

My Calf Scramble Project
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Heifer
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This run with Jolene has been amazing! It all started when I picked her out. She was that orange blonde calf that just stood out with a look that said, “You want a thick clubby calf, but yet feminine heifer? Here I am!” She was sound on her feet and legs and had that pop (eye appeal) to her. She looked amazing with that big swoop to her belly. She was the calf I was looking for. She was also in my price range. It’s like the pieces fell just right so that I could get her.

I bought her on March 15, 2019. Even though she was a yearling and had never been worked before, I got her. As a yearling, Jolene didn’t want to be worked at all. The first day I put a halter on her, she threw me into a pipe fence! Even though we started off on the wrong foot, I knew she was the calf for me. After I got her home, I started working her hard all the time. We formed a good bond that made her trust me more each day. There was only one problem. Jolene didn’t like to walk. She made it to where you had to have somebody always twisting her tail to walk. Eventually, she grew out of this habit. She was a calf that grew hair pretty easily. I was washing her everyday just to make her look good. Jolene helped me learn that not all cattle work the same. Jolene was a gentle heifer but had her moments.

We went to our first show in May, and she did amazing! She won her class at the Texas Junior Charolais Association State Show. We walked out there and did our job. We worked together like champs. We had a blast! At the show, Jolene found out that she gets whatever feed she wants at shows... just as long as she eats. She has become a picky eater now because she knows she can get away with it. I do not care what food she eats... I just want her to look good.

Jolene and I walked into that ring like we owned the place. After that, we went in for showmanship and placed 2nd. Considering it was my 1st showmanship with her, I would say that's pretty good. We went to the American International Junior Charolais Association National show in June. We got 2nd in our class, but it was really tough with about twenty cattle in it. It was really big compared to what I had been showing against before. We walked in the ring and did amazing. I never realized how many breeders there are until I got up there. I learned a lot of fitting tips and how to properly groom cattle, especially Jolene. I used to be a sheep person, so I didn't think I was going to understand what they were saying, but a lot of the stuff transfers over for cattle as well. In July, I went to an "I'm In It To Win It" show. We won our class and were ARB/ORB Grand Champion. In October, Jolene and I went to the Heart O' Texas Livestock Show. In the scramble show, we won our class, the breed, and then won Reserve Overall Champion. I was beyond excited! The Junior and Jackpot shows were not as exciting, because we placed 4th. It just goes to show that each judge has their own opinion. The next weekend, we went to the Brazos Valley Exposition Show and placed 1st in our class and won Reserve ORB Breed. At the end of October, I went to the Houston Livestock Prospect Show. We placed 4th in our class. After the show, I talked with the judge and she gave me some more pointers and told me to up the feed, because Jolene was getting too skinny. In November, Jolene and I went to the Holiday Classic. We placed first in our class. I also won the Senior Showmanship. I was proud to know that I had improved on my showing.

After the Holiday Classic Show, I took Jolene to Kevin Doonan's house to be bred to Who's Who. He is a stout and powerful Charolais bull. I took her in August, but I think I did not give her time to "settle" before bringing her home and she did not take. I have learned that not all cattle breed the first time so I have to be patient. We're hoping she took this time which would

mean an August/ September calf. I would love to have a bull calf, so that I could show the calf as a steer in my county or a major show. I just returned from the Fort Worth Stock Show where we placed 9th. Although I did not place as high as I wanted to in Fort Worth, I was still pleased with our placing because it was a very tough class of Other Registered Breeds. I know that Jolene is not far enough along in her pregnancy to show the deep belly to compete with those that are due in March or April. I am still proud of her and feel like she was the best choice for me and my future herd.

Currently, I am getting ready for several major shows including the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo by changing feed rations, washing, working hair, and practicing showing with her. Jolene and I are a good duo. We look forward to walking into the arena in March to show everyone, especially the judge, how much we have worked and are ready for him.

I have learned so much over the last year. The business plan was difficult in the beginning, because I never thought about how much I spent on my projects. Now I am aware of how much is spent to make it a successful project. I also realize why my parents plan to send our heifers to be bred in December, because that is a month we can use the extra money. As Alex Morgan said, “Winning and losing isn't everything; sometimes, the journey is just as important as the outcome.” I believe my journey with Jolene and the Houston Calf Scramble has led me to be a better showman, livestock owner, and person.