

Evaluating Cow Faults or Faults

There are faults which should be identified and discriminated against when judging dairy cattle. Some are more serious than others. The following list separates the faults into slight, moderate and serious discriminations. Be aware of the seriousness of these faults when judging dairy cattle.

Slight Discrimination

- High tailhead
- Mammary system reverse tilt
- Low loin
- Open toed

Moderate Discrimination

- Recessed tailhead
- Advanced tailhead
- Wry tail
- Mammary system tilt
- Bulgy fore udder
- Heavy fore udder
- Short fore udder
- Front teats not plumb
- Lacks udder shape
- Rear udder unbalanced
- Rear teats not plumb
- Rear udder short
- Rear teats too far back
- Close ribbed
- Undesirable head
- Weak crops
- Weak back
- Lacks balance
- Not well sprung
- Narrow heart
- Frail
- Weak pasterns

- Coarse hocks
- Lacks bone
- Toes out in front

Serious Discrimination

- Thurls too far back
- Webbed teat
- Stance/mobility
- Advanced anus
- Wry face
- Blind quarter
- Crampy
- Parrot jaw
- Protruding lower jaw
- Freemartin heifers

It is your responsibility as a judge to be able to identify these faults.

Judging the Dairy Heifer

A dairy heifer is a young dairy female, usually under the age of two years, which has not yet calved.

When judging dairy heifers, look for structurally correct, clean-cut, open-ribbed, stylish animals with adequate size for their age.

The same points are desired in the dairy heifer as in the dairy cow. The emphasis you should place on each of these areas is:

| | Relative Emphasis |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Feet and Legs | 35 |
| Dairy Strength..... | 50 |
| Rump | 15 |
| Total | 100 |

When judging dairy heifers you should check to make sure that they have four regularly sized teats.

Heifers will generally not show the angularity which is desired in the cow. Older heifers will carry more flesh which will be evident over the rump and at the withers. This fleshiness is tolerated in springing heifers.

An ideal dairy heifer will have these characteristics:

- correctly set rear and fore legs
- tall, upstanding and stylish
- adequate strength and capacity
- straight and smooth over the topline
- level and wide in the rump
- smoothly blended and proportionate body parts
- sharp and clean over shoulders and withers

Judging Dry Cows

Dry cows are those dairy cows which are not currently milking.

When judging any class of dairy cows, you must give consideration to the stage of lactation. Dry cows will normally be carrying extra flesh. They will not show the sharpness and dairyness desired in the milking cow.

The dry udder should be well collapsed, soft and pliable. As the cow nears calving, the udder will begin to fill and lose its softness. Dry or in milk, the udder should always be uniform and strongly and smoothly attached, both front and rear.

Terminology for Judging Dairy Cattle

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| <p>The Mammary System</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger attached udder, both fore and rear • More level in the udder floor • Carries her udder higher above her hocks • Udder held tighter to the body wall • More evenly balanced udder • Showed more desirable quality and texture of udder • Teats more uniform in size and shape • More correct placement of the teats • More desirable veining in the udder • Carries her udder higher above the hocks • Has a stronger median suspensory ligament • Stronger center support in the udder • A deeper crease in her udder • More clearly defined halving in the udder • More halving when viewed from the rear • Stronger center attachment • More fullness at the top (bottom) of the rear udder • More height and strength of rear udder attachment • More symmetry and balance of rear udder • Higher, wider, stronger rear udder attachment • Longer, smoother, firmer fore udder attachment • Stronger fore udder attachment • A longer, more tightly attached fore udder • Less bulginess of fore udder • Tighter in the fore udder attachment • More firmly attached fore udder • Fore udder that blends more smoothly into the body wall • Snugger in the fore udder attachment • Longer fore udder attachment |
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| <p>The Mammary System (continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teats more desirable in size, shape and placement • More nearly correct teat size • Teats hanging more nearly plumb • Teats placed more correctly beneath more quarter • More nearly correct front teat placement • Teats placed more squarely beneath the quarters • More correct teat placement as viewed from the side (rear) • More apparent quality in the udder • More prominent veining • Larger, more capacious udder • More symmetry of udder • More bloom and capacity of udder |
| <p>Dairy Strength</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More angularity and clean-cutness • More openness of rib • More dairyness throughout • Cleaner down the top-line • Flatter (leaner or thinner) in the thighs • More curving in the thighs • More refined over the withers • Sharper over the withers • Cleaner and flatter down through the rump and the thighs • Longer and leaner neck • Blends more smoothly from neck to shoulders • Cleaner about the brisket and dewlap • Deeper and more refined in the flank • More feminine head • Wider muzzle and stronger jaw |

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| <p>Dairy Strength (continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More alert and brighter eye • Cleaner through the head and neck • More substance and angularity • Stronger over the loin • Taller at the point of the withers • More depth and openness in the rib • Deeper through the heart • Fuller through the crops and fore rib • Showed more spring of rib • More capacious through the middle and mid-section • Wider through the chest floor • Fuller in the shoulder • Shows more stretch and scale • Deeper in the rear(ore) rib • More size, scale and substance • Longer from end to end • More harmonious blending of parts • More symmetry and balance • Feet and legs • Deeper in the heel • Stands on a stronger, straighter set of legs • Stands more squarely on her legs • Flatter and cleaner bone in the rear leg • More correct set to the leg • Stronger on her pasterns • Tracks more correctly • Deeper in the heel • More mobility |
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| Rump | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher and wider over the thurls• Wider and more level rump• Wider and more level from hooks to pins• Smoother over the tailhead• Tailhead sets neater between the pins• Longer and leveler from hips (hooks) to pins• Wider in the pins• Tailhead that sets more neatly between the pins• Neater in the tail setting• More correctly set tail head |
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Sample Reasons

Three Year Old Holstein Cows

1 placed this class of three-year old Holstein cows 1 2 3 4. This class easily divided itself into 2 pairs – a top and bottom pair.

The top pair has definite advantages in strength, balance and body capacity. Looking more closely, 1 has a slight advantage over 2 in dairyness, is cleaner cut about the head and slightly longer in her neck. 1 also excels over 2 in the mammary system. 1 is higher and wider in the rear udder attachment and has a definite advantage in front teat placement.

Placing 2 over 3 was an easy placing. 2 has advantages in balance, body capacity and strength front end. 2 is wider in the chest floor, fuller in her crops and fore rib and stands straighter on her front feet than 3. I admit that 3 shows more balance of rear udder, left to right.

In placing 3 over 4, I credit 3 with more substance and angularity throughout. 3 is straighter on top, fuller in the crops and smoother at the point of shoulder than 4. 3 has a big advantage in the mammary system. She is higher and wider in the rear udder, has a more level udder floor and is more correct in teat shape and placement.

These are my reasons for placing this class of three-year old Holsteins 1 2 3 4.