

Dairy Cow Handbook

Ideal Dairy Cow

- T** When first looking at a class of animals, it is desirable to view from a distance so that all four animals can be seen as a group.
- T** This is the best method to pick out strong and weak points of cows relative to each other. Often, a more correct evaluation can be made from a distance than up close.
- T** A side view permits the judge to evaluate depth of heart, length of body, spring of rib, straightness of top line, levelness of rump, straightness of rear legs, fore udder attachment and levelness of udder floor.
- T** A front view permits evaluation of chest width, breed character of head, broadness of muzzle, flare of nostril, thickness of shoulders, etc.
- T** The rear view allows the judge to examine height, width, and strength of rear udder attachment, depth of rear udder, thickness of thighs, straightness of rear legs, width of rump, width of pins and hips.

Order Of Observation

1. GENERAL APPEARANCE:

Attractive individuality with vigor, stretch, scale and a blending of all parts with impressive style and carriage.

BREED CHARACTERISTICS	See Breed Chart for descriptions	
STATURE	height including moderate length in the leg bones with a long bone pattern throughout the body structure.	
FRONT END	adequate constitution with strength and dairy refinement.	
BACK	Shoulder Blades	and elbow set firmly and smoothly against the chest wall and withers to form a smooth union with the neck and body.
	Chest	deep and full with ample width between front legs.
	straight and strong;	
	Loin	broad, strong and nearly level
	Rump	long, wide and nearly level with pin bones slightly lower than hip bones.
	Thurls	high and wide apart;
	Tail Head	set nearly level with topline and with tail head and tail free from coarseness.
LEGS AND FEET	bone flat and strong.	
	Front Legs	straight, wide apart and squarely placed;
	Hind Legs,	nearly perpendicular from hock to pastern from a side view and straight from the rear view;
	Hocks	cleanly molded free from coarseness and puffiness;
	Pasterns	short and strong with some flexibility;
	Feet	short, well rounded with deep heel and level sole.

2. DAIRY CHARACTER

Angularity and general openness without weakness, freedom from coarseness, and evidence of milking ability with udder quality giving due regard to stage of lactation

NECK	long, lean and blending smoothly into shoulders; clean cut throat, dewlap, and brisket:
	Withers sharp with chine prominent;
	Ribs wide apart, rib bones wide, flat and long;
	Thighs incurving to flat and wide apart from the rear view, providing ample room for the udder and its rear attachment;
	Skin thin, loose and pliable.

3. BODY CAPACITY

Relatively large in proportion to size, age and period of gestation of animal, providing ample capacity, strength and vigor.

CHEST	large, deep and wide floor with well sprung fore ribs blending into the shoulders; crops full.
	Body strongly supported, long, deep and wide; depth and spring of rib tending to increase toward the rear;
	Flanks deep and refined.

4. UDDER

Strongly attached, well-balanced with adequate capacity possessing quality indicating heavy milk production for long period of usefulness

FORE UDDER	strongly and smoothly attached, moderate length and uniform width from front to rear.
REAR UDDER	strongly attached, high, wide with uniform width from top to bottom and slightly rounded to udder floor.
UDDER SUPPORT	udder carried snugly above the hocks showing a strong suspensory ligament with clearly defined halving.
TEATS	uniform size of medium length and diameter, cylindrical, squarely placed under each quarter, plumb, and well spaced from side and rear views.
BALANCE, SYMMETRY AND QUALITY	symmetrical with moderate length, width and depth, no quartering on sides and level floor as viewed from the side: soft, pliable and well collapsed after milking; quarters evenly balanced

Because of the natural undeveloped udder in heifer calves and yearlings, less emphasis is placed on udder and more on general appearance, dairy character and body capacity.

A slight to serious discrimination applies to overdeveloped, fatty udders in heifer calves and yearlings.