

# Dairy Cattle Evaluation



**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE**  
**RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

*University of Arkansas System*

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# Dairy Cattle Evaluation

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## Introduction

Dairy type is the combination of phenotypic characteristics that has come to be accepted as indicative of milk production and longevity. Dairy type is generally thought of in contrast to the combination of physical characteristics that constitute the thick and rounded beef-type animal maintained for the production of meat. The ideal dairy cow converts feed to milk while maintaining adequate strength to sustain her production. If she converts the feed to fat rather than milk, much of the efficiency of production is lost.

Judging of dairy cattle is a comparative analysis of the cattle presented for study. It consists of a comparison of the strong and weak (good or bad) points of one animal as compared to those of another animal in the class, and ranking the animals in order of their nearness to the ideal animal. The two steps below illustrate the principles of comparative judging although the process may be much more complex.

**Step 1.** Study the animals with the ideal for the breed in mind, observing strong and weak points.

**Step 2.** To place the animals, weigh the importance of the desirable points and faults of each animal as compared to those of the other animals and the ideal.

Do some thinking and work on terms to be used between workouts if you want to become a competent judge and be able to express yourself clearly.

The right attitude, willingness to work and interest are qualities needed for an individual interested in becoming a good dairy cattle judge. Ability can be developed with the proper attitude, work ethic and interest.

## Steps in Dairy Judging

1. Learn the parts of the animal (Figure 1). Be specific for dairy parts.
2. Learn the dairy cow scorecard so that you know the relative value of each part (Table 1).
3. Learn terminology to describe each part and be able to recognize the ideal (or close to the ideal)

of each part (Figure 1, Table 1 and Table 2). Practice the terms in Table 4 for a perfect cow and then use only the appropriate parts and terms as you compare one cow to another in your reasons.

4. Compare strong and weak points of each animal with the ideal. To be able to do this, you must first know what the ideal looks like (Table 1).
5. Weigh the importance of each point. This involves both knowledge of the scorecard and the degree of deviation from the ideal, which will be developed with experience and training. Factors other than those on the scorecard may be involved, e.g., temperament.
6. Place the animals based on their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, evaluation is DECISION-MAKING. Not all individuals will weigh each point equally, so there may be differences of opinion. All should be close if the decision is unbiased and using the same criteria.
7. Defend your placing with reasons delivered by an effective method, either written or orally (Table 5). The reasons provide a means for you to defend your actions in a logical, concise manner. In most contests for youth, you will need to take notes concerning the animals during the class to assist you in remembering details of the animals for the reasons (Table 3 and Figure 2). Remember to primarily use comparative terminology when comparing individuals except to state a descriptive fact.

