

You be the **JUDGE**



Your Guide to Judging Dairy Cattle ²¹

Whether you're a 4-H member, a progressive milk producer, or an official judge, at some time you'll be assessing and comparing one animal to another, either in your barn or at a show. And regardless of the number—4, 10, or 20, you'll need to sort the desirable from the less desirable animals.

At that time ... *you will be the judge!*

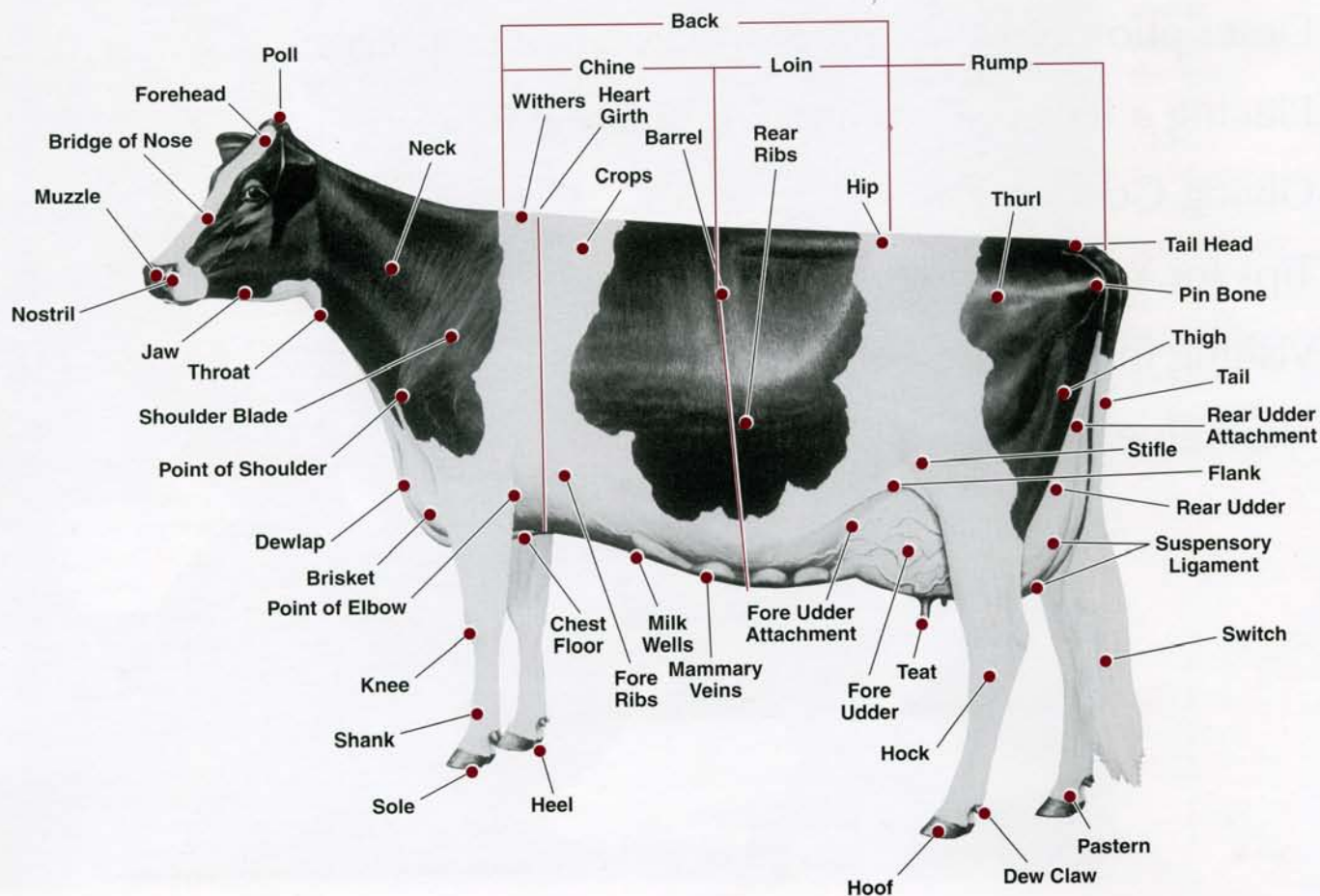
A ***You Be the Judge*** video to complement this manual is available. Other show-related manuals and videos have been produced in English, French, and Spanish. International video formats: NTSC, PAL, SECAM.

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Parts of the True Type Dairy Cow

Before you begin assessing and comparing animals, you must know the parts of the true type cow.

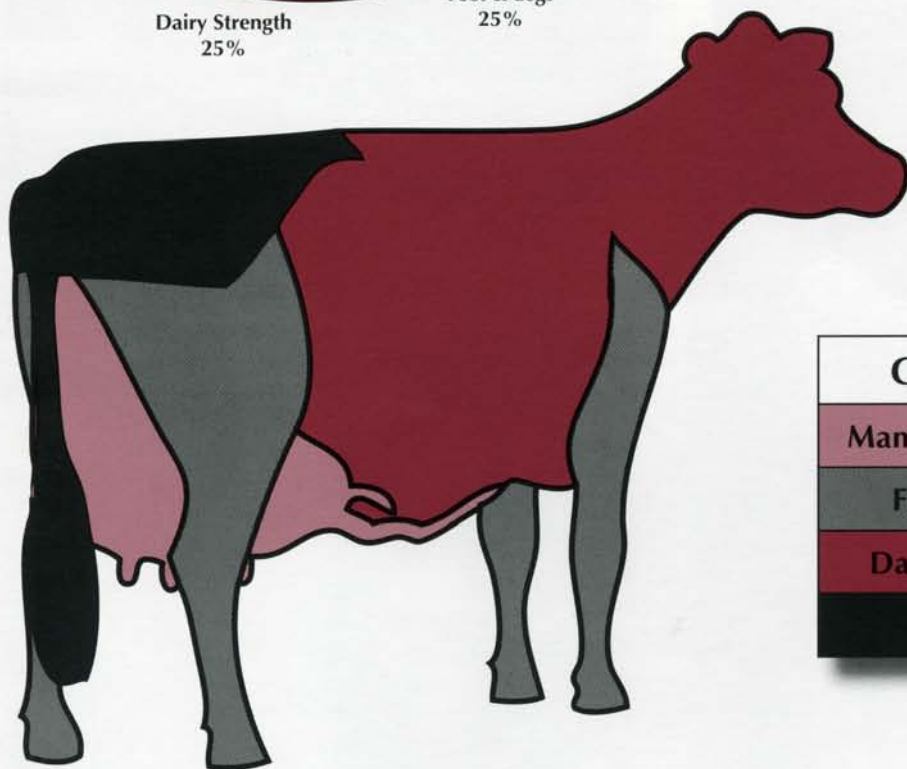
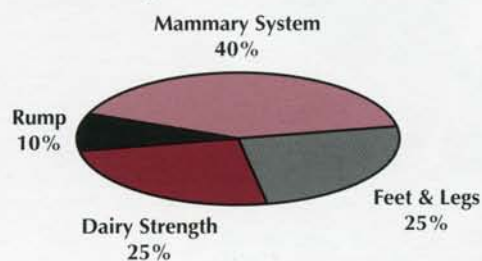


