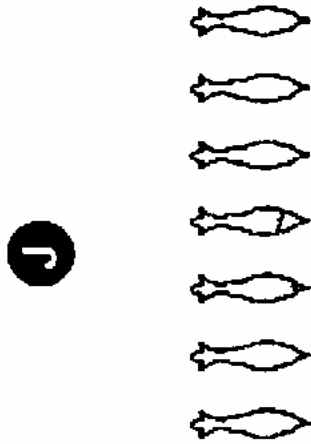
When the judge asks you to move back, pull your goat out at a 45° angle and switch sides once you have started moving back. When you near your spot, walk one goat-length behind your spot and switch sides as you pull into your spot.



For a smoother move, pull your goat out at a 45° angle, perform a Smooth-U, and move back to your destined place.

(3) The Comparison Maneuver

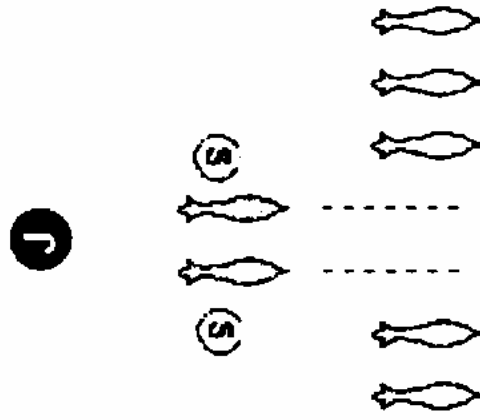
In this maneuver, two goats will be asked to come together towards the judge and then walk away together. The object of this move is to be able to compare the two goats when they walk and/or how they move around their udders.



Starting in a side by side, the judge will ask two people to come towards him/her.

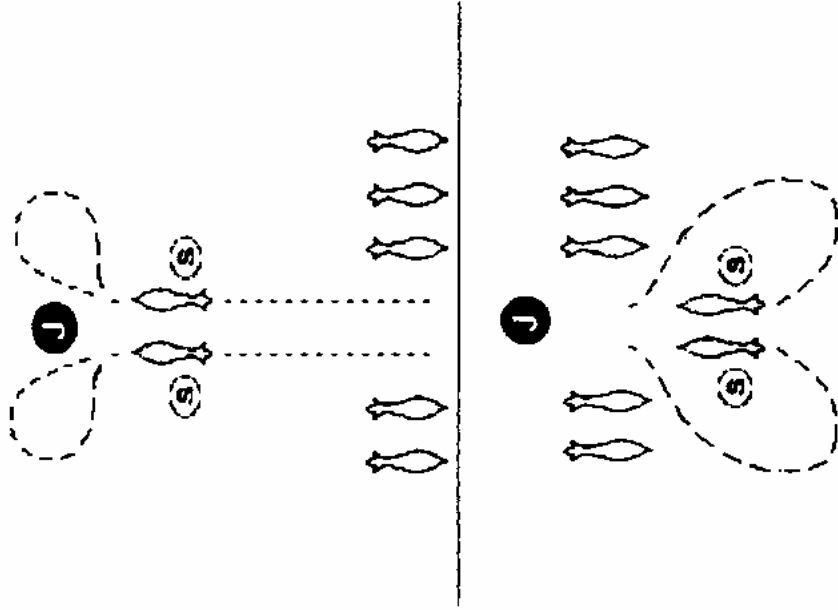
TIP: To keep the goats from fighting, hold your goat under the jaw to keep it from fighting the other goat.

Walk towards the judge, making sure that you are always even with the other person.



TIP: If the other person's goat is acting up or has to pee, stop or slow down so that you are still even in this move. Never take off by yourself.

When you reach the judge, the judge will ask you to turn around and walk away from him/her. To do this, perform a Smooth-U, then wait for the next person to catch up, or visa versa.



On the return, perform another Smooth-U to return to your original position.

(4) The About Face Maneuver

Starting in a head to tail line, the judge will ask the exhibitors to turn their animals the opposite way. The object of this maneuver is to compare the opposite sides of the animals.

