



Judging Dairy Cattle

by the University of Kentucky Animal
Science



About

Dairy Cattle Judging

The physical conformation of a dairy cow is evaluated on four (4) categories:

1. Dairy Strength - 25 points
 2. Rear Feet and Legs - 20 points
 3. Udder - 40 points
 4. Frame - 15 points
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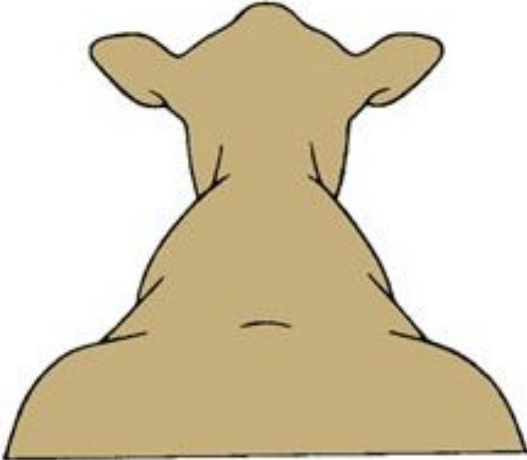
Excellent Dairy Strength

- A feminine head.
- A long, lean neck.
- Sharp and angular withers.
- A long barrel.
- A lot of space between her ribs.
- Ribs that are flat in shape (not round).
- A flat (not round) conformation in the part of her legs between the hocks and dew claws.
- Wide through the chest floor.
- Deep in the fore and rear rib.
- Long in the rib (barrel) region.
- Very wide through the rib (lots of spring of rib).

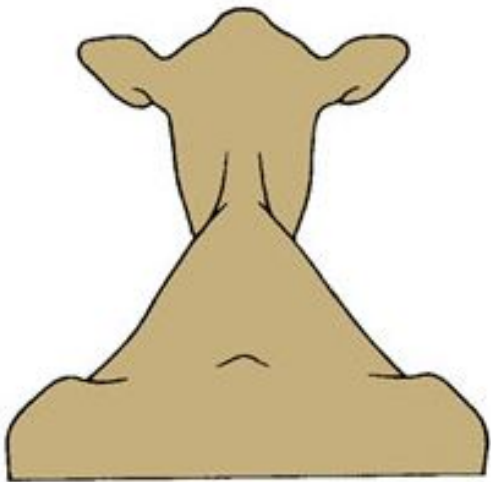
Poor Dairy Strength

- A short, coarse head.
 - A short, thick neck.
 - Round withers.
 - A short barrel.
 - Little space between her ribs.
 - Round ribs.
 - Round lower legs.
 - Narrow between the front legs (narrow chested).
 - Shallow in the fore and rear rib.
 - Short in the rib (barrel) region.
 - Narrow through the ribs (slab sided)
-