Relative Emphasis for Cows

In Canada, both the judging and classification programs use the Holstein Cow Score Card as a guide. While **classification** is the evaluation of each animal individually, compared to the true type, **judging** is the comparing of each animal to others.

The relative emphasis placed on individual parts is indicated in the chart. While used as a guide, numerical points are not assigned in judging.

Relative emphasis for cows:



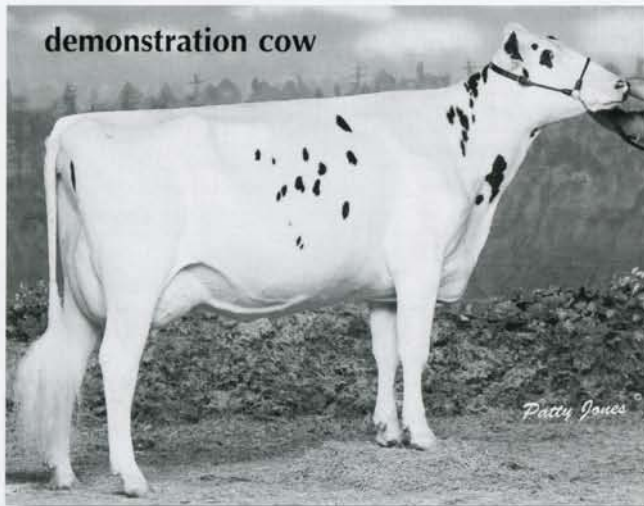
| Cow Scorecard |
|----------------------|
| Mammary System - 40% |
| Feet & Legs - 25% |
| Dairy Strength - 25% |
| Rump - 10% |

Structural Defects and Discriminations

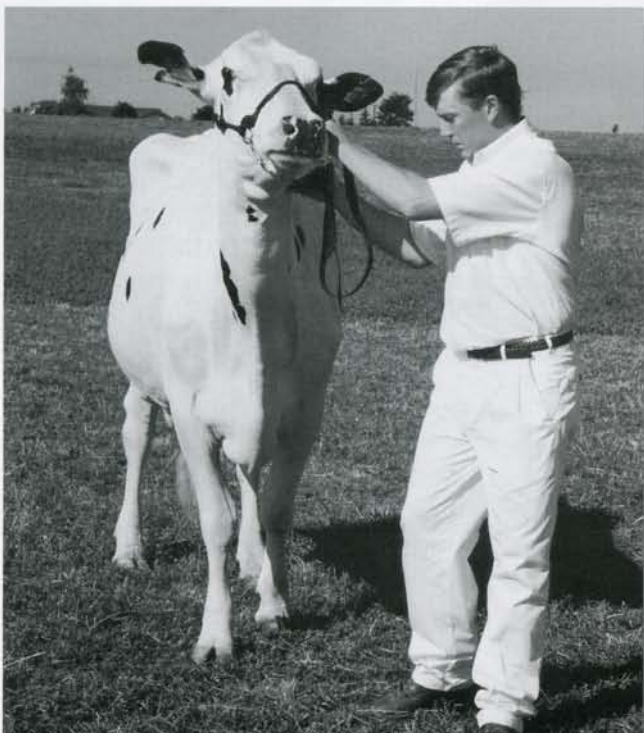
| Structural Defect | Show Ring Discrimination |
|-------------------------------|--|
| abdominal rupture | serious |
| advanced anus | serious |
| corkscrew claw | serious |
| freemartin | very serious |
| Roman nose | slight |
| recessed or advanced tailhead | slight |
| spastic (crampy) syndrome | very serious, particularly in younger cows |
| teat fistula (side leak) | serious |
| undershot or overshot jaw | serious |
| webbed teat | serious |
| wry face | serious |
| wry tail | moderate, depending on degree of curvature |

Comparing Individual Parts of Cows

The individual parts of a demonstration cow are reviewed on the following four pages. Also, a comparison of desirable and undesirable characteristics of other females is included.



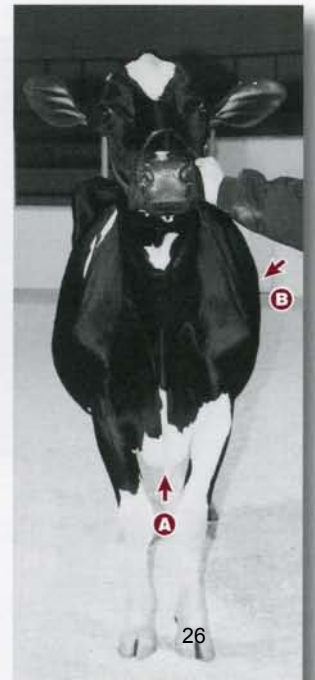
Our demonstration cow below has a wide muzzle, width of chest, freedom of movement in the front legs, and dairy character through the front end.



