

Livestock Judging Guide



By

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Module 2: Beef Cattle



Judging Breeding Heifers

Judging Beef Cattle



- ❧ Will Evaluate:
 - ❧ Breeding Heifers
 - ❧ Market Steers
- ❧ Do Not Judge Bulls at Regional 4-H Contest
- ❧ Learn Terms To Use:
 - ❧ When judging breeding cattle
 - ❧ When judging market animals



Judging Beef Cattle

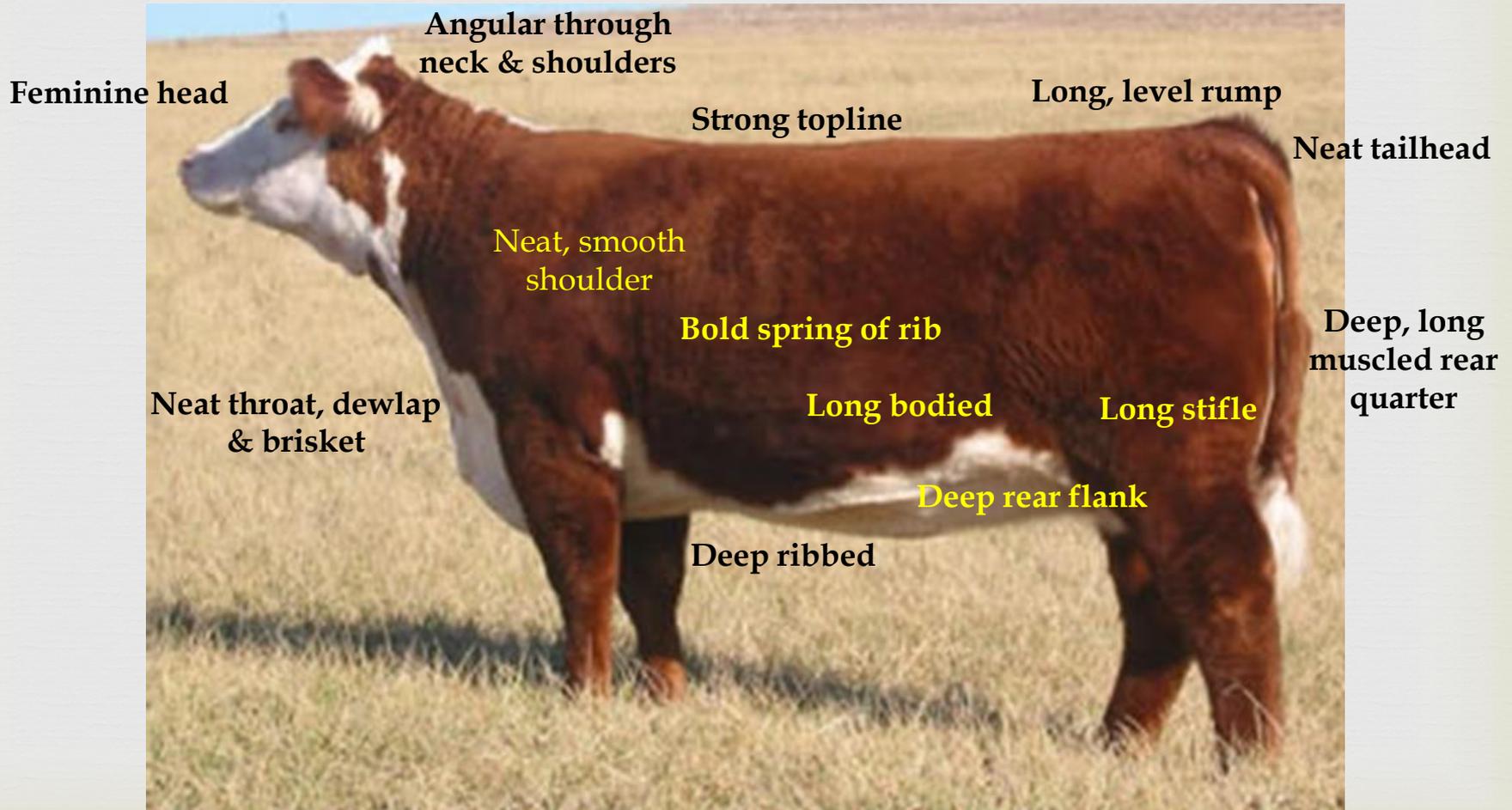


☞ Evaluating Breeding Cattle

☞ Ideal breeding heifers or bulls should:

