



National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England & Wales)

YFC Centre Stoneleigh Park Kenilworth Warwickshire CV8 2LG
Tel: (00 44) 024 7685 7200 Fax: (00 44) 024 7685 7229 E-mail: post@nfyfc.org.uk

Stockjudging Guidelines: Dairy

PROCEDURE IN JUDGING

Judging a group of animals consists of comparing them with the IDEAL for the type and breed to which they belong, and then placing the one that most nearly approaches this ideal at the top of the class.

Before starting to judge, make certain of what it is that has to be judged: butcher or breeding animals. Then view the animals from a distance (20 to 30 feet), so that all the animals in the class can be seen and compared - general appearance and conformation; type etc.

Watch the animals walking towards and then away from you, particularly for breeding. The hind legs should move forward in a straight line, maintaining good width throughout each movement and not swinging in and out.

When you come up close to inspect and handle, work over the animal with method and in a certain order, e.g. from head to tail.

Do not be in a hurry to place the animals, for it is difficult to make one go back on one's first judgment. When ready, pick out the top and bottom animals, placing the second and third later.

If you are taking part in a competition, make quite certain of the time allowed for parade, judging from a distance, and close inspection and handling.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- **Overall**

The cow should show dairy character - being fine throughout, fine and supple in the skin, fine or clean-boned, without appearing narrow; she should show longevity; stature is important; barrel or rib-cage length and width is very important giving her excellent body capacity, a well balanced capacious udder and she should parade well.

- **Head, Neck & Shoulders**

Head - long, feminine head, bright eyes and broad muzzle.

Neck - blend into a finely set, wedge-shaped shoulder, not U shaped.

- **Topline**

Must be level and not weak over the loin, or a high tail head.

- **Rump**

Squarely set, must have plenty of length from hook bone to pin bone, looking for width between pin bones.

- **Body Capacity**

Must have plenty of length and depth of body, plenty of width and open ribbed.

- **Udder**

Rear udder attachment must be high and wide in the twist; fore udder attachment must be strong and carried well forward blending into a deep capacious body; overall - pink, fine-textured skin, not fleshy, capacious but durable, not pendulous; strong suspensory ligament; long, wide sole of udder, plenty of shape and width to her rear udder; prominent milk vein.

- **Legs & Feet**

Should parade well on four well-shaped legs; up on her pasterns, plenty of heel depth and not closed-hocked or sickle-hocked; overgrown clees will seriously affect profitability of cow - can cause overstretching or even lameness whilst on parade.

REASON PLAN

Usually, two minutes are allowed for giving Reasons, and the marks are commonly awarded on the basis of *Accuracy*, 25; *Comparisons**, 15; *Style*, 10. Competitors may, of course, make notes during the inspection of the animals, and these may be referred to while Reasons are given. They must be made, however, on the card provided.

- 1 Reasons should be memorised as well as possible, and one should try to have in one's mind a clear picture of the animals to be compared.
- 2 Make comparisons as much as possible when giving Reasons, compare animals either from head to tail (carcase - tail to head) to maintain uniformity to your Reasons.

*This implies that statements should be comparative rather than descriptive, e.g. 'A is more symmetrical than B'.

- 3 Stand up straight, look at the judge, and keep your hands out of your pockets.
- 4 Be careful to use the terms that apply to the different kinds of livestock, e.g. a leg-of-lamb is found only on a lamb, and bullocks do not have hams.
- 5 Always try to use the full two minutes available when giving Reasons.
- 6 A white coat should be worn at all times and should have all buttons fastened.
- 7 Thank the Judge at the end of your Reasons.

EXAMPLE REASONS

After much consideration, I placed the four Holstein Dairy Cows in the order of **A, B, X, & Y**.

- 1 1 placed **A** first, possessing fully all the dairy characteristics and was true to her type, excelling over the class in her body conformation, with length and openness of rib. Superb depth and width throughout. She was flat and strong through the loin, square over the rump with excellent distance from hook to pin.
- 2 I placed **B** second, lacking the stature, strength and body capacity of my first cow **A**. When compared to **A**, she was narrower in the chest, finer set shoulders, flatter over rib, shorter from hook to pin and narrower in the pins, but paraded better, with more depth of heel. **B**'s udder had a fine silky texture, more width in its rear udder but lacked the central ligament support and durability of **A**'s udder. Her teats were slightly longer but just as well placed. An excellent fore-udder, with more presence of veining.
- 3 I placed **X** third, similar in stature but lacked the dairy qualities of **B**. Shorter head, broader chest, coarsely set shoulders. Broader spring of rib but lacked the depth, more level topline, squarely set rump, coarse in the hock but walked well on parade. **X**'s udder, although well attached, was fleshy, skin lacked the soft texture, less veining, and her teats were coarse; however, they were well placed with plenty of cover.
- 4 I placed **Y** last. No doubt as a young cow she would have been a productive cow in any herd, still feminine in her head, broad muzzle. Compared to **X**, **Y** had finely set shoulders but then lacked width through her spring of rib and loin, squarely set rump, lacked depth in her heel, was close-hocked but fine and dairy-like throughout. Her udder was showing signs of wear and was the main reason for placing her last. Teats widely placed in fore udder and her udder now becoming pendulous but, indeed, a finely tenured skin.

Mr Judge these are my Reasons for placing these four Holstein Dairy Cows in the order of **A, B, X, Y**.

Competitions Department

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