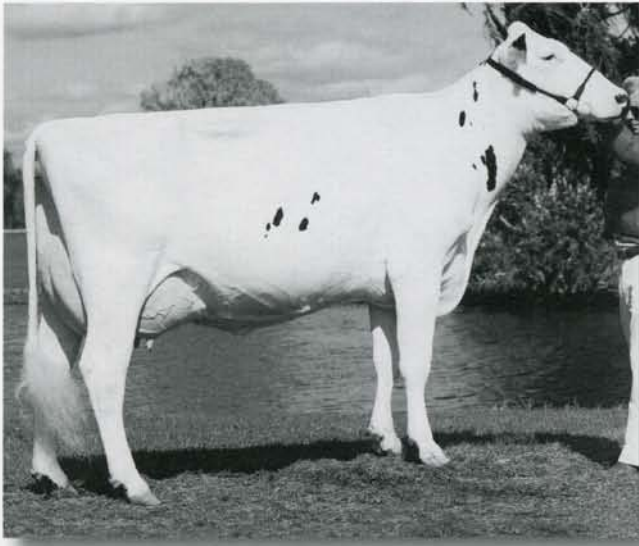
Notice the strength of head on this next clean-cut cow. She has a strong jaw exhibiting plenty of breed character with a long, lean, dairy neck, clean jowl, and throat.



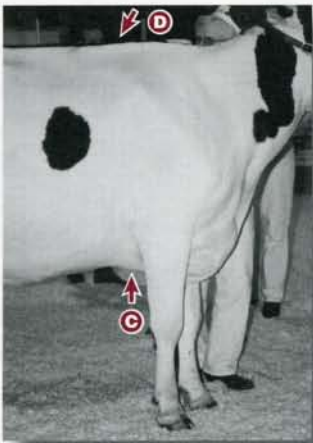
Below, the cow on the left exhibits more width of chest **A**, more spring of rib **B**, and width of muzzle than the cow on the right.



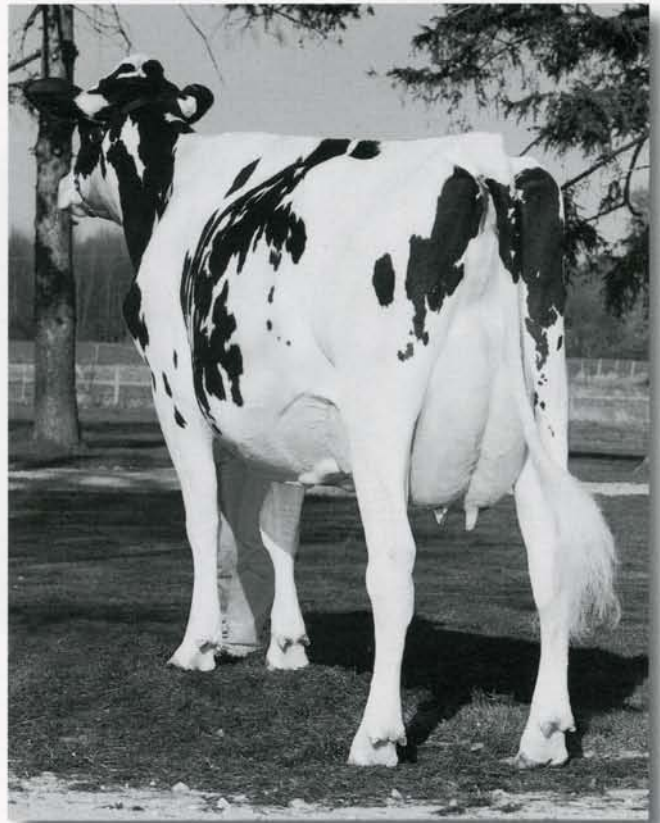
This cow below displays depth and openness of both fore rib and rear rib. Cleanness of head and neck, and length of body are apparent. Observe the overall length and balance of the cow. She displays cleanness and quality of bone, depth of heel, and strength of pasterns.



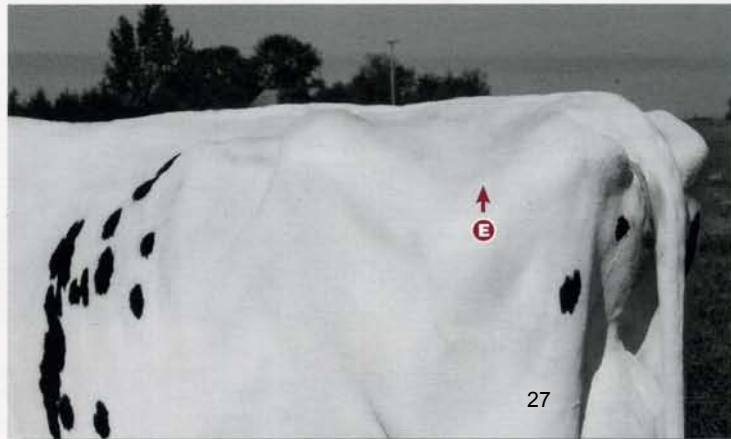
The cow on the bottom left reveals more depth of heart **C** than the cow on the right. Notice how the cow on the left blends more smoothly from neck into shoulder, shoulder into body, and is fuller in her crops **D**.