- ☞ Be well balanced
- ☞ Have ample size and scale
- ☞ Show meat-type characteristics
- ☞ Have sound feet and legs
- ☞ Exhibit proper breed and sex character
- ☞ Display adequate reproductive organs

Ideal Beef Heifer



Feminine head

Angular through neck & shoulders

Strong topline

Long, level rump

Neat tailhead

Neat, smooth shoulder

Bold spring of rib

Deep, long muscled rear quarter

Neat throat, dewlap & brisket

Long bodied

Long stifle

Deep rear flank

Deep ribbed

Ideal Beef Heifer



Natural
thickness down
back & loin

Long bodied
Well balanced

Smooth
shoulder

Deep, wide
chest floor

Correct set of
feet and legs

Long, smooth
muscled rear
quarter

Correct set of
hocks

Legs set wide
apart

Judging Heifers



- ❧ Begin at the Ground & Work UP
- ❧ Start at the Rear and Work Forward
- ❧ Rank Animals Based On:
 - ❧ Traits of importance they possess
 - ❧ Evaluate most important traits first
- ❧ Contestants should:
 - ❧ Eliminate any easy placings
 - ❧ Place the remainder based on the volume of the important traits

Judging Heifers



Ranking of Traits in the Order of Importance:

- Soundness & structural correctness
- Capacity or volume
- Style and balance
- Degree of muscling
- Femininity



Judging Heifers



☞ Soundness and Structural Correctness

- ☞ Feet, legs and connected structure
 - ☞ Biggest factors physically affecting longevity
- ☞ Start evaluation:
 - ☞ At the ground
 - ☞ Work up a joint at a time
- ☞ Carefully consider
 - ☞ Feet
 - ☞ Pasterns
 - ☞ Hocks
 - ☞ Rump
 - ☞ Knees
 - ☞ Shoulders



Judging Heifers



☞ Feet should be:

- ☞ Big
- ☞ Even-toed
- ☞ Squarely placed
- ☞ Toes pointing straight forward



Judging Heifers



Splay-footed



Feet turned out and not squarely under heifer. Puts stress on inside toes and inside of the knees.

Poor depth of heel



Feet with poor depth of heel. Hoof-skin junction sets too close to the ground.

Judging Heifers



❧ **Pasterns** should be:

❧ Strong and flexible

❧ Allows cushion and give in foot & ankle

❧ Straight pasterns:

❧ Restrict flex

❧ Weak pasterns:

❧ Too much set or angle

❧ Adds pressure on joints



Correct set to the pasterns

Judging Heifers



Pastern has too much set, limiting depth of heel and adding pressure to the ankle.



Pastern is too straight, lacking flex and cushion.

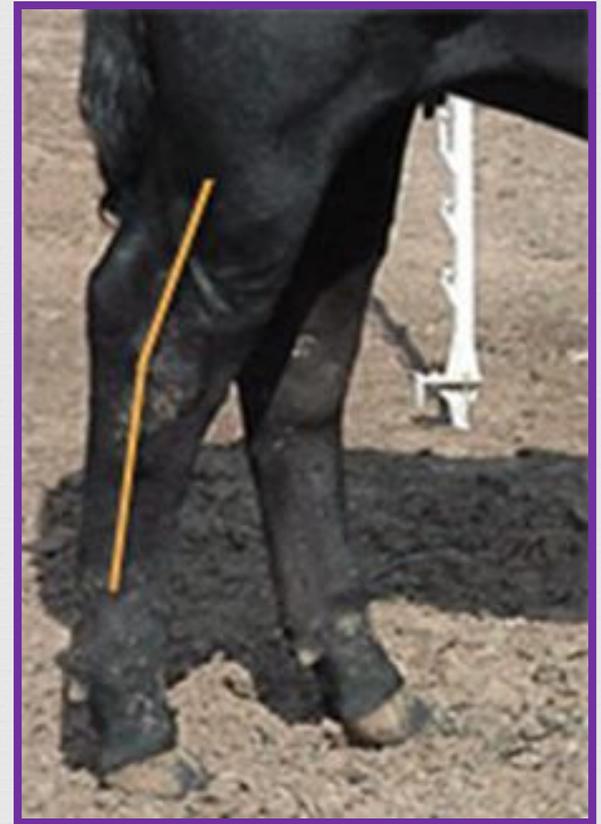
Judging Heifers



∞ **Hocks** should be:

