

is in one of these five divisions. If you know the points allowed for each, you can evaluate an animal based on its strengths and weaknesses.

### **FRAME (15 Points)**

The frame represents all the skeletal parts of the cow. It can be thought of as the silhouette or outline of the cow. That is the reason it can be evaluated easiest 20 to 25 feet away from the animal. The traits on the scorecard in order of importance are rump, stature, front end, back, and breed characteristics.

The rump includes the hip (hook), thurls, and pins. The rump is ideally long, wide, and nearly level. Since the rump is the framework for the udder, it helps make the udder wide, long, and nearly level. Thurls should be wide and set almost centered between the hips and pins. The location of the thurls determines rear leg structure, so this is an important part to observe. Pins should be high and wide.

Stature is evaluated by height and length of leg bones. Taller animals usually carry their udders higher and tend to be larger cows that eat more feed, giving them the nutrients to produce more milk. The front end consists of width and depth of chest, with smooth blending of the shoulder to the body wall. Smoothly blended shoulders give a cow the appearance of harmony, style, and balance.

### **DAIRY CHARACTER (20 Points)**

Dairy character is determined by signs the cow can produce lots of milk. Excellent dairy character is shown by a great deal of angularity and openness, freedom from coarseness, and cleanness throughout. The order of importance for dairy character traits is ribs, thighs, withers, neck, and chine. Dairy animals should have a long lean neck and sharp withers, with no evidence of fat there. The topline and rump show no fat, with the hip bones and pin bones sharply defined. Thighs should be thin and curve in, showing no excess fat. Skin should be thin, loose, and pliable. Dairy animals should be open-ribbed and clean-cut at the throat, dewlap, and brisket.

### **BODY CAPACITY (10 Points)**

Body capacity is usually associated with an animal's being able to eat lots of feed in order to have nutrients to produce large amounts of milk. Body capacity counts only 10 points on the scorecard. It is less important than other major categories. Body capacity is a function of the length and depth of the animal. Good body capacity is usually characterized by capacity, strength, and vigor. It is expressed in terms of length, width, and depth of barrel. An animal should be wide in the chest, with ribs that angle back slightly toward the udder and be well-sprung and deep.

### **FEET AND LEGS (15 Points)**

This part of the scorecard is probably the most difficult to evaluate because its appearance is affected so much by management. Feet and legs are very important in the functional type category, so they count 15 points on the PDCA scorecard.

The order of importance for this category is feet, rear legs (rear and side view), hocks, and pasterns.

The ideal foot has a short toe and a deep heel with a short, strong pastern. Rear legs should be wide apart and straight with moderate set to the hock. The perfect leg walks straight ahead when viewed from the rear. The ideal hock is flat and clean, with no swelling.

### **UDDER (40 Points)**

The udder is the most important part of the cow. Since a dairy cow's main job is to produce milk, much emphasis should be placed on mammary system. For long-term performance under the stress of high production, an udder must be strongly attached, have acceptable size and capacity, and be well balanced.

The fore udder should be moderately long, strongly attached, and blend smoothly into the body wall. It should be uniformly wide from front to rear and be balanced with the rear udder. The udder should have little movement when the cow is walking.

The rear udder attachment should be high, wide, smooth, and deep. The rear quarters should be of equal size and the same width from top to bottom.

The median and lateral suspensory ligaments are the main support for the udder. The median suspensory ligament is located between the halves of the udder, and the lateral ligaments are located on the sides of the udder.

Udders with weak ligaments hang well below the hocks. Weak median suspensory ligaments cause the udder floor to be flat, and there will be no crease between the quarters. A weak median suspensory ligament generally causes teats to point out, making the cow difficult to milk.

The teats should be the same size and shape and 1½ to 2½ inches long. They should be placed squarely under the corners of the udder, pointed slightly inward before the udder is filled, and hang straight down when the udder is full.

Balance, symmetry, and quality are terms used to characterize udders. The udder should be nearly level on the floor, and there should be no signs of quartering. The skin should be soft, pliable, and loose. Large mammary veins are evidence of an excellent quality udder.

You should consider an animal's age and stage of lactation when evaluating udder capacity. As the cow grows older, her udder becomes deeper and larger. When a cow is under 5 years old, serious discrimination should be given if the udder hangs below the hocks.

### **JUDGING SUGGESTIONS**

Here are a few suggestions on procedure for a beginner judge:

1. Learn to locate and identify the parts of the animal.
2. Study the Unified Scorecard and learn how many points are given for frame, feet and legs, dairy character, body capacity, and mammary system. Learn the importance of the various parts of the cow's body.
3. Get a picture of the ideal cow clearly and firmly fixed in