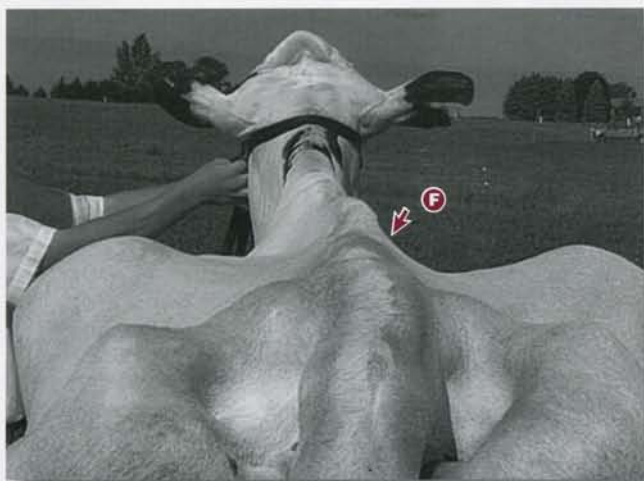
This cow displays desired angularity. She possesses clean bone, thin clean thighs, sharpness at the withers, depth and openness of frame with a pleasing combination of dairyness and strength.



Note the strong topline below, particularly the strength of the loin attached wide on the hips. Also view the overall length of rump and the correct positioning of the thurls **E**.



From the rear on the cow below, observe the desirable width of hips, thurls, and pins. Acknowledge the overall width of the hips. Arrow **F** indicates the strong bridging and strength of the loin. From the top, notice the width and strength of the loin, the blending of withers into the body, and the sharpness and angularity at the top of the withers.



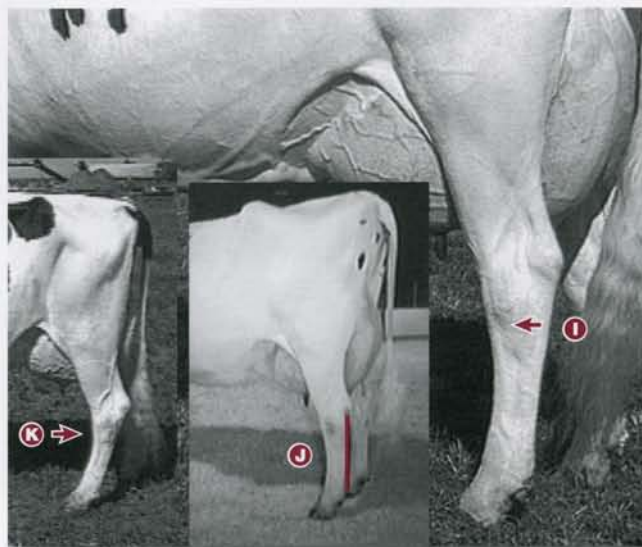
The first cow below shows a desirable rump. She has the ideal slope from hips to pins **G** with a clean, well-defined tailhead setting. She also shows more overall cleanness and dairyness throughout the rump. She is cleaner and more

refined about the tailhead than the cow in the bottom photo.

This bottom cow's tailhead is advanced, and the rump angle is too high in the pins **H**.



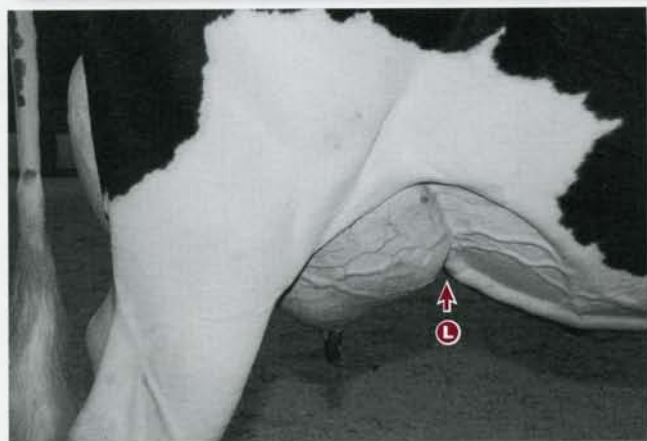
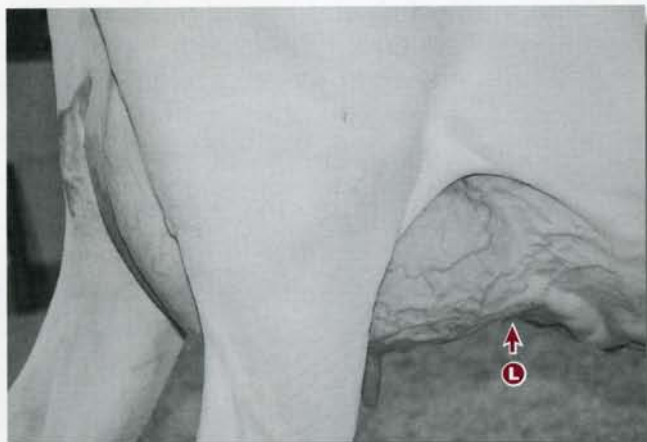
Compare the ideal set of legs on the right. She exhibits flat, clean bone in the hock **I**, desirable set or curvature to the legs, strong pasterns, and deep heel. The legs on the middle inset cow tend to be too straight **J**, and show more coarseness in the hocks. The cow on the far left inset exhibits too much curvature **K** in her hind legs, and has weaker pasterns.



This mammary system displays desirable length, width, capacity, and balance. The floor of the udder is well above the hocks, and the fore udder is very desirable.



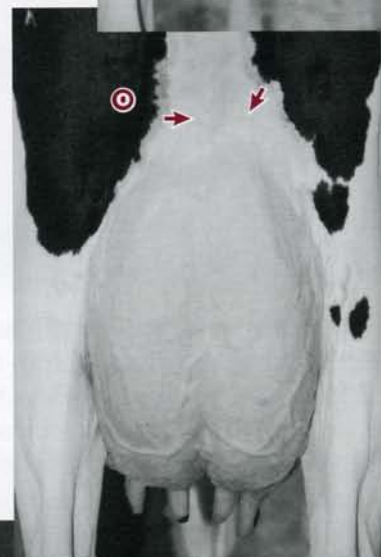
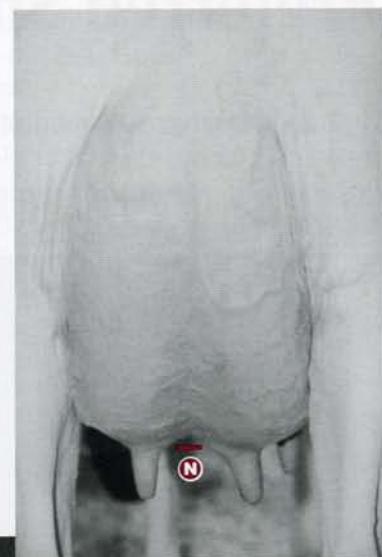
When comparing the two examples below, the top cow has an advantage in overall length and levelness of the udder. The fore udder attachment **L** is more smoothly and firmly attached to the body wall.



