



Livestock Judging

An Introduction to Livestock Judging and Oral Reasons

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Livestock Judging

- One of the most educational activities of the livestock project
- Livestock Judging helps 4-H'ers to:
 - Develop communication skills
 - Make decisions based on facts and observations
 - Compete with a sportsmanlike attitude
 - Develop self-confidence



Placing Animals

- **Place each animal in a class**
 - 4-H contests use four animals in each class
 - Place animals 1st through 4th
 - Break down class into pairs
 - Top pair, middle pair, bottom pair
 - Make easiest placing first
 - Cuts are penalties for placing the class different than the official placing
 - Total of three cuts cannot exceed 15 points



Oral Reasons

- **Orally defend your placings**
 - An explanation to another person why you placed the animals the way you did
 - Points are awarded on the overall fluency and correctness of the reason
 - Even if your placing is different than the official placing

Steps to Judging



- Know the “ideal” of what you are judging
- Compare animals in the class to the “ideal”
- Compare animals to each other
- Place the class
- Take notes on the class
- Learn your reasons
- Present your reasons

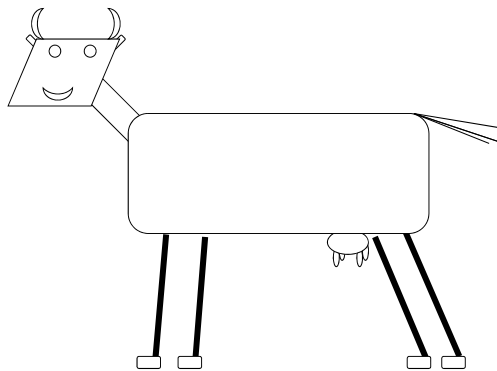
This is an “Ideal” Heifer



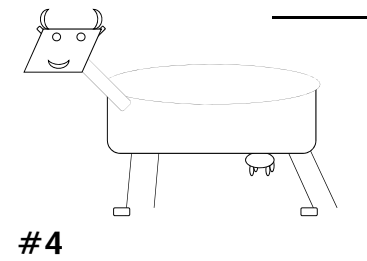
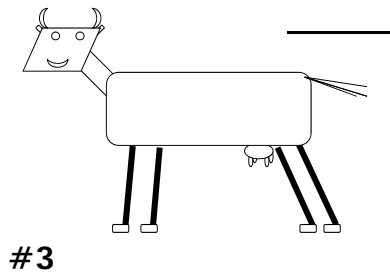
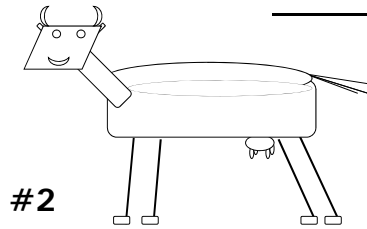
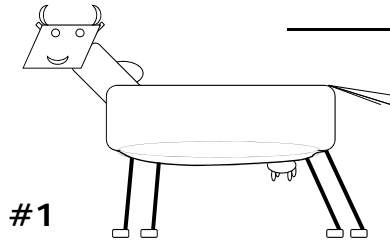
- Characteristics of this

“ideal” cow

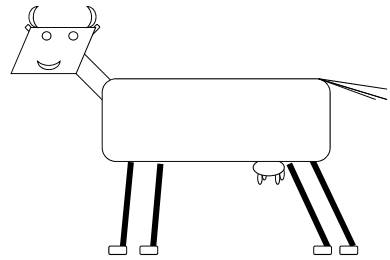
- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, tail, 4 legs, 4 feet
- Strong top line
- Heavily muscled
- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs



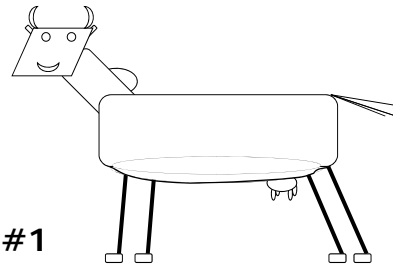
Class of Green Angus Heifers



Compare "Ideal" to #1

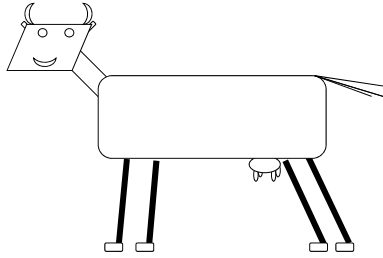


- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, tail, 4 legs, 4 feet
- Strong top line
- Heavily muscled
- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs

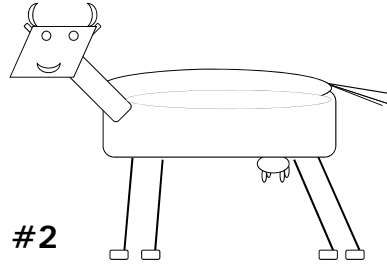


- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, tail, 4 legs
- Strong top line
- Spring of rib, depth of body, mature
- Not as heavily muscled
- Lacks femininity
- Sound feet and legs

Compare "Ideal" to #2



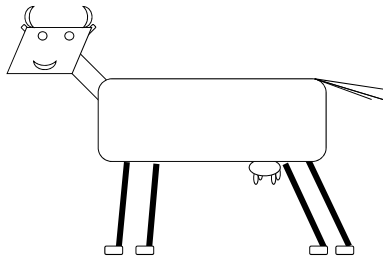
- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, tail, 4 legs, 4 feet
- Strong top line
- Heavily muscled
- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs



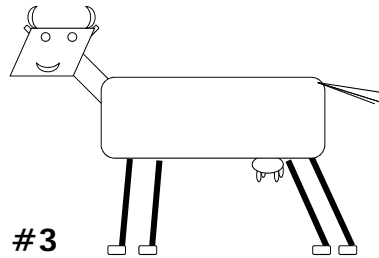
#2

- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, tail, 4 legs
- Roaches her back
 - Structure problem
- Not as heavily muscled
- Feminine through head and neck
- Not as sound on feet and legs

Compare "Ideal" to #3



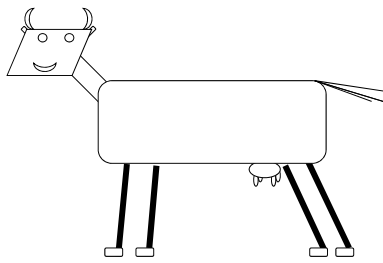
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- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs



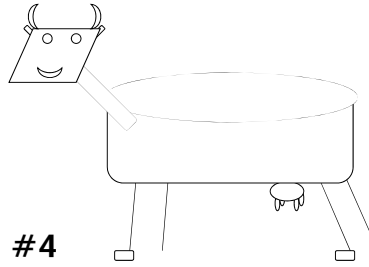
#3

- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, tail, 4 legs
- Strong top line
- Depth of body
- Heavily muscled
- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs

Compare "Ideal" to #4



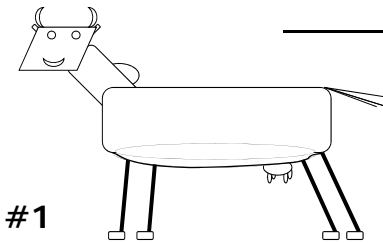
- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, tail, 4 legs, 4 feet
- Strong top line
- Heavily muscled
- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs



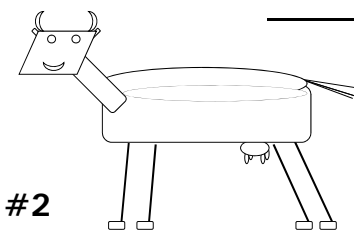
#4

- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, 4 legs, 2 feet
- Weak top line
- Longer sided
- Lightest muscled
- Lacks femininity

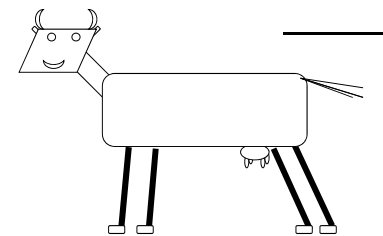
How did you place this class?



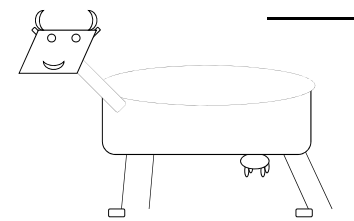
#1



#2

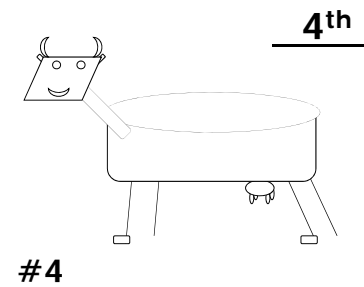
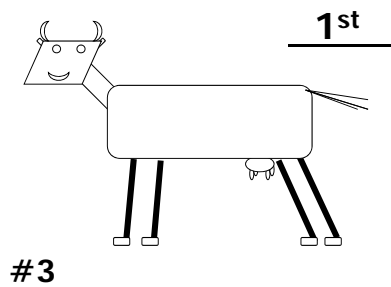
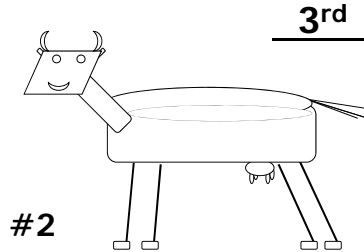
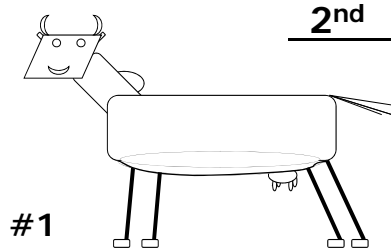