- ∞ Constructed of a clean, flat bone
- ∞ With a slight degree of set
- ∞ Allowing for maximum:
 - ∞ Power
 - ∞ Mobility

Correct set to the hocks



Judging Heifers



Post-legged



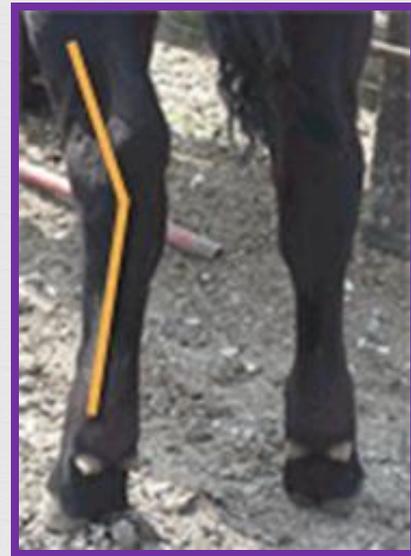
Hock is too straight, severely limits flexibility and puts stress on the joint.

Sickle-hocked



Too much set to the hock, forces rear feet too far under the heifer adding pressure to hip and rump.

Cow-hocked

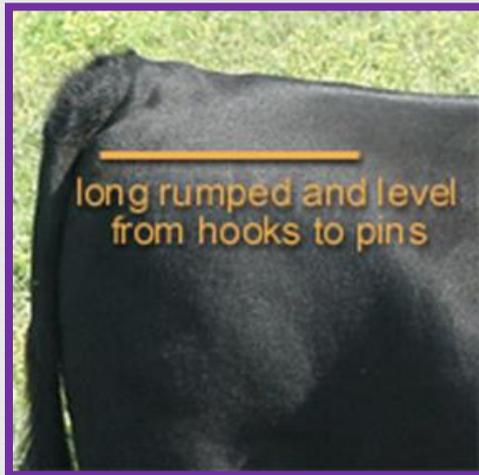


Hocks turn in, does not provide good balance of weight, and places stress on inside toes and ankles

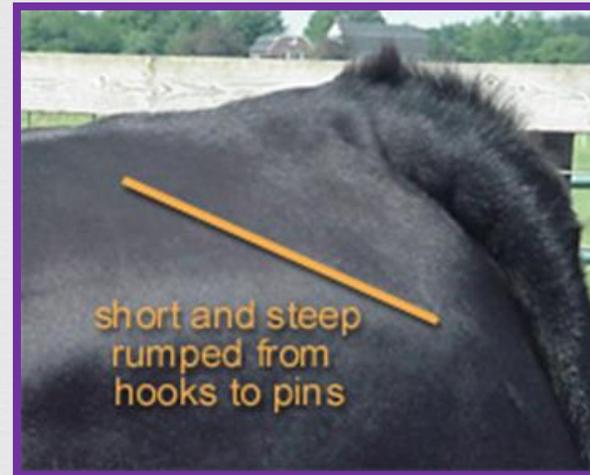
Judging Heifers



- Correct **rump** structure should be:
 - Level from hooks to pin bone
 - Essential for length of stride



Correct rump structure



Rump structure too steep

Judging Heifers

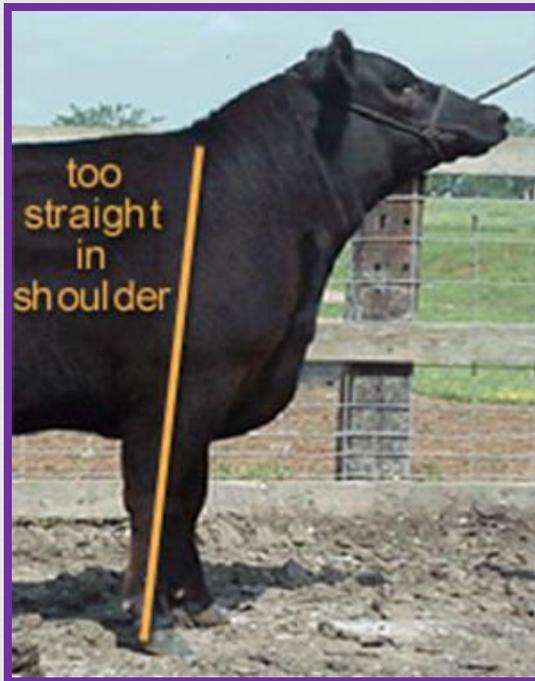


- ❧ **Shoulder** set and shape:
 - ❧ Control degree of motion in front end
 - ❧ Allows for flexibility
- ❧ Determine correct shoulder angle:
 - ❧ View cattle on the move
 - ❧ Pay attention to length of stride
 - ❧ Rear foot should step in track made by front foot