In the photo at right, note the height and width of the rear attachment. View the strength and definition of the median suspensory ligament **M** with the quarters clearly defined. The teats, of desirable size and shape, are properly positioned under the quarters.



These photos indicate some undesirable rear udder traits. This top cow lacks definition of the median suspensory ligament **N**. The one in the middle indicates a low, narrow rear udder attachment **O**. The cow on the bottom displays an unbalanced rear udder **P**.



Keep the five areas of the Score Card in mind when judging, but do not assign numerical points.

Preferred Show Ring Procedures

Have you ever dreamed of being the judge and placing class after class of beautiful cows at a major show? Consider these preferred show ring procedures.



There is a system to judging. View animals from the centre of the ring as they enter—ideally from 15 to 20 feet. It's important to view them from the side. You may also compare three or four animals as they circle the ring. From this vantage, animals can be analyzed for freedom of movement, strength of pastern, head carriage, loin strength, depth of rib, and udder depth.



Start at the front and move around the cow assessing the following traits: breed character of the head, width of chest, length of neck and cleanness of front end, depth of body (both fore and rear rib), strength of topline, strength of loin, curvature of the legs, strength of pasterns, bone quality, levelness of udder, strength of fore attachment, length and width of rump, and height and width of rear attachment.



Move to the other side of the animal and observe the fore udder, balance of udder, and overall length of the cow.

Viewing from the top, check the sharpness of withers, spring of rib, and overall blending of these parts.

Animals should fit the class they're in. While a cow may be a great animal, a two-year-old shouldn't look like an aged cow.

Closely inspecting the rear udder allows you to examine the strength of both the lateral and median suspensory ligaments. Also, pay attention to the shape, size, and placement of teats.



After you've gone through this procedure with each animal in the class, return to the centre of the ring and watch the cows move again.

Pull the cows you want to observe closer into a lineup, starting with the best ones.

When the cows are in a line, observe the entire group, from the rear.



Then walk around to the front of the animals to view their front ends.

When all the cows are in their final lineup, walk down the rear of the lineup for one final inspection. Begin to mentally organize your reasons.

This is also the time to select the best udder of the class, and motion with the sweep of the arm, the completion of the class.

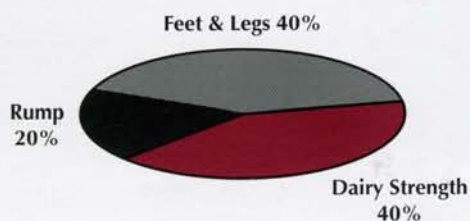
If you've missed a good animal down the line, don't be afraid to bring her up and mention in your reasons that you've missed her. You'll be respected for placing the class correctly.





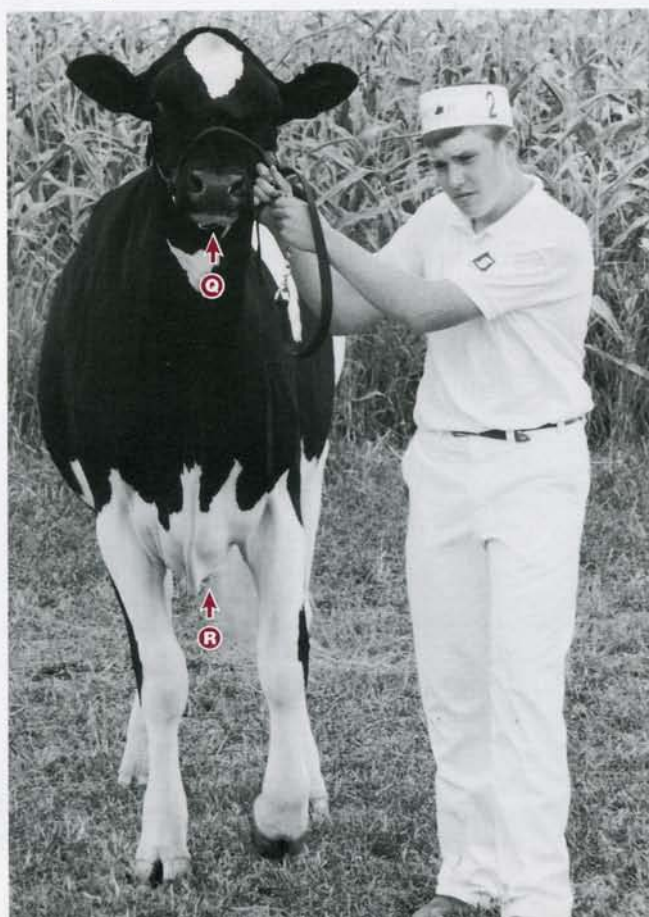
Description of Heifer Parts and Relative Emphasis

The relative emphasis for heifers differs from cows. The major emphasis is placed on feet and legs, and frame and capacity.

