

Beef Handbook

Structural Differences in Beef Cattle



correct



knock kneed
or splayfooted



bowlegged or
pigeon toed

Splayfooted and Knock Kneed -

When viewed from the front, the front knees are close together and the feet toe out away from each other. This problem is often seen in extremely light-muscled, narrow-chested cattle where the legs are naturally set too close together.

Pigeon Toed and Bowlegged -

When viewed from the front or rear, the knees set too far out, causing the toes to turn in toward each other in a pigeon-toed manner.



correct



cow hocked or
splayfooted



bowlegged or
pigeon toed

Cow Hocked -

When viewing the rear legs from the rear, the hocks are turned in or placed too close together.

Buck Kneed -

When the calf is "over at the knees," or buck kneed, full extension of the knee cannot occur when observed from the side. This is usually seen in cattle that are also too straight in their shoulder.



correct



buck kneed



calf kneed

Calf Kneed -

This is the other extreme where the calf stands "back at the knees" when viewed from the side.

Sickle Hocked -

When viewing the rear legs from the side, the hock has too much angle or set, causing the steer to stand too far underneath himself. Often these calves also will droop excessively from hocks to pins.



correct



sickle hocked



postlegged

Postlegged -

The hock has too little angle or set the calf is too straight through the joint resulting in very stiff, constricted movement because of the lack of flexibility. More cattle become unsound because of being postlegged than sickle hocked.