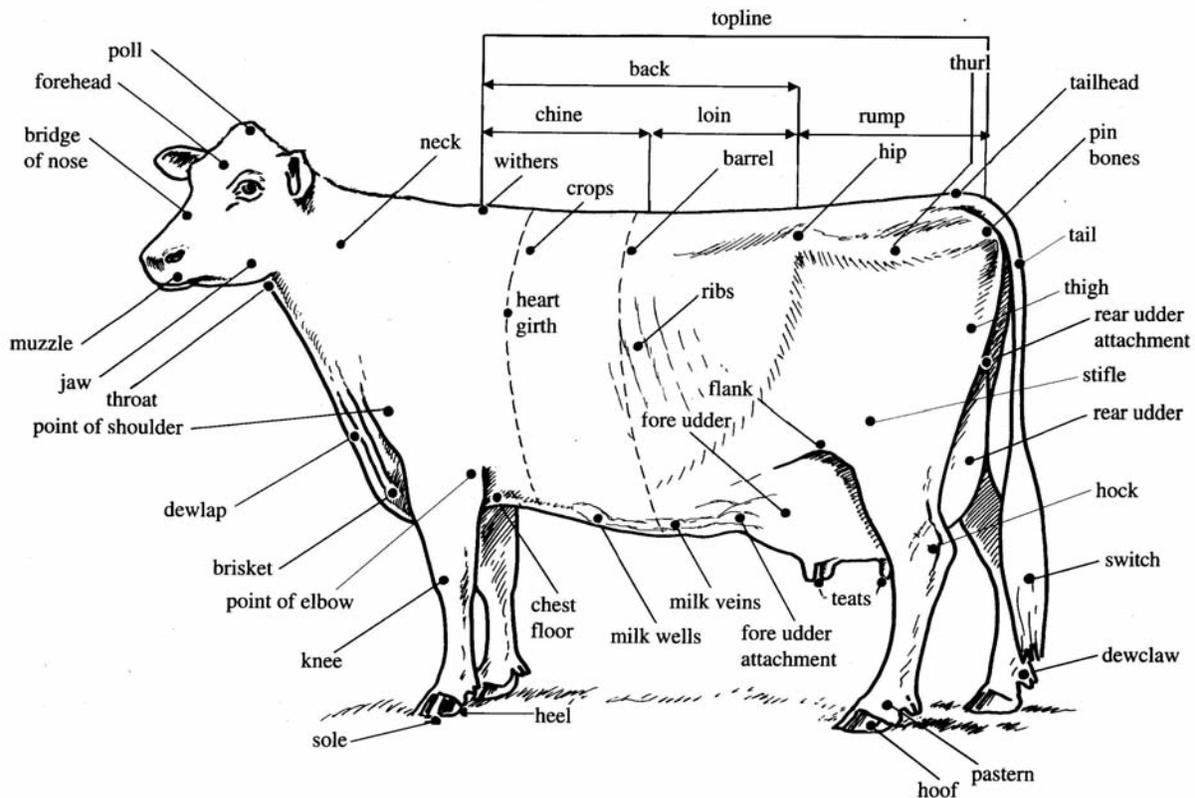
**Thus, the steps for dairy judging are the same process that is used throughout life to make decisions.** You collect information, hopefully with sufficient knowledge of what is important, and weigh the importance of the pieces of information to make a rational decision. The delivery of oral reasons allows you to defend the decisions. Not all individuals weigh the different pieces of information equally and not all decisions are unbiased, so sometimes different decisions will be reached. In a competitive contest, your goal is to be closer to the decisions of the officials than other contestants in the contest.

# Steps for Placing of Animals

The steps in placing of animals in a dairy cattle judging contest can vary. However, they need to be consistent to minimize the chance of skipping or missing a point needed to make a proper placing.

1. Write your name and name of class on placing card (if needed) and name of class in a notebook.
2. Stand at a distance and get a clear-cut mental picture of the type and body conformation of the animals. Always take rear, side and front views of the animals from a distance. Look at both sides.

Figure 1. Cow Parts and Comparative Terms



**FRAME** – more stylish, well balanced individual; walks more uphill. **Head** (poll, forehead, bridge of nose) – more feminine; brighter, more alert eye; stronger jaw; more strength and/or breed character as compared to a weak, coarse or plain head. **Shoulders** (or point of shoulder) – blend more smoothly into the body; tight shouldered as compared to loose or wing shouldered. **Crops** – more fullness. **Chine** – more prominent. **Loin** – greater strength and/or width. **Back** – straighter and stronger over top. **Hips** – greater width. **Pins** – wider; freer of patchiness. **Rump** – greater length and/or width; more nearly level from hips to pins. **Tailhead** – sets in neater between pins. **Thurls** – higher; wider.

**FEET AND LEGS** – stands (or walks) on them more correctly when viewed from rear as compared to cow-hocked; when viewed from the side as compared to postlegged or sickled; flatter-boned; cleaner about the hock as compared to puffy hocked. **Pasterns** – stronger. **Heel** – deeper.

**DAIRY CHARACTER** – more milky appearance; more dairy-like; cleaner, more refined, carrying less flesh. **Neck** – longer and leaner; less throaty; cleaner cut about head and neck. **Withers** – sharper. **Thighs** – thinner or leaner. **Ribs** – more open ribbed; ribs more spread.

**BODY CAPACITY** – more size and scale; taller, more upstanding; longer; deeper bodied; shows more stretch.

**Chest floor** – deeper and/or wider. **Heart girth** – deeper, fuller in heart. **Barrel** – deeper and wider; more capacious; greater spring or fullness to ribs.

**MAMMARY SYSTEM** – more well-balanced; more symmetrical; longer; possesses greater width; more snugly attached; held higher above the hock. **Rear udder attachment** – higher, wider. **Median suspensory ligament** – possesses a stronger ligament; shows greater cleavage. **Udder floor** – more nearly level. **Fore udder attachment** – blends more smoothly into body wall; longer; carries farther forward; stronger attachment. **Teats** – more correct size and shape; placed squarer on the quarters.