#3



#4

Official Placings



Steps to Judging

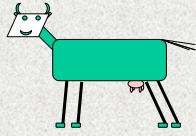


- Know the "ideal" of what you are judging
- Compare animals in the class to the "ideal"
- Compare animals to each other
- Place the class

SURPRISE!

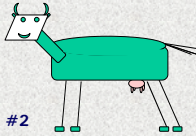
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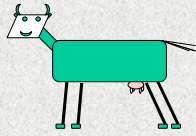
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Compare "Ideal" to #2



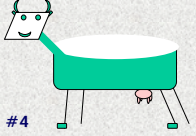
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Compare "Ideal" to #3



- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, tail, 4 legs, 4 feet
- Strong top line
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Compare "Ideal" to #4



- Has head, ears, eyes, mouth, neck, body, 4 legs, 2 feet
- Weak top line
- Longer sided
- Lightest muscled
- Lacks femininity

Mississippi State Extension SERVICE **Brief to Complete Reasons**

Class Name	Placing 3-1-2-4
3/1 Reasons	1/3 Grants 1 Criticisms
1/2 Reasons	2/1 Grants 2 Criticisms
2/4 Reasons	4/2 Grants 4 Criticisms
1 Notes and IDs	2 Notes and IDs
3 Notes and IDs	4 Notes and IDs

Keys to Oral Reasons



- Refer to animals by their number or other description
- Compare animals
- Most important things first
- Back up placings with detail

Keys to Oral Reasons



- Grant areas where the lower placing animal is better
- Use a variety of terms
- Reasons length should not exceed 2 minutes

Number or Descriptive Term



-
- **When describing the animal, refer to the animal by it's number**
 - 3 is more refined about her head
 - **Or refer to it by a distinguishing characteristic**
 - Now I admit the black baldy is more productive in his look
 - **Try to avoid saying "Number 1 is..."**

Compare Animals



-
- **Use er words or est words**
 - 3 is heavier muscled, longer bodied
 - 4 is the poorest structured, flattest ribbed
 - **Never just describe the animal**
 - 3 is broody, eye appealing
 - **COMPARE!**

Most Important First



- Describe the most important/most obvious first
- Back it up with details and move on to less important traits

– 3 is clearly a more powerful wether as he works more dimension of muscle down his top & maintains this advantage out to his dock and wraps with more circumference of leg compared to the other wethers in this class. Also, 3 ties a longer neck into a smoother shoulder.

Remember to Grant



- Grant back the lower placing animal to the higher placing animal

- 2nd to 1st
- 3rd to 2nd
- 4th to 3rd

- There is always one thing

better about the lower placing animal!

Class Name	Placing	3-1-2-4
3/1 Reasons	1/3	Grants
	1	Criticisms
1/2 Reasons	2/1	Grants
	2	Criticisms
2/4 Reasons	4/2	Grants
	4	Criticisms
1	Notes and IDs	2 Notes and IDs
3	Notes and IDs	4 Notes and IDs



Use Variety

- **Use different terms throughout your reasons**
- **Instead of always saying “heavier muscled”, use...**
 - Thicker, wider, dimension, shape, tone
- **Instead of “I grant”, use...**
 - Concede, admit, realize, at the same time, recognize



Top Pair

- **How you start to describe your top pair will vary depending on the class**
 - If you have a clear winner, you would want to start with a broad description of your class winner
 - If you have a top pair of similar animals, you would start with a descriptive term about them and then why you preferred one over another



Grant

- **Describe something that your 2nd place animal is better at than your 1st place animal**
- **Do this for every pair!**



Criticism

- **You just got done telling the official how much better this animal is than the one above it, so you need to use a transition**
 - **Although, but still, in spite of this, on the other hand, does not compensate for the fact**



Criticism

- Describe why that animal is in that spot
- These negative things might just be compared to the animal above it, of the initial three, or in the entire class



Middle Pair

- Need another transition as you start to describe your middle pair, and a big descriptive term
- “Even so, it’s 1’s soundness that places her over 2 in my intermediate comparison.”
- Grants and criticisms are treated the same as the top pair



