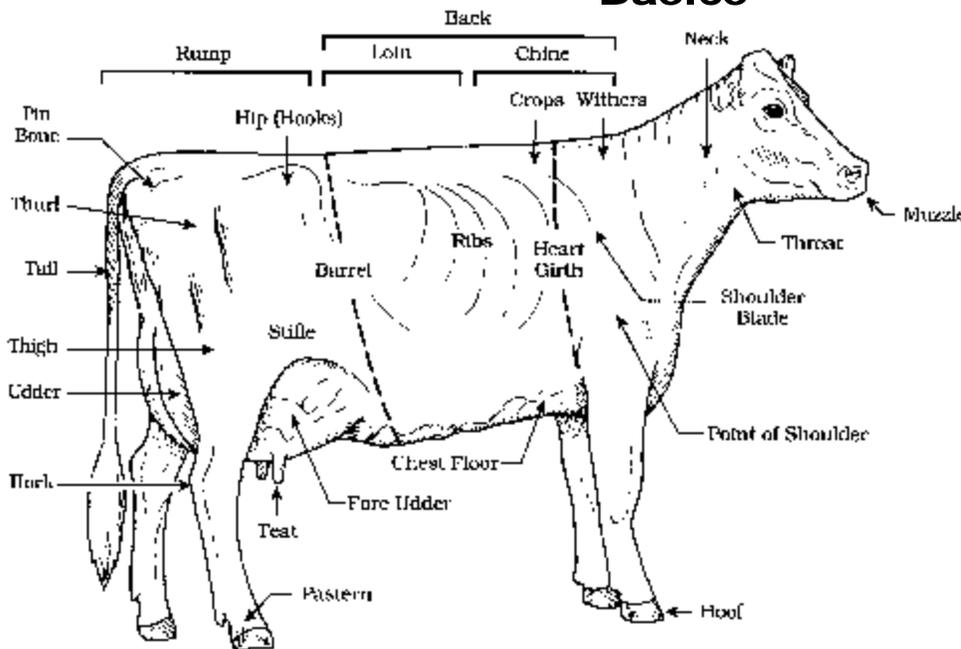


Dairy Cow Handbook

Basics



To Judge dairy cattle, one must have knowledge of dairy cow anatomy (body parts), desirable dairy type, factors of good general appearance, mammary system, dairy cow character and body capacity.

You must be able to observe, evaluate and make a decision that is accurate and logical.

Dairy Cattle Type

This refers to body conformation or physical appearance. Type is controlled by structure of bone and other body components and how well all these components fit together as a unit --the cow.

level udder floor, teats of more uniform size and shape, teats more squarely placed, more height and width of rear attachment, smoother fore attachment, and strength of fore (or rear) attachment.

General Appearance

This refers to the how the cow looks overall. If a cow is immediately attractive being large, straight, well boned, having style, balance and being feminine, we consider her good in general appearance. Some terms which describe cows of good general appearance include: straighter top-line, size and scale, length and stretch, substance of bone, style and balance, straighter and stronger rear legs, longer flatter rump, and width at hips and pins.

Dairy Character

This indicates that a cow shows evidence of being a good producer. A cow with good dairy character is one who is sharp, particularly at the shoulders and withers, and one who shows no excess flesh or fat. A long, lean neck showing refinement and not coarseness is desirable. Thickness at the shoulders, neck, withers or thighs indicates a lack of dairy character.

Mammary System

This refers to the udder and teats. Since we are concerned with dairy cows, the mammary system is of prime importance. To produce large quantities of milk, cows must have sound udders which will remain strong and not be subject to disease or physical damage. A good udder is one that is large, spacious and well balanced. It should be firmly and smoothly attached in both front and rear. The udder should extend well up under the belly wall and should be level on the floor. A desirable udder is uniformly wide from top to bottom when viewed from the rear. The rear attachment should be high as well as wide. Teats should be of uniform size and shape. They should be squarely placed and should point straight down. Some terms which describe desirable udders include: larger more spacious udder, more

Body Capacity

This indicates a cow's ability to consume large quantities of feed and thus greater milk production potential. All cows have the same number of ribs, so those cows with ribs that are wider and farther apart have longer bodies and those with longer ribs have deeper bodies. Length, width and depth of body all determine capacity. Width and depth of chest are associated with good body capacity. The chest cavity serves as the container for the heart and lungs. Maximum space is desired for adequate heart and lung capability. Some terms used to describe good body capacity include: deeper and fuller in the heart, depth of fore rib, depth of rear rib, depth of body, length of body, width of chest, and spring of rib.