**Table 1. PDCA Dairy Cow Unified Scorecard  
Major Trait Descriptions**

**FRAME**

15

*The skeletal parts of the cow, with the exception of feet and legs, are evaluated. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:*

**Rump** – long and wide throughout with the pin bones slightly lower than hip bones. Thurls need to be wide apart and centrally placed between hip bones and pin bones. The tailhead is set slightly above and neatly between pin bones, and the tail is free from coarseness. The vulva is nearly vertical.

**Stature** – height, including length in the leg bones. A long bone pattern throughout the body structure is desirable. Height at the withers and hips should be relatively proportionate.

**Front End** – adequate constitution with front legs straight, wide apart and squarely placed. Shoulder blades and elbows need to be firmly set against the chest wall. The crop should have adequate fullness.

**Back** – straight and strong; the loin – broad, strong and nearly level.

**Breed Characteristics** – overall style and balance. Head should be feminine, clean-cut, slightly dished with broad muzzle, large open nostrils and a strong jaw is desirable.

*Rump, Stature and Front End receive primary consideration when evaluating Frame.*

**DAIRY CHARACTER**

20

*The physical evidence of milking ability is evaluated. Major consideration is given to general openness and angularity while maintaining strength, flatness of bone and freedom from coarseness. Consideration is given to stage of lactation. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:*

**Ribs** – wide apart. Rib bones are wide, flat, deep and slanted toward the rear.

**Thighs** – lean, incurving to flat and wide apart from the rear.

**Withers** – sharp with the chine prominent.

**Neck** – long, lean and blending smoothly into shoulders. A clean-cut throat, dewlap and brisket are desirable.

**Skin** – thin, loose and pliable.

**BODY CAPACITY**

10

*The volumetric measurement of the capacity of the cow (length x depth x width) is evaluated with age taken into consideration. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:*

**Barrel** – long, deep and wide. Depth and spring of rib increase toward the rear with a deep flank.

**Chest** – deep and wide floor with well-sprung fore ribs blending into the shoulders.

*The Barrel receives primary consideration when evaluating Body Capacity.*

**FEET AND LEGS**

15

*Feet and rear legs are evaluated. Evidence of mobility is given major consideration. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:*

**Feet** – steep angle and deep heel with short, well-rounded closed toes.

**Rear Legs: Rear View** – straight, wide apart with feet squarely placed.

**Rear Legs: Side View** – a moderate set (angle) to the hock.

**Rear Legs: Hocks** – cleanly molded, free from coarseness and puffiness with adequate flexibility.

**Pasterns** – short and strong with some flexibility.

*Slightly more emphasis placed on Feet than on Rear Legs when evaluating this breakdown.*

**UDDER**

40

*The udder traits are the most heavily weighted. Major consideration is given to the traits that contribute to high milk yield and long, productive life. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:*

**Udder Depth** – moderate depth relative to the hock with adequate capacity and clearance. Consideration is given to lactation number and age.

**Teat Placement** – squarely placed under each quarter, plumb and properly spaced from side and rear view.

**Rear Udder** – wide and high, firmly attached with uniform width from top to bottom and slightly rounded to udder floor.

**Udder Cleft** – evidence of a strong suspensory ligament indicated by adequately defined halving.

**Fore Udder** – firmly attached with moderate length and ample capacity.

**Teats** – cylindrical shape and uniform size with medium length and diameter.

**Udder Balance and Texture** – should exhibit an udder floor that is level as viewed from the side. Quarters should be evenly balanced; soft, pliable and well collapsed after milking.

3. Remember the breed-type you are looking for when judging a class. (especially in heifers) and mammary (especially in two-year-olds) become very important.
4. **Take notes on individual animals and write general comments on the class (Figure 2).** Get in the habit of writing *obvious* points first and then going head-to-tail so you don't miss an important point. Compare each cow and note differences from the ideal animal. Some may go from head to tail and put a star by the most important points. The key for good decisions and reasons is to note the most important deviations from the ideal and differences among animals in the class.
5. **In a class of four animals, pick a top, bottom or two pairs, etc., if possible.** Make the class as easy to place as possible. There are 24 possible placings in a class of four animals. If the class has two pairs, there are only two more decisions to make: does first go over second and does third go over fourth? Not all classes will break into pairs or into a top and bottom. The key to getting high scores is to place the best animal over the next best animal.
6. Generally, you don't start a class with an animal with a problem in a major area (mammary, legs, dairy character, body).
7. First, make obvious placing; then, make logical placings. In close placing, body
8. Make certain you have a major reason for placing one cow over another at this point. **WEIGH POINTS APPROPRIATELY** (Tables 1 and 2). **BE ACCURATE.**