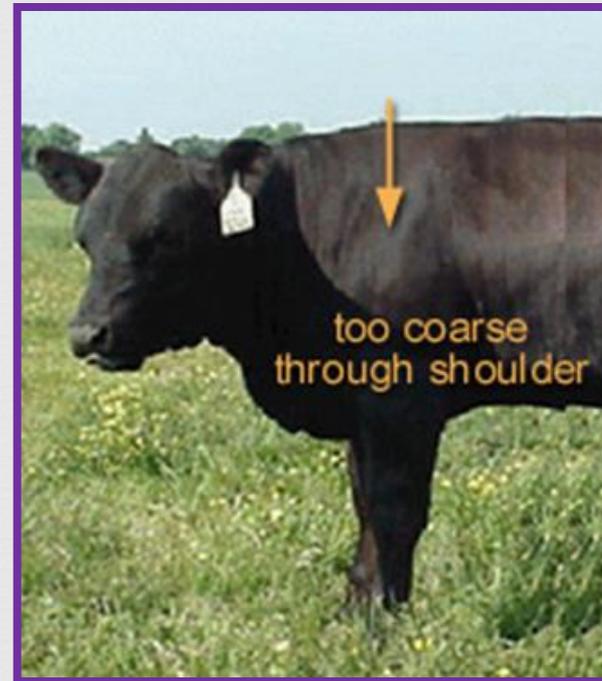
Nice set and
smoothness of shoulder



Judging Heifers



Poor set or angle of shoulder, too straight, will restrict stride



Shoulder too coarse, does not lay smooth

Judging Heifers



☞ Evaluating Capacity or Volume

- ☞ Amount of body volume a heifer possesses
- ☞ Necessary to perform at a high level
- ☞ And, still maintain body condition
- ☞ Associated with:
 - ☞ Production traits
 - ☞ Performance traits



Judging Heifers



❧ Evaluating Capacity or Volume

❧ Determined by:

- ❧ Body width (spring of rib)
- ❧ Body depth
- ❧ Body length

❧ Heifers should be:

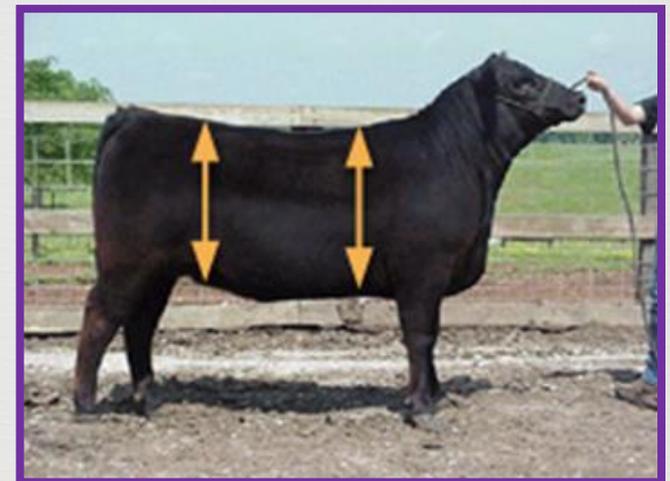
- ❧ Wide bodied
- ❧ Good spring of rib

❧ Depth should be:

- ❧ Uniform from front to back
- ❧ More than 50% of heifer's height from top of back to ground