TIP: This move is not used much.

From this,



to this.



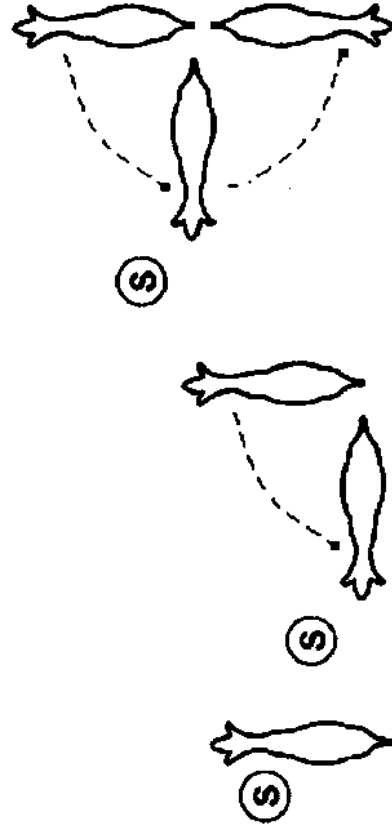
Instead of pulling your goat out of line and going through a bunch of motions, the easiest way (and the correct way) is to pivot on the rear hoof of your goat.



To perform the About Face, you need to find which hoof you need to pivot on. Always pivot on the rear hoof closest to you.



After finding your rear hoof to pivot on, you then will pull the goat towards you to pivot on that hoof. To complete the 180° turn, keep the goat moving as you push it towards your desired destination.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

TIP: Make sure that the hoof you're pivoting on does not move.

The Tips

Switching Animals

1. Try to be calm. Being nervous will only upset the animal, and will make you look bad out in the ring.
2. Never use the shoulder method unless you know the previous exhibitor did.
3. Never get mad. This also makes you look bad.
4. Look for faults that you can correct easily.