**Table 2. Worksheet and Terms From Dairy Cow Score Card Judging<sup>1</sup>**

**EVALUATING UDDER TRAITS (40 points)**

Udder Depth – above hocks; even higher in young cows  
 Teat Placement – squarely placed beneath all four quarters  
 Rear Udder – high and wide; tightly attached  
 Udder Cleft – clearly defined crease  
 Fore Udder – firmly attached; moderate length  
 Teats – uniform size; medium length and diameter  
 Udder Balance and Texture – level floor; quarters evenly balanced; soft and pliable

Place the cows from best to poorest udder:    1<sup>st</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup>    3<sup>rd</sup>    4<sup>th</sup>

**EVALUATING TRAITS THAT IMPACT DAIRY CHARACTER (20 points)**

Ribs – wide apart; slanted toward the rear; giving impression of length and openness  
 Thighs – lean, incurving  
 Withers – sharp with a prominent chine  
 Neck – long, lean and blending smoothly into shoulder  
 Skin – thin, loose and pliable

Place the cows on dairy character:                    1<sup>st</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup>    3<sup>rd</sup>    4<sup>th</sup>

**EVALUATING THE FRAME TRAITS (15 points)**

Rump – long and wide with pins slightly lower than hips  
 Stature – tall; height usually measured at hips  
 Front End – smoothly blended shoulders; wide and tall  
 Back – strong and straight with adequate width  
 Breed Characteristics – overall style and balance

Place the cows in the class on their frames:    1<sup>st</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup>    3<sup>rd</sup>    4<sup>th</sup>

**EVALUATING TRAITS ASSOCIATED WITH FEET AND LEGS (15 points)**

Feet – short toe, deep heel; steep foot angle  
 Rear Legs, Rear View – straight, wide apart  
 Rear Legs, Side View – moderate set (angle) to the hock; not too straight or too set  
 Hocks – cleanly molded; free from coarseness and puffiness  
 Pasterns – short and strong; flexible

Place the cows on rear legs and feet:                    1<sup>st</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup>    3<sup>rd</sup>    4<sup>th</sup>

**EVALUATING BODY CAPACITY TRAITS (10 points)**

Barrel – long, deep and wide  
 Chest – deep and wide

Place the cows in the class on capacity:                    1<sup>st</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup>    3<sup>rd</sup>    4<sup>th</sup>

**FINAL PLACING (100 points)**

Place the cows from best to poorest:                    1<sup>st</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup>    3<sup>rd</sup>    4<sup>th</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from University of Wisconsin Extension Booklets

9. Never let your placings be influenced by another contestant or by the way the judges are looking at the animals.
10. **Organize your notes for reasons, with most important differences first.** Use a standard

format (Table 3) and terminology so that you can concentrate on the animals as you give reasons. Not all contests will use the same scorecard for judging reasons (one example in Table 5). You should know how the reasons will be scored before a contest.

Figure 2. Example of notes for reasons.

3 year old Holstein cow (Class Title)

(Cow color, description or ID points)

B&W1. Good, Long frats, Best udder, Biggest Cow, Good top/mid  
 B: 2. Smallest, Slightly thick (not fat), Good top/mid & legs  
 B&W3. Low udder, Bad legs, Easy bottom  
 W&B4. Good but < 1, Good top/mid & legs, 2<sup>nd</sup> best udder,

General Comment (Quality? Pairs? Top? Bottom?)  
 BC - 1 4 3 2  
 MS - 1 4 2 3  
 1 4 1 2 3      1 4 Best uddered, 2 pairs with easy bottom  
 3 Bad legs, x MS

**REASONS**

1st/2nd MS - hwr wd, ↑ hock, ? teats placement  
 BC - longer, taller, barrel, ↓ ribs, ↓ ribs  
 ↑ spring

2nd/1st      Teat size (1 = too long)

2nd/3rd  
 DC - sh withers, ↓ neck, ↓ flesh, ↑ milk  
 BC - longer, ↓ heart, longer barrel, taller  
 MS - capacity, hwr wd

3rd/2nd      ? maybe stronger loin

3rd/4th  
 MS - more youthful, ↑ hock, ↑ rhd, ↑ feet, ↑ MSC  
 Legs - sideled, cow-hocked, toes out in front