Bold spring
of rib



Judging Heifers

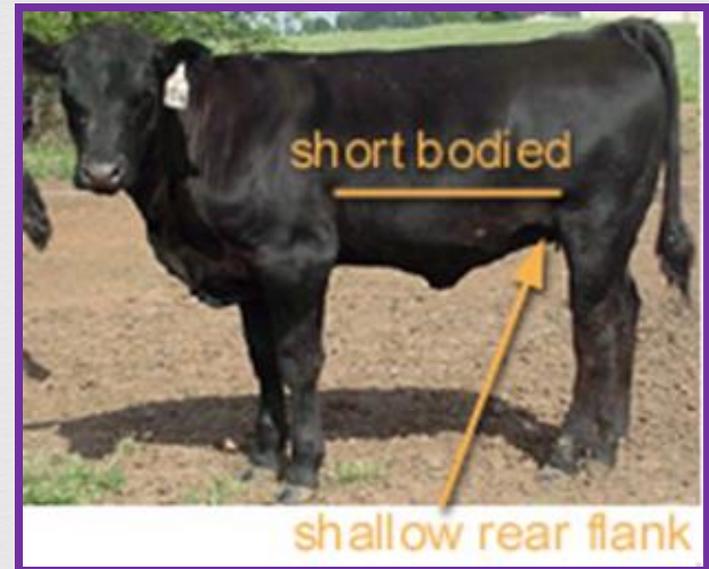


Lacks adequate capacity



Very narrow bodied, with no spring of rib

Too short bodied



Lacks depth, especially in rear flank

Judging Heifers



œ Evaluating Degree of Muscling

- œ Degree of muscling in heifers should be evaluated:
 - œ First through center of the quarter
 - œ Base width of rear feet as heifer walks
 - œ Shape over heifer's top
- œ Critical to compare base width at the ground to top width
- œ On a lean animal that is heavy muscled:
 - œ Base width and top width will be equal

Judging Heifers



☞ Evaluating Degree of Muscling

☞ Fat can cause mistakes in evaluating muscle shape

☞ Fat can:

- ☞ Mask shape
- ☞ Change shape
- ☞ Hide shape
- ☞ Invent shape



Judging Heifers

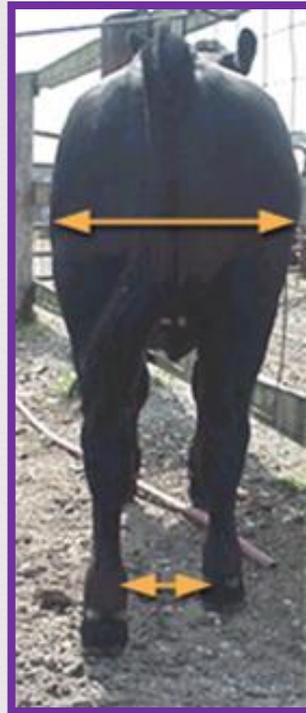


Light muscled



Very narrow

Average muscled



Average width

Heavy muscled



Good width

Judging Heifers

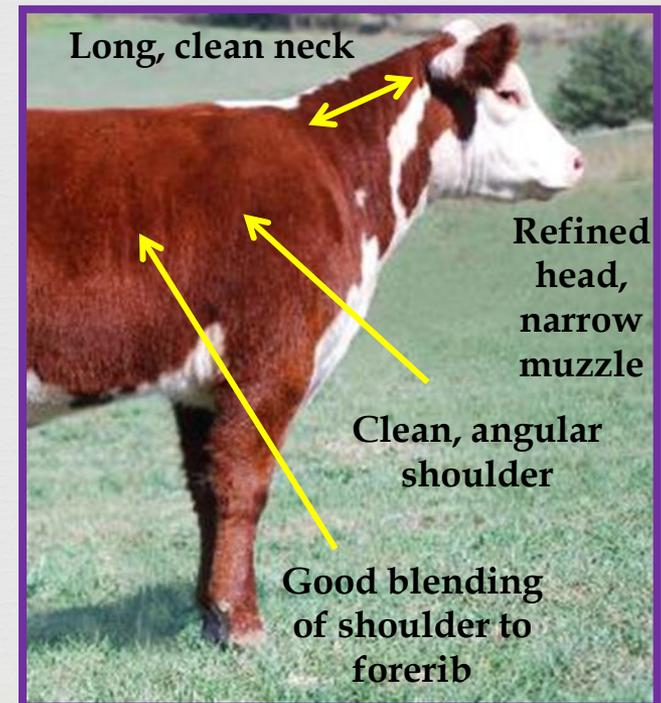


❧ Evaluating Femininity

❧ Femininity refers to the “prettiness” of the heifer

❧ Traits to consider:

- ❧ Refinement of head
- ❧ Length of neck
- ❧ Angularity of neck & shoulder
- ❧ Blending of shoulder to forerib



Judging Heifers



Test Your Skills



Place this class of heifers



Official Placing



1st



2nd



3rd



4th



Official Placing: 1 - 4 - 2 - 3

Cuts: 5 - 2 - 5