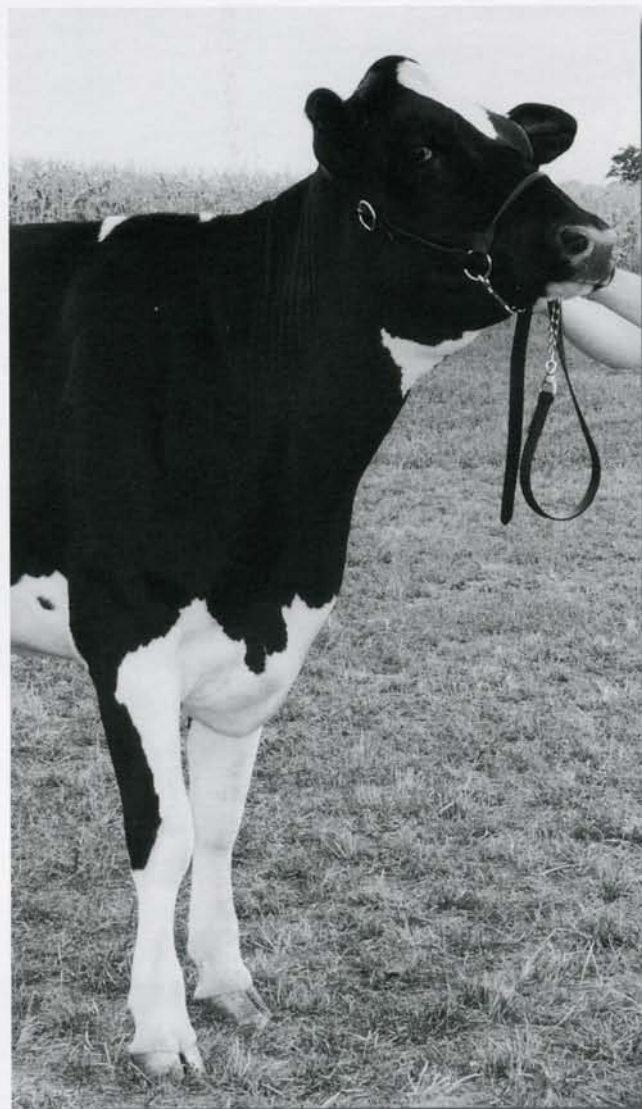
Relative emphasis for calves and heifers:



From the front, notice this heifer's width of muzzle , width of chest , and straightness of front legs.



Observing the head, you see breed character, strength of jaw, and dairyness through the head and throat area.

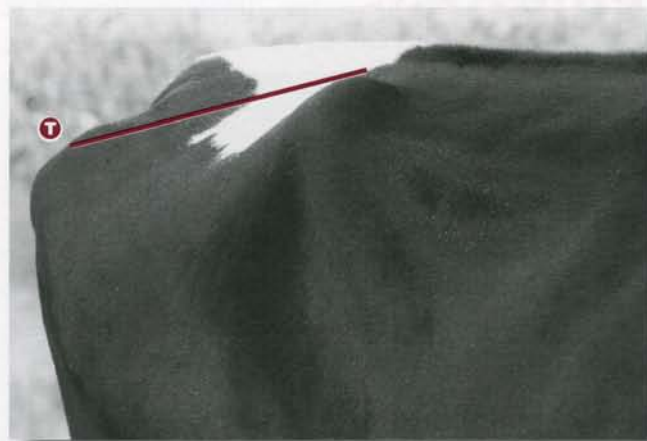


While judges expect yearlings to be dairy and angular with strength, some body conditioning in preparation for calving should be accepted.

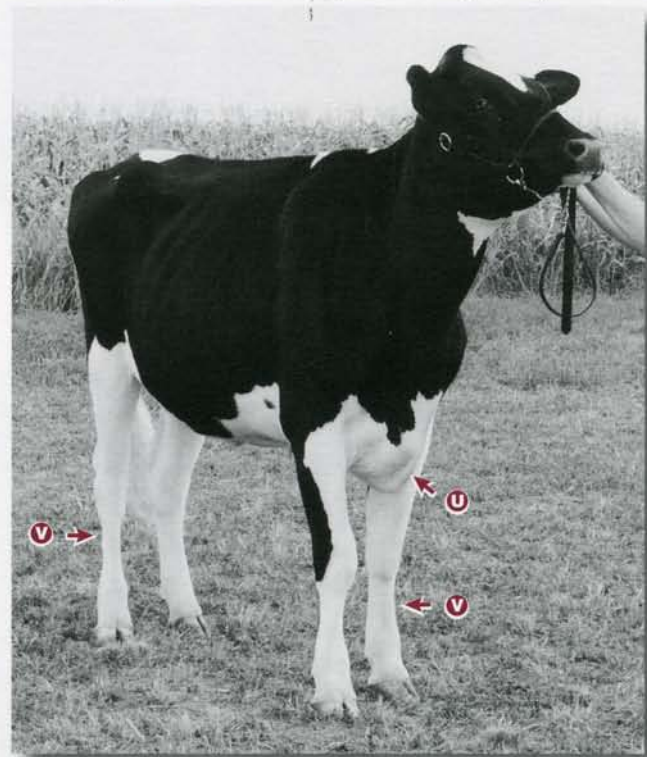
From the side, you will want to check out height of front end, overall length, strength of topline, depth of fore and rear rib, and openness and dairyness of frame.



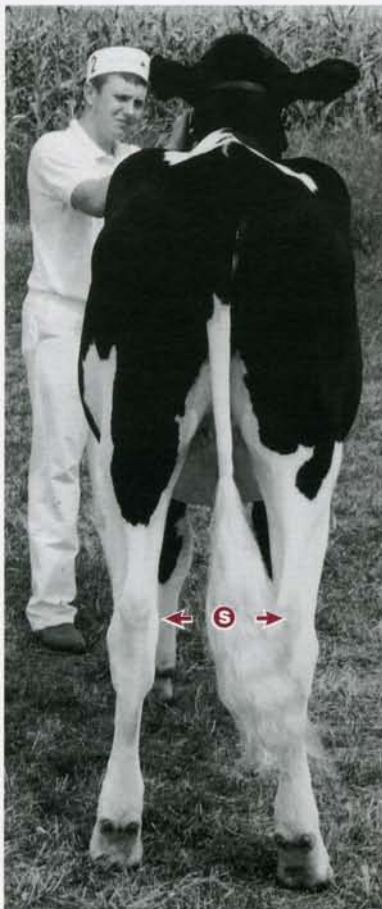
From this side view of the rump, recognize the desired slope from hips to pins **T**.



