

Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Program

2026-2027 Handbook



| University of Idaho
Extension

Advisory Committee Members

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Cheyanne	Fisher	Committee Member	501 Main Street	Caldwell	ID	83686	459-6003
Rhiannon	Blum	Committee Member	13198 Purple Sage Rd.	Caldwell	ID	83607	869-7142
Susi	Larrocea-Phillips	Committee Member	7855 North Star Rd.	Meridian	ID	83646	871-5766
Megan	Bennett	Committee Member	22787 Parkinson Rd.	Grand View	ID	83624	965-3416
Justin	Nesbitt	Committee Member	2405 Scarlet Rd.	Boise	ID	83706	991-8595
Gwen	Murray Clark	Committee Member	5736 W. Pheasant Circle	Boise	ID	83714	309-696-8392
Corey	Edwards	Committee Member	5220 W Amity Rd.	Nampa	ID	83687	208-573-5713
Maricela	Garcia	Committee Member	7876 Southside Blvd	Nampa	ID	83686	208-695-4463
Tim	Lowber	Committee Member	8276 Dearborne Rd	Nampa	ID	83686	208-880-7446
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Corinne	Conley	Committee Member	3173 E. Green Meadows	Nampa	ID	83687	208-890-1242
Jordyn	Betterncourt	Committee Member					
Staci	Odette	Committee Member					

For immediate questions or concerns regarding your dairy heifer or the project in general, please contact any of the committee members.

The committee works to ensure high learning outcomes and successful project experiences for each participant.

They also develop and implement the rules and regulations that govern the project.

Project Overview

The Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Project is open to participants from Ada, Canyon, Gem, Payette, Washington, Valley, and Owyhee counties. The purpose of the program is to increase knowledge and interest in the dairy industry, as well as enhance life skills among youth in the Treasure Valley.

Youth go through an application process in which they must understand, and agree to the rules and guidelines of the project. They purchase a heifer calf that has been provided by an area dairy producer to the TVDRHP program.

Program participants will learn how to care for, halter-break, show, feed, and manage their heifer as described in the project guidelines for approximately 16 months. During this period of ownership, youth have an opportunity to develop skills in financing, budgeting, record keeping, nutritional management, reproductive management, selection, and showmanship of dairy animals.

There are numerous clinics, tours, and workshops available throughout the year for participants. In addition, farm visits are conducted by committee members to monitor progress and offer useful advice.

Once the heifer reaches proper breeding age and size the participant will need to get the heifer bred. The program offers a place to get heifers bred.

Finally, heifers will be sold as two-year old bred or “springer” heifers. The sale is scheduled to occur at the Western Idaho Fair in August. This serves as the conclusion of the project. The participants keep money earned from the sale of their heifer minus any fees.

For more information on the program please contact treasurevalleydairy@gmail.com or contact one of the Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Program committee members.

History of the Dairy Heifer Project

The Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Project is open to participants from Ada, Canyon, Gem, Payette, Valley, Washington and Owyhee counties, and began in 1994 with 11 youth. The purposes of the program are to increase knowledge and interest in the dairy industry and enhance life skills among youth in the Treasure Valley. Throughout the years, over 360 youth have been involved in the program.

Youth go through an application process in which they must understand and agree to the rules and guidelines of the project. They have the opportunity to purchase a heifer calf that has been provided by a local dairy producer. To ensure all youth have an equal chance at every heifer, a lottery style drawing is utilized to match a youth with an animal.

Program participants will halter-break, feed, and manage their heifer as described in the project guidelines for approximately 16 months. During this period of ownership, youth have an opportunity to develop skills in financing, budgeting, record keeping, nutritional management, reproductive management, selection and showmanship of dairy animals.

Volunteers that serve on the committee select the project heifers, plan educational events, and organize the sale. Farm visits are conducted, particularly during the breeding season and numerous activities such as clinics and tours are planned by committee members.

Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Program Objectives

- Develop character and life skills through 4-H and FFA work.
- Develop integrity and sportsmanship by caring for, training, and showing a dairy heifer.
- Increase experience with and knowledge about the dairy industry and dairy products.
- Develop a better understanding of basic dairy heifer anatomy, nutrition, management, and healthcare.
- Stimulate positive public interest in the dairy industry.
- Be a positive ambassador to the public for 4-H, FFA, and animal agriculture.
- Learn and use business principles including use of animal records and financial records.
- Furnish a source of well-grown replacements for dairy herds.

Participant Eligibility

- Must be a currently enrolled 4-H or FFA member. Seniors in high school that will be the age of 18 at the time of the sale will be eligible, if present for the duration of the project and to sell their heifer. Juniors in high school are also eligible, if they will be present for the duration of the project and to sell their heifer.
- Have adequate facilities and feed for raising a heifer for 16 months.
- Have parent and leader/advisor support.
- Agree to get their project heifer bred between December and April.
- Agree to sell their heifers if proven bred in August at the Western Idaho Fair. If the heifer calves prior to or during the Western Idaho Fair, notify a Project Committee Member IMMEDIATELY. Both the project heifer AND the calf will be sold during the Bred Heifer Sale.
- Agree to submit all required heifer reports on time.
- Agree to pursue and approach buyers for the Western Idaho Fair in 2027.
- Be responsible for all costs incurred during the duration of the project (feed, housing, veterinarians, breeding, etc.)
- Be aware that often members only break even and some even lose money. It is a time consuming and sometimes costly project. The goal of a youth livestock project is learning and experiencing animal agriculture while developing life-skills!

Participant Selection in Case of Heifer Shortage

The Project Committee remains committed to providing as many quality heifers as needed; however, for various reasons the number of heifers the committee can secure may not equal the number of applicants for the project. Acceptance by the committee does not guarantee that you will receive a heifer. The committee will make every possible effort to secure heifers for the project members. In the event that the committee is unable to secure a sufficient quantity of heifers, some acceptable applicants might be dropped. (This hasn't happened yet, but be aware that the possibility does exist.) The priority of the Dairy Heifer Project is to get youth involved who do not have a project heifer and DO have the means to take care of the heifer. Participants must have means to take care of their heifer (land, shelter, ability to purchase feed, veterinary care, etc....). The following criteria have been established and will be utilized in the selection of participants from the applicant pool *should the committee not be able to secure a sufficient number of dairy heifers:*

1. New Applicants
2. Project Success in Previous Years
3. Level of Project Participation in past years
 - a. **Submission and completion of heifer reports**
 - b. **Participants participation in shows and educational events**
4. Order applications were submitted

Payment and Financing

For the past several summers, a group of individuals separate from the TVDRHP Committee has held a golf scramble to raise money for the TVDRHP program. The goal of this group is to raise money to help kids participate in the project who otherwise could not participate due to the financial burden. In 2026, there will be up to five scholarships, depending on participation and market prices to be used toward the full purchase price of a heifer. Scholarships are awarded one time only per participant.

The TVDRHP Committee is offering a second financial assistance option in the form of a \$500 loan to be repaid without interest when the heifer is sold in August 2027. First preference will be given to first time applicants. Returning applicants may apply.

Insurance

The Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Project will manage an insurance fund to insure animals against death loss. Premiums are \$100.00 per animal insured. Payout in the event of the death of the heifer will be fair market value as determined by local dairy sales at the time of death.

Total payouts can never exceed the insurance fund total. In the event that claims are made totaling more than the insurance fund contains, the fund will be split equally among those making a claim. Payout will not occur until after the heifer sale at the Western Idaho Fair for that group of heifers.

If there are no claims used by participants of the 2026-2027 group, \$50.00 of the premium will be refunded to each participant after the heifer sale.

No payout will be made in the event of death caused by negligence.

Heifers

These are animals. Animals can get sick, injured, or die. Once you purchase your heifer she is yours and therefore if she gets sick, injured, or dies she is your responsibility. The Heifer Project is not responsible for replacing sick or injured heifers. There are few exceptions to this and it is left to the committee to evaluate each circumstance and determine if there will be any project involvement. The decision of the committee is final.

