

Cows in curlers...well, almost



Chief cattle steward at the Camperdown Show, Ashlea Wines, with one of her winning cows, Izzy Bubblefrost Jersey.

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[/dropcap]HE nightmares began for Ashlea Wines about a fortnight ago.

Cows were running loose, judges failed to show up, the rain came down in bucketloads and Ashlea left all of the prizes at home.

Such is the stress of being the chief steward for the entire cattle section of the Camperdown Agricultural Show which on Saturday (October 12) kicks off the show season for South-West Victoria.

Ashlea, from South Ecklin, has been chief steward for the past

six years and still suffers the last-minute nerves that inevitably come with having full responsibility for making sure everything runs smoothly.

That includes organising judges, of which there are five, securing sponsorship for about \$8000 worth of prizes, selecting and organising the feature breed events, and setting up and running the cattle events on the day.

“Every year I say that I am not going to do it for another year...and here I am,” she said with a laugh.



Now that is a baggage carousel! Lining up for judging at the 2011 Camperdown Show. (Image courtesy of the CP&A Society).

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he Camperdown show is organised by perhaps one of the smallest committees – only eight hardy volunteers – yet it boasts a strong following, especially for its horse and cattle events.

Ashlea expects to oversee around 100 cattle entered for this

year's show, and that includes five milkers and one bull from her own family's herd, Bubblefrost Jerseys.

"Fortunately my fiancée (Geoff Church) and cousin (Elyse Meade) will be preparing the cows on the day and looking after that side of things," she said.

In reality, the preparations begin much earlier – in fact months earlier, when cows intended for show are broken into halters so that they become accustomed to being led around the show-ring.



Here's looking at moo...Petunia
Bubblefrost Jersey.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A
[/dropcap]nd then there is the shampooing, shaving, brushing and general preening which needs to be done to ensure the cows are looking udderly gorgeous.

"I am a bit soft on my girls and have them rugged leading up to show day, just like you would a horse, so that their coats are the best condition they can be," Ashlea explains.

It is not only the cows that need to look good, but also their

owners. Those who lead the cows around the ring are expected to dress for the part.

“Last year we had heavy rain so we allowed everyone to walk around in gumboots,” Ashlea said.

Even as a chief steward, there are some things which remain beyond our control.

[box] Find out more about the Camperdown Show on its [Facebook page](#). [/box]



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