Dairy Strength



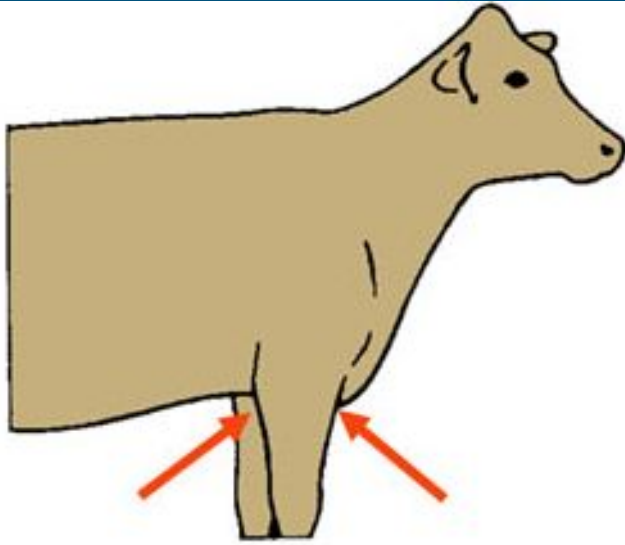
Poor Dairy Character



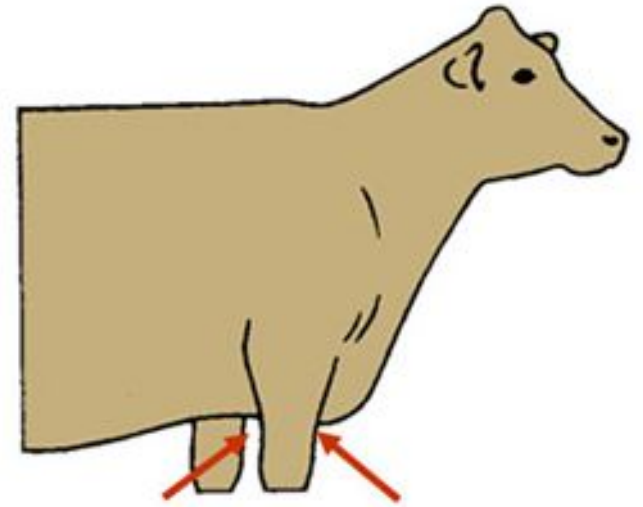
Excellent Dairy Character!!

A purple award ribbon with a yellow center and a gold emblem, signifying a high-quality or winning specimen.

Chest Width



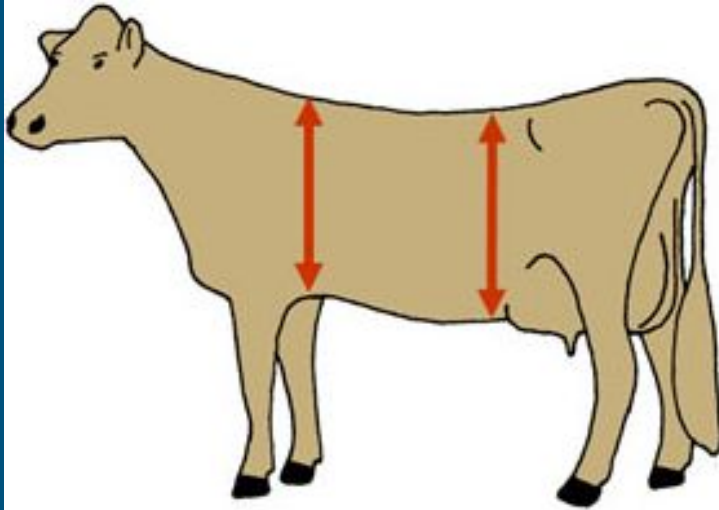
Narrow Between
Front Legs (*Narrow
Chested*)



