Dairy Cattle Evaluation
Why Judge Dairy Cattle?

Gain a better understanding of what makes a productive and functional dairy cow.
Important Dairy Cow Characteristics:

- 40% Mammary System
- 20% Dairy Character
- 15% Frame
- 15% Feet & Legs
- 10% Body Capacity
1 - Mammary System
40 %
1. Mammary System

A - Udder Depth

How high above the hock is the udder?
Where are the teats placed on the quarters?

- Teats should be
  - about 2 inches long
  - Cylindrical
  - Placed squarely under each quarter
    - Not to one side or another
1 - Mammary System

C - Rear Udder Width & Height

- Rear udder width is measured at the attachment
- The higher the rear udder the better!
D - Fore Udder & Udder Quality

- Length & Smoothness of the Fore Udder Attachment
  - Should attach smoothly into abdomen

- Veining of the Udder should be visible
2 - Dairy Character
20%

What is Dairy Character?

Does it look like a dairy cow or a beef cow?
2- Dairy Character

A - Rib & Bone

- Ribs that sweep back toward the flank
- Ribs that are wide apart and flat
- Bone structure should be flat & refined
B - Cleanliness & Angularity

- Sharp withers, hips & pins
- Clean down the neck and thigh
3 - Frame
15%

- Components of Frame
  - Rump
  - Stature
  - Front end
  - Back
  - Head & Breed Character
A - Rump, Stature & Back

- Slight slope from hooks to pins
- Wide from hook to hook and pin to pin
- Stature is how tall the cow is at the withers.
- The back should be slightly higher at the withers than hips and straight all the way across.
A. Rump, Stature & Back
3 - Frame

B - Front End & Strength

- Front end assembly is the shoulder and chest
  - It should be smooth and tight
- Strength = width of chest & muzzle.
C - Head & Breed Character

Look for:

- A Feminine Head
- Correct Breed Colors and Shape of Head
- Deep Jaw & Wide Muzzle
Components of Feet and Legs:

- Short toe
- Rear legs — straight from rear
- Rear legs — moderate angle from side
Legs – Side View

- View the rear legs from the side
- The leg should have a moderate angle to the hock
- The hock should be clean and flexible
5 - Body Capacity

- 10%

- **Body capacity is simply the volume of the cow**
  - Length x Width x Depth

- **Look for:**
  - A long body
  - A wide chest
  - A deep barrel
A. Length & Depth of Barrel
Let's Practice!

Here is a practice class of Brown Swiss cows...

❖ Look at each cow

❖ Write down several things that you like or dislike about that cow.

❖ Place the class
Brown Swiss Cow #1
Brown Swiss
Cow #2
Brown Swiss
Cow #3

Class #1
Class #1: Brown Swiss Cows

1

2

3

4
Time for Decisions...

- **Mammary System:**
  - Best A
  - Worst B

- **Dairy Character:**
  - Best C
  - Worst B
What do you think?

- **Frame:**
  - Best A  - Worst D

- **Feet & Legs:**
  - Best C  - Worst B

- **Body Capacity:**
  - Best A  - Worst B
Class #1: Brown Swiss Cows
Official Placing

1 3 4 2

To read what the judge had to say about this class of cows go to:
HOARD'S DAIRYMAN - THE NATIONAL DAIRY FARM MAGAZINE
Class #2
Holstein Dairy Cows
Class #2
Class #2
Class #2
Class #2
Official Placing

1 - 2 - 4 - 3
FFA Application:
Dairy Cattle Judging

- Judge classes of dairy cattle
- Give oral reasons
Breeds of Dairy Cattle
Holstein History

- The Holstein cow originated in Europe
- The major historical development of this breed occurred in what is now the Netherlands
- Winthrop Chenery brought the first Holstein over so the sailors could have milk
  - He noticed her high production and started to bring over more
Holstein Characteristics

- Holsteins are large, stylish animals with color patterns of black and white or red and white.
- Average production for all Holsteins enrolled in official U.S. production-testing programs in 1987 was 17,408 pounds of milk, 632 pounds of butterfat, and 550 pounds of protein per year.
Brown Swiss History

- Brown Swiss breed originated in the mountain pastures of the Swiss Alps
- The Brown Swiss breed in the United States was declared a dairy breed in 1906
Brown Swiss Characteristics

- Light silver to dark brown with dark points
- 15,883 lbs of milk per lactation; 3.97% fat
- A mature female weighs 1400 lbs
- Particularly strong feet and legs because of the mountains
- Docile, people-friendly demeanor
Guernsey History

- The Isle of Guernsey, a tiny island in the English Channel off the coast of France, is the birthplace of the Guernsey cow.
- The Monks from France brought France’s best bloodlines and came up with the Guernsey.
- Introduction of the Guernsey to America occurred around September 1840, when Captain Belair of the Schooner Pilot brought three Alderney cows to the port of New York.
Guernsey’s Characteristics

- The Guernsey cow is known for producing high-butterfat and high-protein milk.
- Guernseys produce their high quality milk while consuming 20 to 30 percent less feed per pound of milk.
- The Guernsey is also an excellent grazer.
- Produces 14,667 pounds of milk, 659 pounds of butterfat and 510 pounds of protein.

provided by Hoard’s Dairyman
The Jersey breed originated on the Island of Jersey, a small British island in the English Channel.

The island of Jersey was very protective of this breed. Because of this the breed stayed distinctive for many years.
Jersey Characteristics

- Jerseys are adapted to a wide range of climatic and geographical conditions.
- Jerseys vary greatly in color, but the characteristic color is golden fawn, with or without white markings.
- Smallest of the dairy breeds.
- Long life (61.1 months vs 56.2 months).
- Its nutritive content is 28.46% greater than ordinary milk.
The Ayrshire breed originated in the County of Ayr in Scotland, prior to 1800. Prior to 1800 many of the cattle of Ayrshire were black, although by 1775 browns and mottled colors started to appear. Early breeders carefully crossed and selected the various strains of cattle.
Ayrshire Characteristics

- red and white
- medium-sized cattle and should weigh over 1200 pounds at maturity
- strong, rugged cattle that adapt to all management systems including group handling on dairy farms with free stalls and milking parlors
- 12,000 pounds of milk with a 3.9% Butterfat
- Calves are strong and easy to raise
Shorthorn originated in the northeastern part of England in the Tees River Valley. The Colling brothers, Charles and Robert, are often referred to as the founders of the Shorthorn breed of cattle. They were brought to America in 1783.
Shorthorn Characteristics

- color ranges from red to roan to white
- In the feedlot, these cattle attain 1,000 to 1,200 pound weights at an early age
- ease of calving
- docile
- healthy calves