



JUDGING

Breeder Heifer Terminology

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by S.E. Myers¹

Quick Facts...

Breeding heifer judging involves making decisions based on visual observation and often is combined with individual performance traits and/or expected progeny differences.

Making decisions based on visual observations will help determine which animals stay in the breeding herd (selection) and/or which sires will be mated to which dams.

When you have an understanding of the terms in this fact sheet, you will be able to completely describe all of the important points of a class of breeding heifers.

Breeding heifer judging involves making decisions based on visual observation and often is combined with individual performance traits and/or expected progeny differences. These decisions help determine which animals stay in the breeding herd (selection) and/or which sires will be mated to which dams. The terminology found below will help youth develop their livestock vocabulary. As you look over the terms, try to picture an animal with the characteristics described by the terminology. When you have an understanding of these terms, you will be able to completely describe all of the important points of a class of breeding heifers. If you are uncertain about the exact meaning of a term or phrase, ask your coach, parent, 4-H leader, volunteer or Colorado State University Cooperative Extension agent.

Priorities for Judging Breeding Heifers

- Muscle and Volume
- Structural Correctness
- Growth (Performance)
- Balance
- Correctness of Condition

Muscle Terminology

Advantages

Heavier muscled
Naturally thicker
More volume of muscle
Wider tracking
Has more top
More dimension to her top
Thicker rumped
Thicker quartered
More thickness from hooks to pins

Criticisms

Light muscled
Narrow tracking
Narrow topped
Flat quarter
Shallow quarter

Volume Terminology

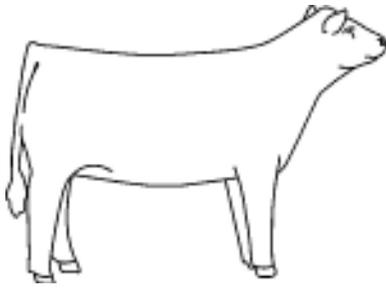
Advantages

Bigger (higher) volumed
More overall dimension and capacity
Broodier
Wider chested
Bolder hearted
Bolder sprung
More spring of rib
Deepest and fullest in her rib
More spring and dimension to her rib
More depth to her rib and flank

Criticisms

Low volumed
Narrow chested
Flat ribbed
Tight ribbed
Shallow bodied
Tight in her fore rib





Structural Correctness Terminology

Advantages

Structurally more correct
 Longer (freer) striding
 Sounder striding
 Easier moving
 More desirable slope of shoulder
 Moved with more flex to her hock
 Traveled truer off her rear (front) legs
 More correct (desirable) set to her hock
 Stands wider and squarer behind
 More functional appearing
 Leveler from hooks to pins
 Heaviest boned
 Larger footed

Criticisms

Poorest structured
 Short (tight) stride
 Straight shouldered
 Toes out up front
 Straight in the hock
 Post legged
 Straight pasterned
 Sickie hocked
 Narrow tracking
 Cow hocked
 Low at her pins
 Light (fine) boned

Growth (Performance) Terminology

Advantages

Larger framed (ONLY when appropriate)
 Appeared to be faster growing
 Growthier appearing
 Longer patterned (bodied, fronted)
 More moderately framed
 More sensible in her size
 More conservative in her frame

Criticisms

Smaller framed
 Appeared pounds light
 Early maturing
 Lower W.D.A. in class
 Short bodied (fronted)
 More extreme in her frame (to big)

Balance Terminology

Advantages

Highest quality
 More stylish (eye appealing)
 More balance (symmetry)
 Nicer profiling
 Cleaner patterned
 More refined head
 Longer necked
 Cleaner fronted
 Smoother shouldered
 Neck blends smoother into her shoulder
 Lays neater and tighter in the shoulder
 Stronger topped
 Leveler hiped (rump)
 Leveler and squarer from hooks to pins
 Cleaner naveled
 More correct vulva size and placement

Criticisms

Plain (unattractive)
 Ill made
 Poor balanced
 Breaks behind the shoulder
 Easy (weak) topped
 Short fronted
 Heavy fronted
 Low headed
 Heavy brisket
 Coarse shouldered
 Weak topped
 Steep rumped
 High tailhead
 Large naveled

Correctness of Condition Terminology

Advantages

Easier fleshing (keeping)
 Better doing
 Easier maintaining
 Lighter conditioned
 Trimmer patterned

Criticisms

Heavier conditioned
 Harder fleshing
 Harder doing
 Heavier brisket
 Wasty through her udder

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