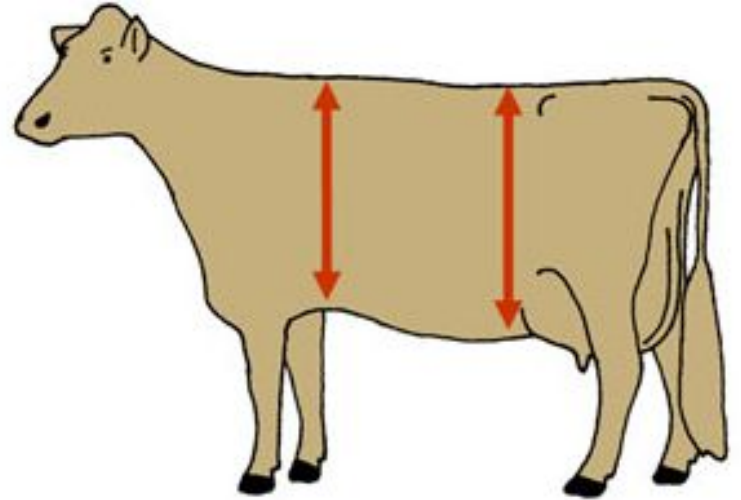
Wide Chest
Floor



Fore
and
Rear
Rib
Depth



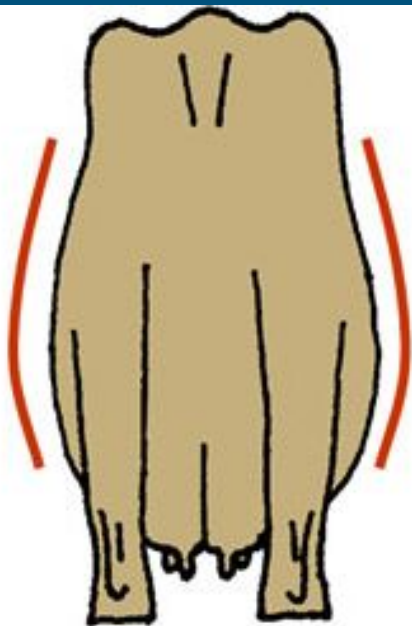
Shallow in Fore
and Rear Rib



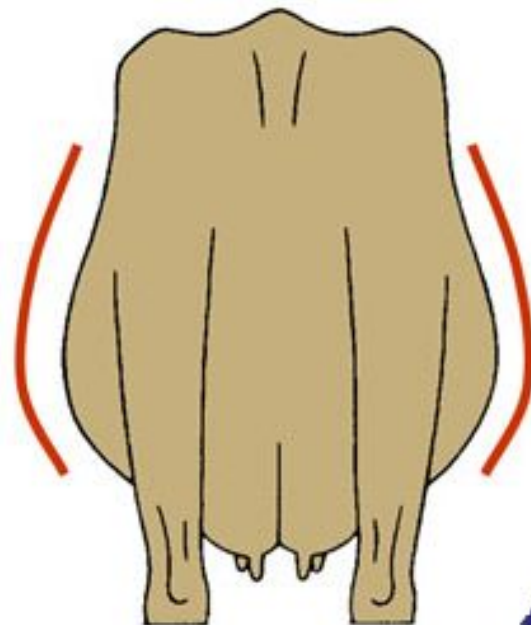
Deep in Fore
and Rear Rib



Spring of Rib



Lacks Spring of Rib
(Slab Sided)



Excellent Spring
of Rib



Front Feet & Legs

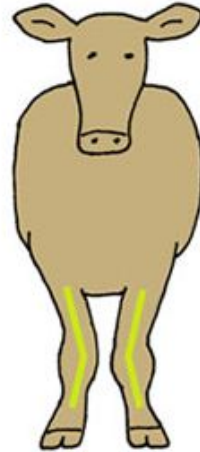
A cow with correct front feet and legs will have:

- Hooves which point straight forward.
- Straight front legs which set square with her body.

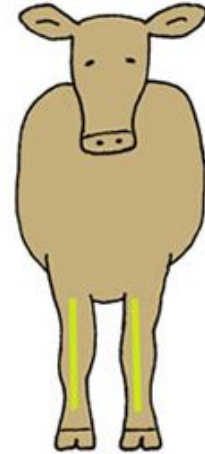
A cow which is **not** correct in the front feet and legs may have:

- Hooves with toes that turn in or out.
- Crooked front legs.

Front Legs (Front View)



In at Knees, Out
at Feet
(Toed-Out)



Straight Front
Legs (Hooves
Point Forward)



Rear Feet & Legs

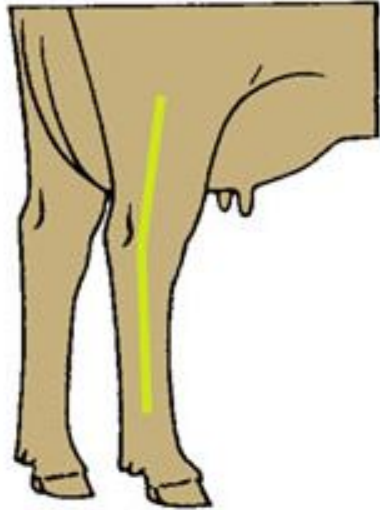
Correct

- Hind legs that are placed squarely underneath her when she stands.
- A moderate set (curve) to her hocks.
- Clean hocks.
- Short, strong pasterns.
- A deep heel.
- A steep foot angle.
- Straight hind legs when viewed from the rear.
- An easy, smooth stride when she walks.