From this view, observe the breed character about the head and neck, a long, lean neck and cleanness of throat and brisket **U**, flat, clean bone in the legs **V**, overall length and angularity.



From the rear, note this animal's flat, clean thighs, allowing room for future udder development. Notice the quality of bone in both the front and rear legs, flat and clean hocks, good width between the hocks **S**, strong pasterns—both fore and rear—and good depth of heel. Also notice the width of the hips, width and placement of the thurls, sharpness of withers, and overall blending of parts.



From behind, check heifers underneath very quickly for regular size teats.

Placing a Heifer Class and Formulating Reasons

In this sample heifer class, the judge uses the same ring procedure as for the cows.

Following is the judge's initial mental analysis of the heifers in this example class.

The first heifer (1) is well-bodied with a hard topline. You'd like to see her taller in the front end.



The second heifer (2) is also well-bodied. However, she has a short neck, and doesn't handle her rear legs well.



The third animal (3) is a large heifer lacking dairy character throughout.

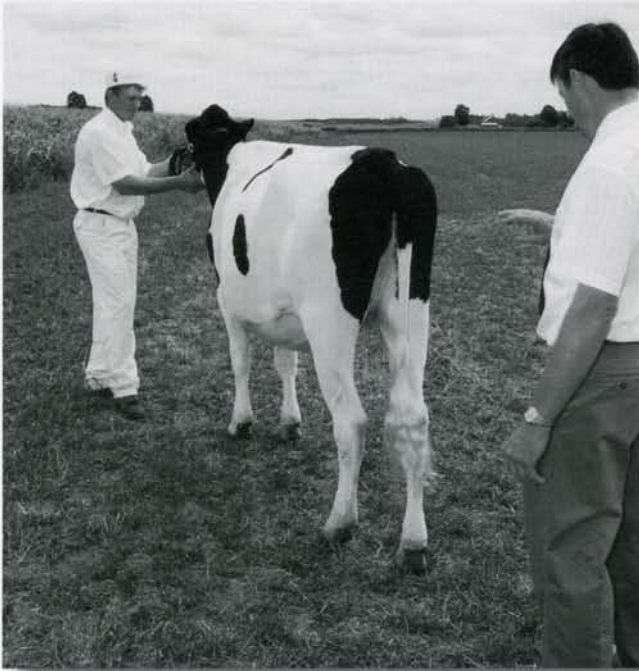


The fourth (4) exhibits excellent overall style, angularity, and openness of rib.



When giving reasons, say first over second, second over third, etc. Don't use the numbers of the animals.

As with the cows, the judge begins analyzing each animal by starting at the front and moving around each one. For each heifer, he observes depth of body, strength of loin, strength of topline, and set of legs. Over the top, he looks at sharpness of withers, strength of loin, spring of rib, and overall blending of body parts. The judge moves back to the right side of the animal and watches her move.

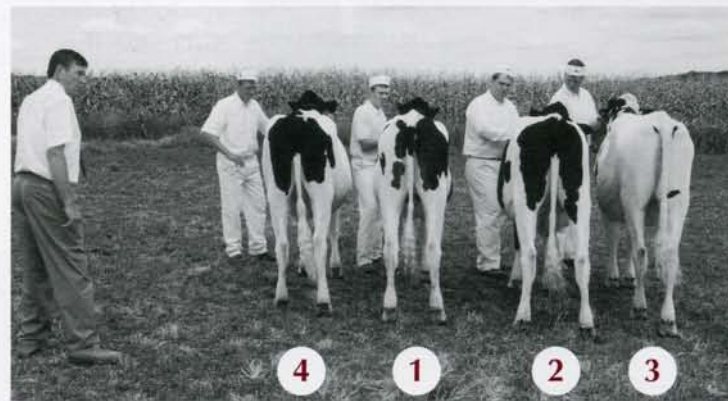


After the judge has made his initial pull, the heifers are brought into line. This gives the judge a chance to view them from the rear.



The judge's final reasons on this class:

This class of yearlings is very placeable. The heifer standing in first place is an easy winner. She has overall style and angularity. I like her openness of frame. The first animal places over the second because she's taller at the point of withers, has more total length from head to tail, and is more open ribbed than the heifer in second. Second over third is a close placing. However, the second heifer handles her rear legs more correctly, and is longer and leaner in her neck than the deep-bodied heifer in third. Third places over fourth as she displays more breed character about the head, is deeper of her body, is more angular, and exhibits more dairy character than the fourth place heifer.



You've just reviewed the basics of judging. Now, select a few animals at home, and after analyzing their strengths and weaknesses, compare one to another. You be the judge!

Giving Good Reasons



Effective reasons **describe placings accurately**, and **compare** animals in the class.

Your job is to analyze each animal, place the class, and describe to exhibitors and spectators why you've placed the cattle the way you have.

You don't need to attend a judging school to practise giving good reasons.

While avoiding *canned* reasons, slowly practise the words you might use in placing a class. Practise in front of your family and friends, and often!

Add new phrases as you gain confidence and success.

Reasons must **reflect the class** being judged.

Never give an inaccurate reason or one not describing the class at hand.

1. Once you've finished a class, stand behind the top four to six animals and organize your thoughts.
2. Start your first set of reasons of the day with a cordial statement indicating your pleasure/honour to be invited to judge.
3. Speak slowly, crisply, and confidently into the microphone as the animals parade past. Stand straight, but relaxed.
4. Start each set of reasons with an opening statement. Use only **descriptive** terminology at the beginning or end of a set of reasons to generally describe the class, and/or the first place animal. For examples: this is a superior lineup of aged cows; we have an easy winner on top; the first three cows caught my attention as soon as they entered the ring.
5. Use simple words. Do not use slang, or trendy words that ringside spectators don't understand, e.g. chrome on udder.
6. **Comparative** terminology must be used, comparing one animal to the animal placed below it. The animal should not be described. Comparative terminology uses words ending in "er", such as longer, wider, taller, deeper, etc.