4th/3rd  
 BC - All

11. Thinking through your reasons on a difficult class before making the placing will often help you avoid bad “busts.” Have at least two major reasons for each placing and a reason for putting the first and last cow in their positions. One example of reasons is in Table 6.
  12. A final look at the class from a distance should be made before placing.
  13. Always hold to your initial impressions as you prepare to turn in your card in a contest, unless it is discovered that some serious fault has been overlooked. Never change your placing at the last minute: you’ve spent your full time on evaluation during the class and a last minute change is very risky.
  14. Check your placings before you turn in your placing card. Make sure that you turn in your card.
- d) Use plenty of comparisons.
  - e) Be certain of the class so you don’t mix numbers and sexes. Mixing numbers is confusing in giving reasons and may cost you points.
3. Give your reasons smoothly and not in short, incomplete, jerky sentences.
  4. Never repeat yourself; it takes time. Never argue with the judge in a contest. Good judges do not weigh the points the same.

## Giving Your Reasons

The object of giving reasons is to tell how one animal excels the next in line in an accurate, impressive, interesting, sincere and confident manner.

1. Picture the class mentally. Have your reasons well in mind before going before the judge. Organize and plan your reasons.
2. Give your reasons clearly and distinctly and not too fast.
  - a) Be accurate, concise and definite.
  - b) Start with major differences between animals being compared.
  - c) Be fair and impartial.

**Table 3. Worksheet for Format of Standard Reasons**

I placed this class of \_\_\_\_\_ (OR)

\_\_\_\_\_ is my placing for this class of \_\_\_\_\_.

(As you gain experience, you also might give a general introduction of the class, eg two pairs or a top and bottom.)

\_\_\_\_\_ places over \_\_\_\_\_ in my top pair because:

- 1.
- She is also:
- 2.
- 3.

I admit that \_\_\_\_\_ is:

- 1.
- 2.

In the middle pair, \_\_\_\_\_ places over \_\_\_\_\_ because of her advantage in:

- 1.
- Furthermore, she is:
- 2.
- 3.

However, I grant that \_\_\_\_\_ is:

- 1.
- 2.

Finally, \_\_\_\_\_ places over \_\_\_\_\_ because of her advantage in:

- 1.
- Additionally, she is:
- 2.
- 3.

I realize that \_\_\_\_\_ is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

But she places on the bottom of this class because:

- 1.
- 2.

These are my reasons for placing this class of \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Thank you. Do you have questions or comments?

5. When talking about a close pair, make this evident and “grant” to the lower place animal what it is due.
6. Always use 1, 2, 3, 4 to identify the animals. Do not speak of No. 1, No. 2 or “3 cow,” etc. It takes time and becomes tiresome to hear.
7. **All terms must be comparative except when it is necessary to make a direct criticism which cannot be adequately brought out by comparison.** In other words, the approach is from the positive rather than the negative or critical aspect.
8. In most cases, do not use such sweeping statements as “1 is the deepest cow in the class.” If “1” is your top animal, you are comparing “1” to the animal in the second place and not to the whole class. Statements with broad implications may be used in an introduction, a final statement or for emphasis in your reasons.
9. Never use the words “good,” “better,” “best,” “I think” or “I guess.” Never make a statement unless you are sure in your mind it is right.
10. End your reasons in a forceful, confident manner and state clearly and concisely why you placed the last animal down.

convey thoroughly all of the important points and give a vivid picture of the class. Put the most important reasons first. Do not describe an animal; tell why you consider it superior to the animal next in line. The reasons should compare the animals under consideration. In the case of a close pair, a limited amount of description may be used. Use the numbers of the animals often enough so the judge can readily follow you. Avoid too frequent use of “she,” “he” or “it.” Select terminology that makes it clear what you are describing.

#### **Table 4. Reasons for a Perfect Cow, 1, Versus a Bad Cow, 2**

I placed 1 over 2 because she excelled in mammary system. Her udder was more well-balanced, more symmetrical and overall was more snugly attached and held higher above the hock. 1 had a higher, wider rear udder attachment, had a smoother, longer fore udder and possessed a stronger median suspensory ligament. She was more nearly level on the udder floor and had more correct size and shape of the teats, with the teats placed squarer on each quarter. 1 possessed more veining of the mammary gland than 2.