Final Pair

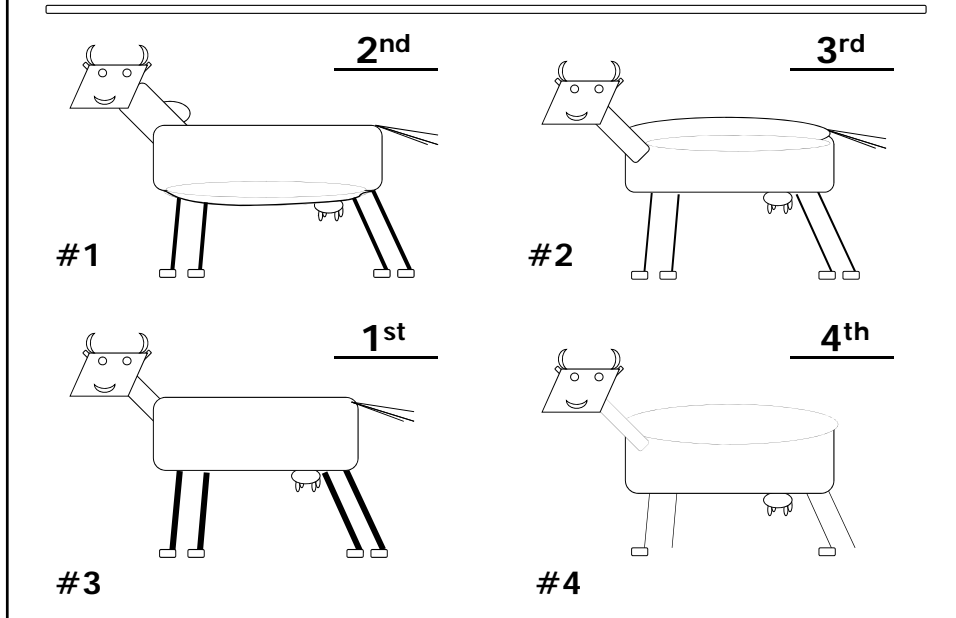
- **Another transition and big term to describe**
- **“Nevertheless, it is her decisive advantage in power that places her over 4 in my concluding pair.”**
- **Grants are treated the same**



Last Place Criticism

- **This is the last place animal, so she probably is the worst at something**
- **Use est terms and you might want to end with “of any in the class.”**
 - **She is the smallest patterned, shortest bodied, and least eye appealing heifer of any in the class.**

Official Placings



Appearance



- **Make your 4-H'ers look professional!**
- **Males and females**
 - At least wear a collared shirt, tucked in
 - Preferred to wear shirt and tie (males) with dress slacks; jacket or blazer optional at state contest
- **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR 4-H'ERS TO WEAR:**
 - Hats or caps, jeans, pants tucked into boots, t-shirts, shirt not tucked into pants
 - **NO CELLPHONES**

Presenting Your Reasons



- **Be confident in your reasons**
 - **DO NOT USE NOTES!**
- **Stand straight (or slightly bent forward at the waist), about 2 paces from the judge**
- **Keep hands behind your back or at your side**

Presenting Your Reasons



- **Look directly at the judge**
- **Speak clearly and boldly**
- **Do not yell but do not whisper either**
- **Be pleasant and courteous**
- **Be prepared for questions**



Other Tips

- **Learn terms that are applicable**
 - **Market livestock**
 - Muscle mass, condition, thick topped, carcass characteristics (leaner, more red meat)



Other Tips

- **Learn terms that are applicable**
 - **Breeding livestock**
 - **Females**
 - Stylish, femininity, long neck, angularity, trim/clean navel, eye appeal
 - **Males**
 - Masculinity, scrotal circumference, rugged design, cleaner/neater sheath



Other Tips

- **Learn terms and parts for each species**
 - **Cattle**
 - Bull, heifer, cow, steer
 - **Swine**
 - Boar, barrow, gilt, sow
 - **Sheep**
 - Ram, wether, ewe



Other Tips

- **Understand how to use expected progeny differences (EPD)**
 - Takes into account the relationship in a pedigree and predicts how progeny or offspring of a particular animal should perform relative to animals from an average parent
 - Maternal EPDs: Birth weight, maternal milk
 - Growth EPDs: Weaning weight, yearling weight, carcass characteristics



Final Thoughts

- **Make oral reasons fun!**
- **Keep it simple for new judges**
 - Learn terms of species that they show
- **Visualize animals when practicing and presenting reasons**
- **Study terminology and transitions**
- **Keep professional appearance**



Credits

- **Ann Leed, Instructor**
 - Livestock Judging Team Coach, MSU
- **Kathy Nash and others**
 - 4-H Horse Judging Contest DVD
- **Mississippi 4-H Livestock Judging Manual**
- **Kipp Brown, Area 4-H Livestock Agent**