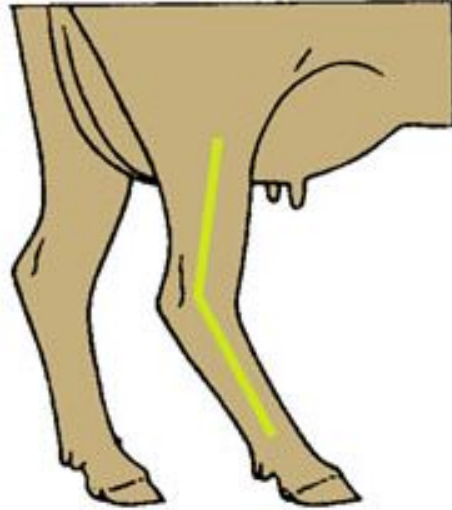
Incorrect

- Hind legs that attach too far back on the rump (thurl placement too far back).
- Too much set to the hocks (sickle-hocked) or hocks that are too straight (post-legged).
- Swelling or puffiness in the hocks.
- Weak pasterns.
- Heels that are too shallow.
- A low foot angle.
- Hocks that are in when viewed from the rear (cow-hocked).
- A restricted, uncomfortable stride.

Rear Feet and Legs Hocks



Too Straight
(Post-Legged)



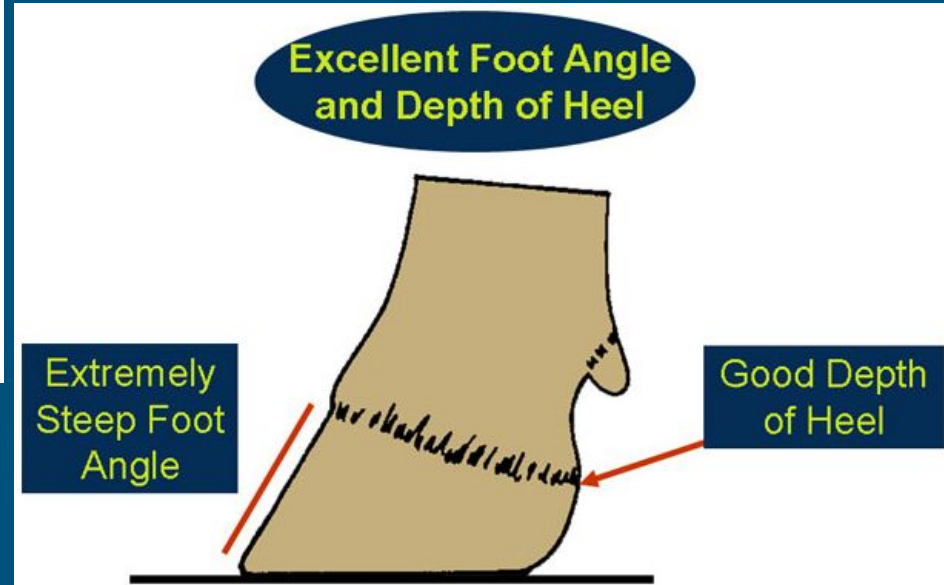
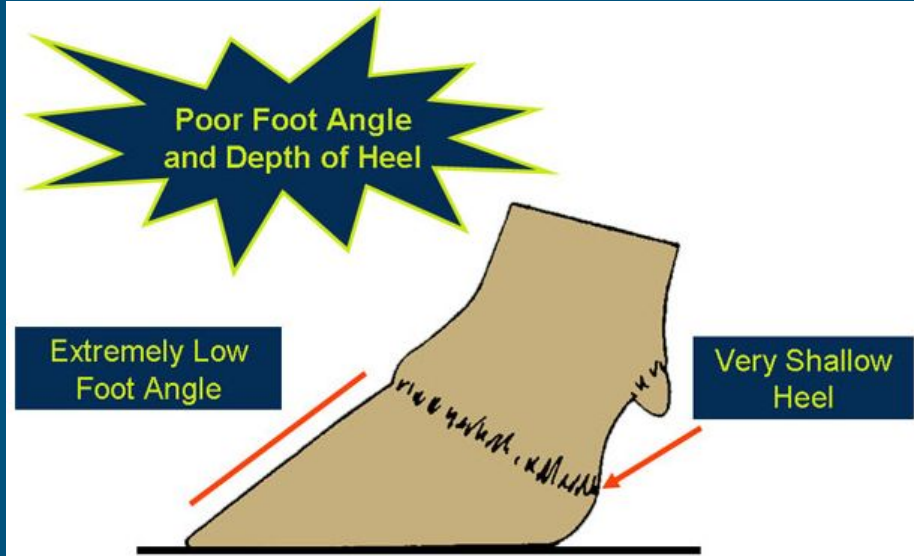
Too Much Set
(Sickle-Hocked)