The committee works with all cooperating producers and will select all calves. Calves will primarily be purchased from Idaho dairymen.

Calves for this project will be born approximately September, October, and November. These calves will be out of cows with herd average production or above. An effort will be made to select a very uniform group of calves with no major differences in size and production characteristics.

Project Participant Responsibilities

The following is a list of your responsibilities as a participant in the Dairy Heifer Project. If you have any problems during the project please notify the committee at treasurevalleydairy@gmail.com immediately. The committee is here to help!

- A project committee mentor will be selected to help guide you through the project. This person is highly experienced and qualified to help the participant learn how to properly care for, train, and show a dairy heifer. You are also allowed to select a mentor from outside of the committee to assist you in your project.
- **You are required to attend Selection Day in April.**
- **You are required to show at Meridian Dairy Days both years.**
- **You are required to show at your county fair or the Western Idaho Fair your first year.**
- **You are required to show at the Western Idaho Fair your second year.**
- **You are required to submit updates on heifer growth to the Extension Office in June and September of 2026 and February, and May 2027. All reports are required to be eligible to sell at the WIF in August of 2027.**
- **After the sale you are required to write a personalized thank you letter to your dairymen. please take a photocopy of this letter. Proof is required by the TVDRHP committee to receive your check.**
- Practice leading and working with your heifer daily.
- A heifer project committee member may visit each participant on the farm during your time in the program. All participants must make their heifers available for evaluation.
- Participants must feed and care for their heifer as prescribed by the Heifer Project Advisory Committee. Follow the guidance and advice of your project mentor or heifer project committee.
- Any participant that is suspected of or determined to be abusing or neglecting animals or acting in an unsportsmanlike manner can be dismissed from a show, removed from the project, have their heifer removed from their care, or banned from future animal projects as deemed necessary by the project committee.
- Each heifer must be bred to a superior dairy bull. This breeding will take place when the heifer reaches the proper age and size for breeding and so that she will calve shortly after the Western Idaho Fair Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Sale in late August.

TVDRHP Selection Day

At selection day, participants get to pick their heifer. It generally happens in April. At arrival, participants are given a folder with a handbook, and information that will help them be successful throughout their time in the program. During selection day there are several guest speakers with additional information to help families in the program with their new heifers. For the selection of heifers, youth draw a number out of a bucket to determine the order of selection. Three heifers are put into the ring for youth to choose from until the last one is chosen. Participants pay for their heifer at selection day and take them home, or to wherever they may be being housed. **This is a required event for all participants.**

TVDRHP Meridian Dairy Days

Youth attend the Meridian Dairy Days with their heifers for presentation to the public and for quality and showmanship competitions. The TVDRHP puts on an educational clinic in May for the youth who attend. **This is a required event for all participants for both years of participation.**

TVDRHP Reproduction Workshop

The heifer reproduction workshop occurs in early November and **is a required event for all participants.** Before the workshop, participants will have to decide and notify the extension office if they are breeding their heifer at home or taking it to a designated heifer raising operation for breeding. Unless you have the facilities at home for artificial insemination of cattle, the TVDRHP committee highly recommends taking your heifer to the designated operation! The day of the workshop, participants will bring their heifer to the designated operation where they will be weighed, vaccinated, and given a magnet. Participants breeding their heifers at home will join at a later time for the remainder of the workshop. Information will be presented on how to judge the strengths and weaknesses of your heifer, basic cattle reproduction, understanding bull proofs and how to select a bull to breed your heifer to.

TVDRHP Bred Heifer Sale

SALE GUIDELINES

All springer heifers in the program will be sold at the Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Project sale, held at the Western Idaho Fairgrounds in Boise in the month of August. Heifers will be given a random sale order. A 5% fee will be charged on the sale proceeds of each project participant. This fee will be used by the committee for program expenses. Heifers purchased at the sale may not be released from the Western Idaho Fairgrounds before the time designated in the fair book. It is the responsibility of the seller to arrange for delivery of the animal to the purchaser residing within a reasonable distance or, if resale, to the designated location. The purchase price equals the delivery price. Ownership of the heifers does not change until delivery has been made. It is the responsibility of the participant to pursue and invite potential buyers to the WIF.