1 excelled over 2 in that she was a more dairy-like individual today. 1 was cleaner and more refined, carrying less flesh; she had a longer, leaner neck, was cleaner-cut about the head, had sharper withers, was leaner in her thighs and more open-ribbed today than 2.

I placed 1 over 2 because she is a more well-balanced cow. 1 was a more stylish individual, walking more uphill. She had a more feminine head with a brighter, more alert eye and a stronger jaw. 1 blended more smoothly from neck to shoulder, and shoulder to body, was fuller in her crops and had a more prominent chine and showed greater strength and width to the loin than 2. These traits lead to a straighter and stronger back. 1 had wider hips and pins, was more nearly level from hooks to pins with a more correct rump and had a tail head that sat more neatly between per pins. She also was higher in her thurls than 2. 1 exhibited more stature and breed characteristics than 2.

1 stood more correctly on her rear legs when viewed from the side and stood squarer on her rear legs when viewed from the rear than 2. She had a flatter bone and more cleanliness of the hock. She had stronger, shorter pasterns with a deeper heel than 2. 1 also had more width between her rear legs than 2.

1 also excelled over 2 in that she had more body capacity with more size and scale today. She was a longer, taller, more upstanding individual showing more stretch and openness throughout. 1 had a deeper and wider chest floor and was deeper and fuller in her heart, which led to a more capacious barrel than 2.

2 placed on the bottom of the class because she lacked the refinement and quality of 1. She was plainer about the head and showed less breed character. She was ewe-necked, open in her shoulder, weak in her crops and tended to fall apart in the chine region than 1. 2 toed out in the front and walked downhill. A fat cow, 2 lacked the flatness of bone and angularity of 1. Additionally, she was pinched through the heart girth, very shallow-bodied and lacked the length of 1. She was sloping in her rump, low in her thurls and very narrow at her pins. She also had a pendulous udder which tended to be meaty, and had funnel-shaped teats. These are my reasons for placing this class 1 – 2.

## **Rules for Presenting Reasons**

1. Reasons should be concise, easy to follow and to the point, yet complete enough to

### Table 5. One Scorecard for Reasons.

Points (50 possible)

1.	Reason Organization .....	10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Include an introductory statement of your placings.</li> <li>(2) Make class comparisons made in pairs in a logical, orderly manner with major points emphasized first and less important statements made last. Primarily use comparative terminology.</li> <li>(3) Descriptive terms may be used in reasons to point out faults and outstanding characteristics, but in a limited manner.</li> </ul>	
2.	Delivery .....	10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Your appearance should be relaxed but alert without an awkward placement of the feet and hands.</li> <li>(2) Be neat and clean in appearance.</li> <li>(3) Always use <u>clear</u> enunciation.</li> <li>(4) Modulate your voice so that the presentation is given in a convincing, businesslike manner.</li> <li>(5) Vary your voice and you may use limited easy body gestures for emphasis.</li> </ul>	
3.	Material Content of Reasons .....	25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Statements should be complete and accurate.</li> <li>(2) Wording should describe distinct differences between cattle by indicating points of strength and weakness. Primarily use comparative terminology.</li> </ul>	
4.	Vocabulary .....	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Terminology should apply to class being discussed and be easily understood. Use specific dairy terms.</li> <li>(2) Use correct grammar.</li> <li>(3) Use a variety of appropriate dairy terms.</li> </ul>	
	Total .....	50

### Table 6. Reasons for 2-Year-Old Holstein Cows

In placing this class of two-year old Holstein cows 2, 4, 3, 1, I found an easy top in the stylish 2, a close middle pair and an easy bottom in the loose-uddered 4.

2 places over 4 because she is a more stylish individual. She is more feminine in the head and neck, stronger over her topline and stands on a more correct set of rear legs when viewed from the rear. She displays greater quality throughout and exhibits this higher quality in her mammary with more veining. 2 also shows a higher, wider rear udder with more fullness and bloom of the mammary system today. She is a longer, taller cow than 4 and has a more milky appearance. I admit that 4 blends more smoothly in her shoulders than 2.

4 goes over 3 because she excels in general appearance. She blends more smoothly from neck to shoulder and shoulder to barrel, is fuller in her crops, stronger in her loin and has a more desirable set to hock when viewed from the side. 4 is a more capacious cow with greater depth and width of body and stands taller at the withers. However, I do recognize that 3 stands on a straighter set of rear legs when viewed from the rear and is a leaner, more angular cow.