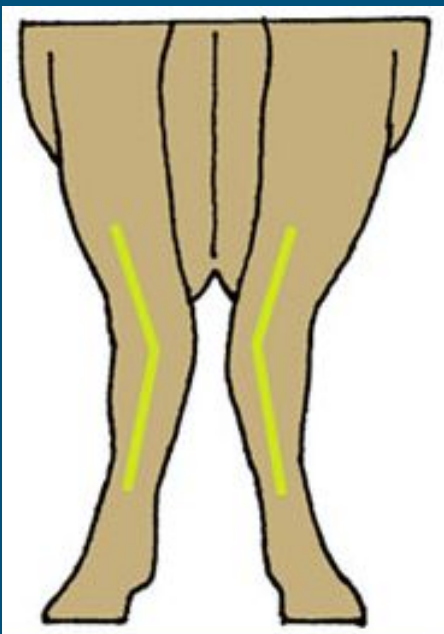
Correct
Hocks

Rear Feet and Legs

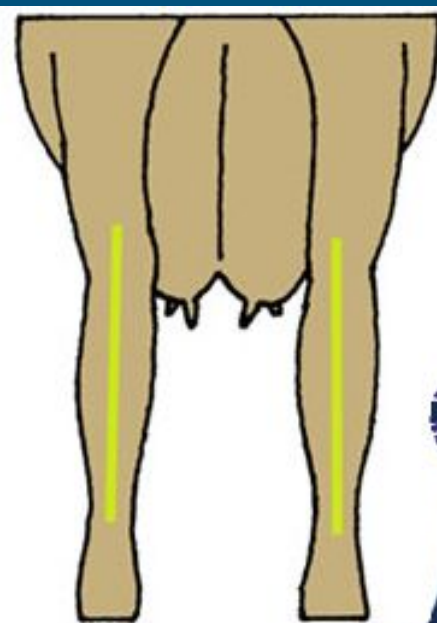
Foot Angle & Depth of Heel



Rear Feet
and Legs
Hind Legs
(Rear
View)



In at Hocks,
Out at Feet
(Cow-Hocked)




Straight Hind
Legs

Udder Conformation

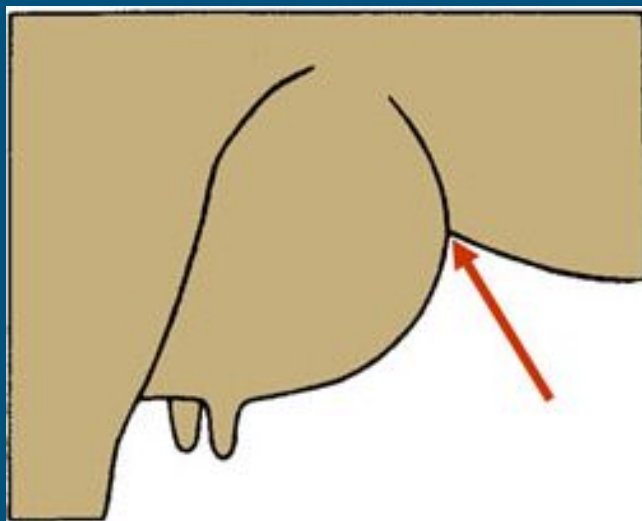
Excels

- An udder that is appropriate in size and capacity relative to the cow's age and number of lactations.
- A moderately long fore udder that blends well into the body wall.
- A level udder floor, with the udder floor well above the hocks.
- A full and wide rear udder.
- A high and wide rear udder attachment.
- Balanced quarters.
- Evidence of a strong median suspensory ligament.
- A lot of veining in the udder.
- Teats which are moderate in size and length, squarely placed under the quarter and perpendicular to the ground.