Sharper at the point of *withers* (not shoulder) is correct. The often-used term hooks should be referred to as *hips*.

7. The obvious points of difference should be your primary concern. Use one really good point, and another couple of points of difference for each pair of animals. 36

8. Always start with the most important reasons as to why one animal places over another. Consider only the major points of superiority. Grant an obvious advantage to a lower animal, especially in close-placing pairs.
9. When two animals are extremely close, give only one or two reasons for placing them the way you did.
10. In a not-so-good class, keep the reasons short. Don't try to manufacture something that's not there.
11. Don't give overly good reasons on any one class. Leave your options open for better animals in the following classes. Then you can build up your champions.
12. Always be positive when giving reasons.
13. Allow your brain to work faster than your tongue.
14. Conclude the show with complimentary remarks about the quality of the show, support of exhibitors, etc.

Summary of Giving Good Reasons Following a Class:

- start with a descriptive statement
- emphasize only the main points of difference
- use comparative terminology (not descriptive) to compare one animal to another
- be accurate
- be positive
- grant an obvious advantage to a lower placing animal

Canadian judges receive training, and practise giving reasons to support their placings.

Tips for Your Judging Assignment

- ✓ dress professionally; set an example as a Canadian judge. Men should wear a suit (or sports jacket/pants) and tie. Women should wear a pantsuit, or dress pants and jacket/vest.
- ✓ be well rested
- ✓ obtain the cell phone number of a contact person at the show in case of travel or other problems
- ✓ arrive at the show at least 30 minutes prior to starting time
- ✓ discuss with your ringman where animals are to be lined up, keeping in mind the final lineup should be viewed from behind by the largest audience
- ✓ carry yourself with composure and presence, without arrogance
- ✓ display confidence—a feeling of assurance or certainty
- ✓ recognize the cows as the main attraction; do not grandstand
- ✓ inspect every animal closely in each class
- ✓ establish a pattern. Animals placing high in individual classes should portray the same traits.

Visiting in the Barn Following the Show

As a good public relations function, it's important that you visit exhibitors in the barn after the show.

Divide your time fairly among all exhibitors. First-time showpersons standing down the line deserve your attention as well as the top winners. It gives them an opportunity to ask you some questions about what they did well and what they could be

doing differently. You have a wealth of expertise to share.

Try to end your visit with the Premier Breeder, Premier Exhibitor and exhibitors of the Reserve Grand and Grand Champion.

It's perfectly acceptable to socialize and enjoy the after-show atmosphere, but remember your

official position—you're representing the breed.

Always conduct yourself in a professional manner.

Finish your judging experience on a high note.



Canadian judges are ambassadors for the Holstein industry. They represent the Canadian breeding philosophy and efforts of fellow breeders from coast to coast.

The Value of Judging Beyond the Show Ring

Life skills developed through judging include communication, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Judging cattle is one of life's richest experiences. The knowledge and practical skills gained through closely evaluating, reasoning, and making decisions extends far beyond placing animals. It's about developing valuable transferable skills for use in many of life's situations, at any age.

If you plan to breed cattle, make business management decisions, or invest in the dairy industry, you must develop a keen eye for detail. Judging cattle involves looking for particularities, and weighing differences. Without the ability to evaluate cattle and to make logical, quick **decisions**, it would be far more difficult to manage a viable dairy business.

We are not born with the natural ability to reason through difficult situations, work under pressure, or make sound decisions quickly. These skills are developed through experience. Judging in a time-limited setting sharpens decision-making expertise.

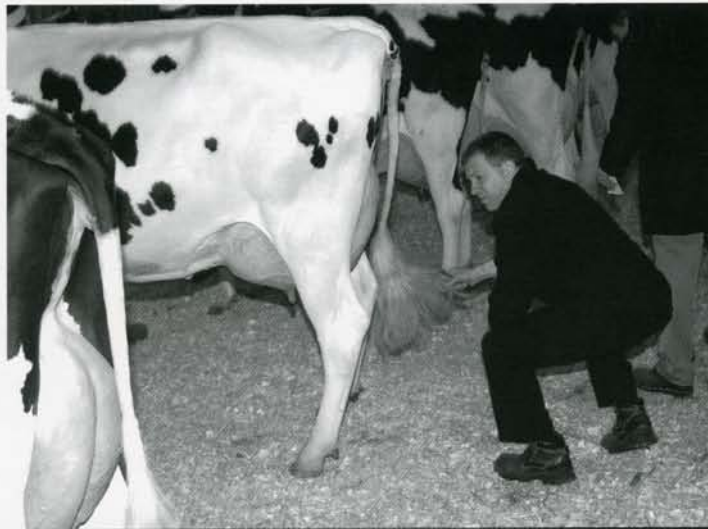
The reasoning process is the same for, "Which cow do I place first?" and "Should my business spend \$50,000 on this equipment now?" Both situations involve **problem solving**—a complex process of weighing facts, utilizing information gained from earlier experiences, and making a decision.

Life is full of times when you must explain your ideas and decisions. By presenting oral reasons in the ring or barn, you learn to organize,

prioritize, and present your thoughts in a clear, concise manner. It's about selling yourself, your ideas, and persuading others—**communication**.

Judging develops confidence and a sense of achievement.

The respect and admiration earned from a job well done brings lifelong satisfaction—whether through a good business plan, or a successful judging experience. And long-lasting friendships and contacts you make through working with people of similar interests remain one of judging's greatest benefits!





Holstein Canada
Box 610, Brantford, ON N3T 5R4

in co-operation with Holstein Ontario and
supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Tel: 519-756-8300
Fax: 519-756-9982
Email: info@holstein.ca
Website: www.holstein.ca

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