Finally, 3 places over 1 because she has a more snugly attached udder with it held closer to the body, criticizing 1 for carrying her udder too low and too loosely for a two-year old cow. 3's mammary has a stronger median suspensory ligament as indicated by greater cleavage and shows greater quality, noting that 1 has a meaty udder. 3 also is more dairy-like with a longer, leaner neck, sharper withers and less flesh throughout. I do grant that 1 is a larger cow with tighter shoulders and a stronger loin. However, I must place her on the bottom of these two-year-old Holsteins because she lacks the quality mammary of the other cows in this class, which placed 2, 4, 3, 1.

2. Have confidence in yourself. Make yourself clear by using common words. Do not talk too fast, but talk convincingly. Talk in a slightly louder tone than you would in ordinary conversation. Use inflection while talking to emphasize major points. **Do not be content to mention main headings or general terms only (feed capacity, constitution, breed type), instead state facts.** Do not use indefinite words such as good, better, nice, etc. Don't repeat certain words so often that your reasons become monotonous. Do not use long, run-together statements. Drop your voice at the end of each sentence. Hold your head up. Do not fidget, and keep your hands at ease unless you must gesture.
3. Create a desirable impression by your appearance, manner and sincerity. Look directly at the judge rather than around the room or out the window. Stand squarely on both feet. Do not move about when giving your reasons. Gestures with the hands should be kept to a minimum. Stand five to eight feet from the judge, depending upon the size of the room.

## Logical Combination of Terms

The terms in Figure 1 and Table 1 are given as suggestions for use in discussing a class of dairy cattle. These terms are flexible and may be put into combinations that will best compare the cow or cows in question. When preparing reasons, they should be specific, accurate and in a logical order of presentation. Furthermore, they should be given as smoothly as possible. While the essential thing is to bring out the important points first, one must bring out certain points in logical order at the same time. All blending of statements must hold true for the pair of cows being compared and must be of importance.

Examples:

1. Cleaner cut about the head and neck, and sharper over the withers.
2. Shows more refinement about the head and neck, is cleaner cut over the withers and more neatly laid in at the shoulders.
3. Blends more smoothly from neck to shoulder and into a fuller, deeper fore rib.
4. More depth and spring of fore and rear rib.
5. Deeper through the chest and middle.
6. More spring of fore and rear rib.
7. More uniform, capacious udder that is more level on the floor and carries up higher, wider and stronger in the rear attachment.
8. Stronger back and loin, and longer and more nearly level rump.

Never use negative statements such as "less beefy," "not as sloped in the rump," "not as shallow bodied," "less plain about the head," etc. In addition, never use "canned" reasons which are given regardless of the class of cows being placed. Be able to use your own capabilities and develop a vocabulary of cattle terms which you may draw from at any time. If a comparison does not adequately bring out the difference, a qualifying statement may occasionally be used to good advantage, such as: 1 has a more evenly balanced udder than 2 in that 2 is light in the left rear quarter.

When scoring reasons, officials must give a subjective evaluation since time does not permit a detailed analysis for each set of reasons. A good official should evaluate a set of reasons for four general characteristics. Major emphasis should be placed on material content, delivery, reason organization and vocabulary when determining a final score.

The chart in Table 5 is a guideline for scoring reasons. It is important to know the scorecard for your contest as the guidelines may vary. For example, the National Intercollegiate Dairy Cattle Judging Contest uses a 50-point scorecard based on 35 points for content (accuracy and completeness) and 15 points for delivery.

## Exercises

1. Write out the parts of the cow in Figure 1 and write the correct parts.
2. List the parts of a cow from Figure 1 and give two terms for each part.
3. Write out the perfect cow.
4. Orally give a set of reasons for a perfect cow over a normal cow.
5. Write a set of reasons from the notes in Figure 2.
6. Write a set of notes from the reasons in Table 6.
7. Place the class of Holstein cows in Figure 3, write notes on the class and write a set of reasons on the class.
8. Give an oral set of reasons to your leader on the cows in Figure 3. After listening to comments from your leader, give the set of reasons again. Repeat as many times as necessary until the reasons are satisfactory to your leader.
9. Practice giving a set of reasons using a variety of terms and mixing terms so that no one term is overly used.

Figure 3. Class of Holstein Cows (compliments of Hoard's Dairyman and From the 2007 Cow Judging Contest).

# HOLSTEIN CLASS

**A**



**B**



**C**



**D**



Below are the official placings for the Holstein class from Lynn Harbaugh, Pine River, WI.