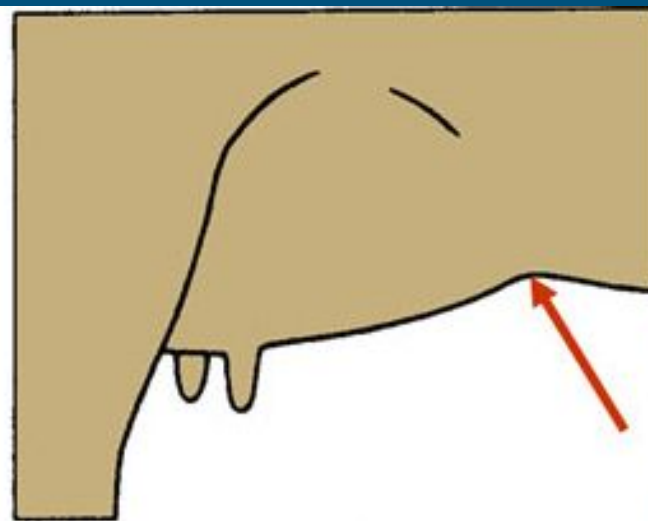
Does Not Excel

- A bulgy for udder.
- A loose for udder attachment.
- Too much slope to the udder floor, or reverse tilt to the udder floor.
- An udder floor below the hocks.
- A flat and narrow rear udder.
- A low and narrow rear udder attachment.
- Unbalanced quarters.
- A weak median suspensory ligament.
- Teats that are not the correct size or shape.
- Front teats that are too wide.
- Front teats that strut out.
- Rear teats that are too close.