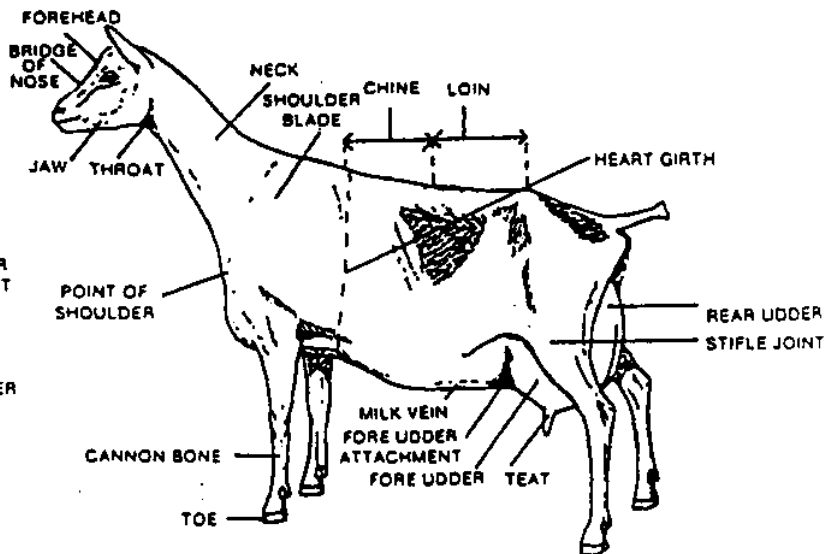
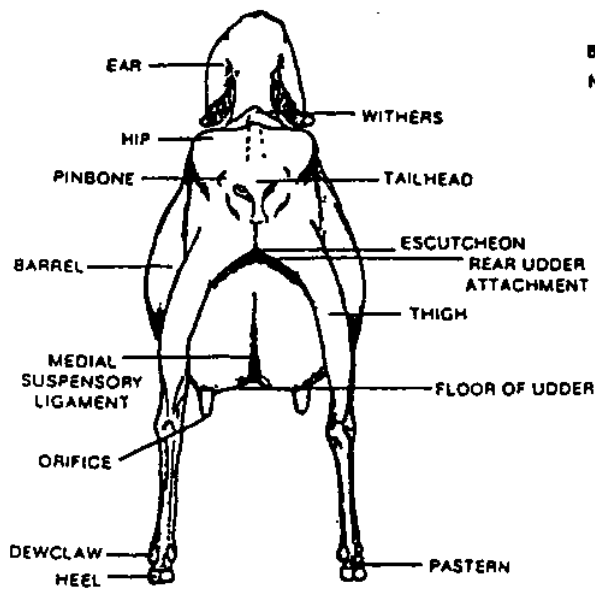
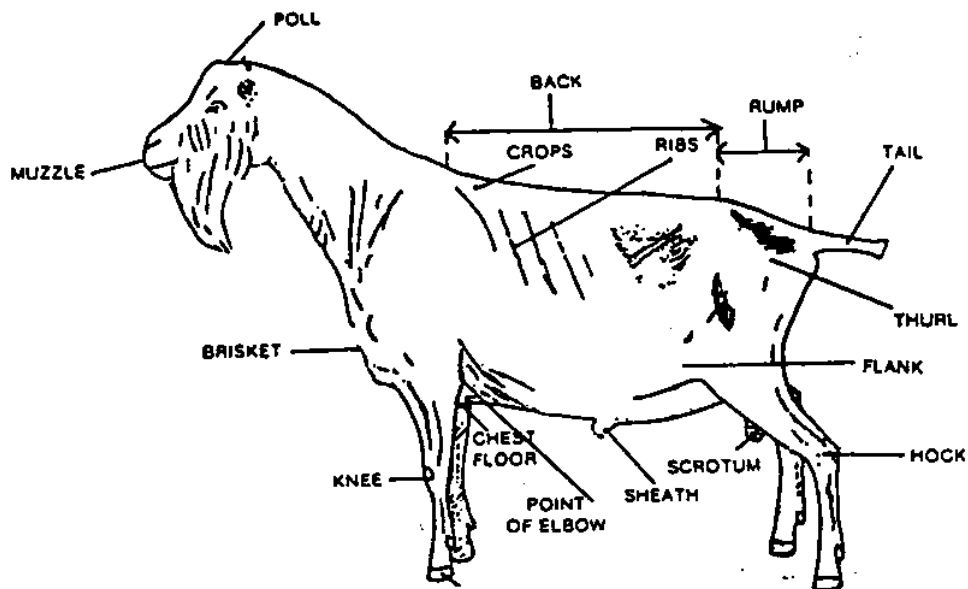
Questions To Ask Yourself When You Switch Animals:

1. What is this animal's greatest asset?
2. What can I do as a showman to emphasize this asset?
3. What is this animal's greatest fault?
4. Is this fault something that I, as a showman, can minimize?
5. If not, what is the most obvious correctable fault?
6. What can I do to minimize this fault?
7. What is the total picture I want the judge to see, and do the answers to the previous questions help me to reach this goal?

Things That Help Improve Your Showmanship Skills

1. Watch a class before yours (if you can) to see how the judge judges, what moves they might use, and what questions they might ask.
2. When in the class, and the judge is not working with you, watch the other exhibitors and see how they do the moves. You might find a smoother or easier way to do that move.
3. Act natural. Don't get nervous because it makes you mess up and it makes the goat nervous too.
4. Be inconspicuous. Try not to stand out or over-show.
5. Know your animal's birthday, freshenings, breed, and how many lactations she has had.
6. Set the feet up on the judge's side first. This makes you look prepared.
7. Know your animal's body parts, the scorecard, and the showmanship scorecard. Also know how to use judge's reasons when evaluating a goat.
8. When the judge feels your goat's udder, press firmly down on the back (around the loin) to prevent her from "roaching" and making a pocket in her udder.
9. Talk to your animal quietly to keep it calm. If you do not want to talk to your animal, then rub the side of her face or the side of her neck. Try to avoid petting the goat at all costs.
10. Last but not least, SMILE!! And have a good time!

Parts of a Dairy Goat



ADGA Judges' Training Committee 1984