I placed this fine class of Holsteins **C A D B**. The best uddered **C** handily places over **A** on her advantage in bloom of udder, height and width of rear udder attachment and snugness of fore udder. **C** also excels in power and angularity throughout, being deeper and wider through the floor of the chest, and she carries this width out through her hooks, pins and thurls. Moreover, **C** has more spring and depth of both fore and rear rib. I will grant **A** tracks straighter on her rear legs.

In a close middle pair, **A** places over **D** on her advantage of dairyness and angularity, being longer from nose to tail. **A** is also longer and more feminine in her head and neck, sharper at the point of withers and more incurving in her thigh. Furthermore, **A** shows less quartering in her udder floor when viewed from the side and stands straighter on her rear legs with a shorter toe and a deeper heel. I do admit **D** is deeper in her rear rib and flank.

In the final pair, **D** places over **B** on her advantage of style and smoothness and blending of parts. **D** is harder in her loin and straighter down her topline. **D** is also fuller in her crops and tighter at the point of elbow. Still further, **D** is snugger in her fore udder attachment. However, **B** is stronger in her suspensory ligament and tracks straighter on her rear legs.

I admire the depth and width of frame and correctness of feet and legs, but **B** lacks the dairyness and angularity, balance and symmetry of udder to place any higher in this class.

## Summary

Lastly, always be professional as you judge in a contest or in a show. Be objective in your placings and reasons. Not all judges will place animals the same. Some placings and reasons scores may be controversial. Enjoy yourself as you place animals and give reasons. Contests can be very stressful. Always do your best in a contest, but first, prepare yourself so that you have an opportunity to perform your best by knowing the principles of judging and then by practicing with a variety of classes.

## Dairy Judging Educational Resources

*Hoard's Dairyman Judging Guide*, a booklet that features linear scoring, with analysis of frame, udder, body capacity, feet and legs, and dairy character, explained and illustrated. Includes 15 judging classes, 3 of each breed. Printed insert gives judges' placings and reasons. Approximate cost \$9.00 plus shipping. *Hoard's Dairyman*, PO Box 801, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538-0801, phone: (920) 563-5551, [www.hoards.com](http://www.hoards.com).

*Annual Cow Judging Contest*, *Hoard's Dairyman*. Web site and booklet with color pictures of the five classes of dairy cows to be judged before mid-March of the contest year. Available after January 1 of the contest year. Free. *Hoard's Dairyman*. [http://hoards.com/youth\\_corner/cjc\\_corner/cow\\_judging\\_contest.html](http://hoards.com/youth_corner/cjc_corner/cow_judging_contest.html).

"Focus on Linear Scoring," an 8-page insert that focuses on linear scoring, with analysis of frame, udder, body capacity, feet and legs, and dairy character, explained and illustrated. Approximate cost \$2.50 plus shipping of \$3.00. *Hoard's Dairyman*.

*Linear Classification Program*, revised 16-page booklet with complete introduction to the current descriptive type traits in the Holstein classification program. Approximate cost \$2.00. Holstein Association, 1 Holstein Place, Brattleboro, VT 05302-0808, phone 800-952-5200. There is a new guide, *Linear Descriptive Traits*, at their web site: [www.holsteinusa.com/pdf/print\\_material/linear\\_traits.pdf](http://www.holsteinusa.com/pdf/print_material/linear_traits.pdf)

*Dairy Cattle Judging Techniques (4th Edition)*, revised 356-page illustrated textbook that covers basic type evaluation, selection within the herd, show-ring judging, fitting and showing, show-ring procedures, placings and reasons in youth and college student judging contests. Trimberger, Etgen and Galton. Approximate cost \$39.95 plus shipping. Waveland Press ISBN 0-88133-678-5.

*Techniques of Judging Dairy Cattle (5th Edition)*, revised 50-page booklet with helpful pictures of dairy cows and heifers, showing ideal parts and defects. Sample reasons included. Excellent for inexperienced judges. Approximate cost \$7.50 plus shipping. Dennis Hartman, 2709 Mt. Vernon Lane, Blacksburg, VA 24060.

Videos for Dairy Judging – available several places including Creative Educational Video, Inc., PO Box 65265, 5147-A 69th Street, Lubbock, TX 79464-5265, phone 800-922-9965, [www.cevmultimedia.com](http://www.cevmultimedia.com).

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