Approximate Cost for the Project

1. Gross Receipts	Unit	\$/Unit	Units/head	Cost	Income
Replacement Heifer \$2,292.86	Head	\$3314.47	1 Head		
(based on 2018 prices, w/out add ons)					
2. Costs					
Initial Heifer Value (based on 2019 figures) (500 pounds @ \$1.00/pound)	Head	\$1050.00	1 Head	\$1050.00	
Feeds					
Roughages (8,000 lbs.)	Ton	\$200/ton	4.00 Ton	\$800.00	
Concentrates (1,500 lbs)¹	Ton	\$500/ton	.75 Ton	\$450.00	
Yardage (during breeding)	Days	\$3.50	90 days	\$112.50	
Drugs/Veterinary²	Head	Varied	1 Head	\$75.00	
Bedding/Housing	Head	\$70.00	1 Head	\$70.00	
Breeding³	Head	\$30.00	1 Head	\$30.00	
Supplies⁴	Head	Varied	1 Head	\$90.00	
Insurance Fee	Head	\$100.00	1 Head	\$100.00	
Interest on Heifer⁵	Dollars	.02875%	\$1050.00	\$40.15	
Sale Fee	Dollars	\$129.40	1 Head	\$129.40	
3. Total Costs				\$2947.05	- \$3314.47
4 Returns⁶					= 367.42

¹ Cost may vary depending on the market and whether purchased in bulk or individual sacks. This price reflects individual sacks which are more expensive. (30 bags/50 lbs each x \$15 = \$450.00)

² Veterinary home calls are more costly than hauling a heifer to the clinic. This cost reflects taking the heifer to the clinic for preg checks.

³ Semen cost can vary greatly.

⁴ Supplies during the first year of the dairy project may be more expensive if you don't have supplies like halters and clippers.

⁵ Interest = (.02875 x \$1050.00 x 1.33 years = \$40.15)

⁶ Not all costs listed here will apply to every animal. However this budget reflects what could be expected during the course of the program. Participants can increase their receipts through active marketing of their heifer and add-on donations.

Animal Health

Heifers will be vaccinated, wormed, and checked for extra teats and other health issues at selection day. All other animal health and veterinary needs and expenses of the heifers are the participants' responsibility unless the committee determines a necessary veterinary check.

Please make sure that you have the contact information for a large animal veterinarian in your area prior to selection day. They are animals and can become sick or injured and therefore it is important to have a working relationship with your veterinarian. It is also important for you to spend enough time with your heifer to know what is normal for her to enable you to quickly recognize an illness or potential problems. If you have a health concern, **CALL YOUR VET!**

If you experience any problems or have concerns regarding the Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Program, please contact a Committee Member at treasurevalleydairy@gmail.com

Any questions or concerns that are brought to the Treasure Valley Dairy Replacement Heifer Program Committee will be acted on and decisions made will be final.

Notes:



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Persons with disabilities have the right to request and receive reasonable accommodations. Each participant must be evaluated individually, assessing whether they are qualified for the event and whether they would be able to participate in

the event with or without accommodation. So long as the participant meets essential requirements of the activity, participation should be welcomed. Please complete this [form](#) to assist in evaluating the reasonable accommodation request at least two weeks prior to the event. Accommodation applications cannot be approved without supporting documentation.

Submit this electronic request form by sending the application and documentation to Center for Disability Access and Resources 875 Perimeter Drive Moscow, ID 83844-4257 cdar@uidaho.edu Phone 208-885-6307, Fax 208-885-9404

Accomodations Link: <https://content-hub.uidaho.edu/api/public/content/24dcb309ed5544e9a662bd870bd638dc?v=b54ea882>

Individuals with limited English skills must have meaningful access to our programs. If you need this program in a language other than English, contact Cheyanne Fisher at chevannem@uidaho.edu at least two weeks prior to the event. If we cannot provide an interpreter, translation services will be provided via Google Translate.