

Tips for Effective Animal Welfare Bulletin Boards

Animals naturally promote discussion and attract people to the exhibit. These forums can help clarify any misinformation. It is important to provide an accurate portrayal of modern animal agriculture to the public.

- **Farm animals are not pets or people:** Avoid giving human-like characteristics to your animal. This is critical when trying to explain issues such as separating calves from cows and at what age they reach market weight. Use pedigree names if appropriate. If the animal on display does not have a name, do not give it one; instead explain it has a number and what the number represents. Replace signs which say “Hello, my name is Suzy and I eat hay.” with “This young female cow is a beef breed called ‘Charolais’, due to have a calf in 3 months.”
- **Make it real:** Display farm animals in their regular environments. Do not generate misconceptions by using inappropriate settings. The industry should be open about our practices and the rationale behind them. People see negative or inaccurate images of farming in the media all the time. This is agriculture’s chance to show how things are really done, but do not forget to include an explanation why. People are more interested in different stages of growth of animals than breeds. Combine different breeds and sized to maximize the value of the display. This is extremely important for explaining the lifecycle of a farm animal and how quickly they grow.
- **What is it?** Label everything, including age and breed. Do not assume that your audience will know a cow is a cow, and not a horse. Be as specific as you can without being confusing. Do not oversimplify by simply stating “COW”—is it a dairy cow or a beef cow, a boy or girl, young or old? Explain the role of the animal: meat or milk; and what it eats, production methods, and equipment. If you include specific terms, be sure to define them.

Source: Ontario Animal Farm Council