Udder Conformation - Fore Udder



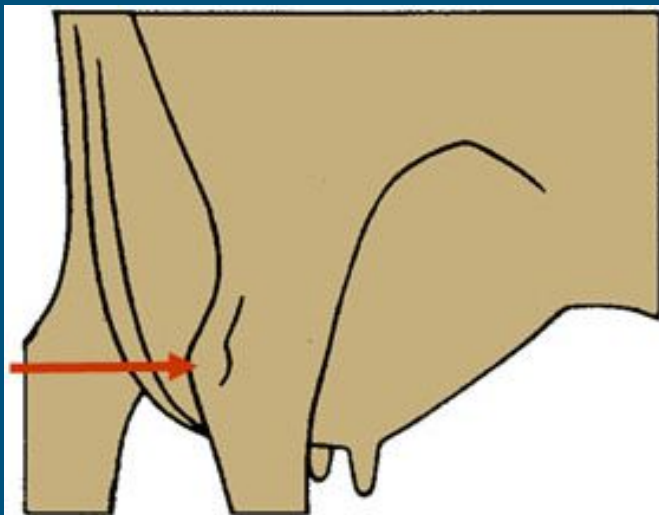
Bulgy with Loose Attachment



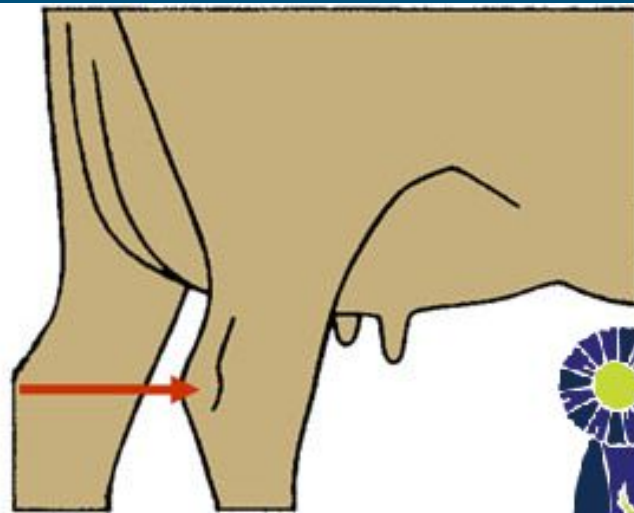
Moderately Long with Tight Attachment



Udder Conformation - Udder Depth

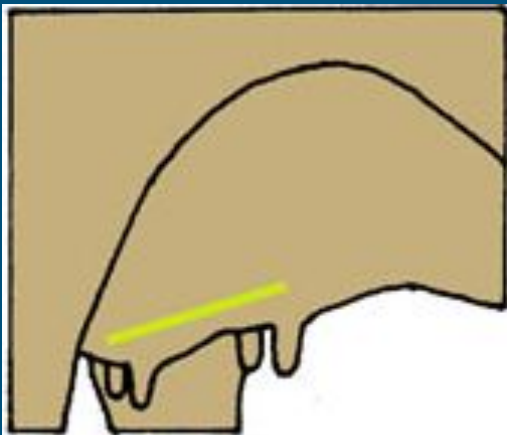


*Udder Floor Too Deep
(Below Hocks)*

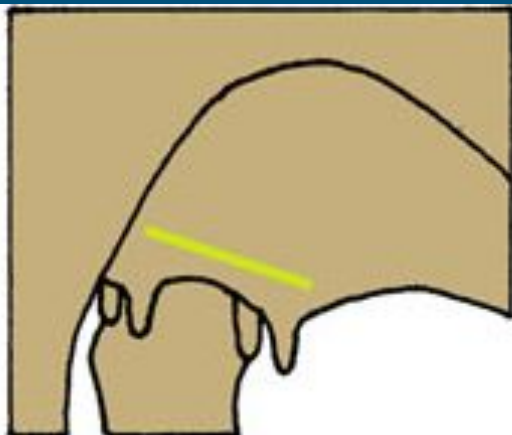


*Udder Floor Well
Above Hocks*

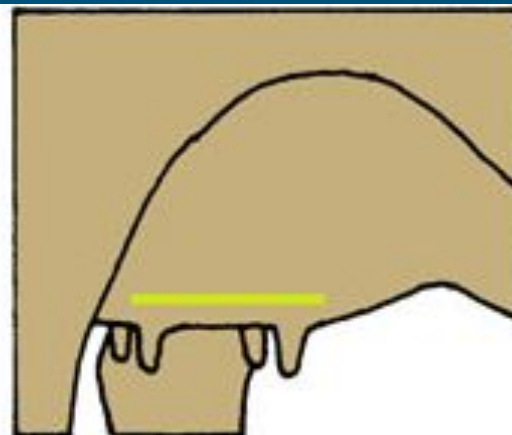
Udder Conformation - Udder Tilt



Rear Quarters
Too Deep



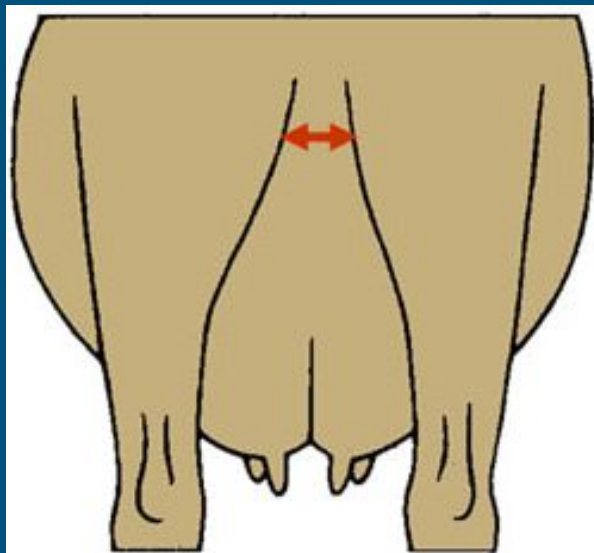
Front Quarters
Too Deep



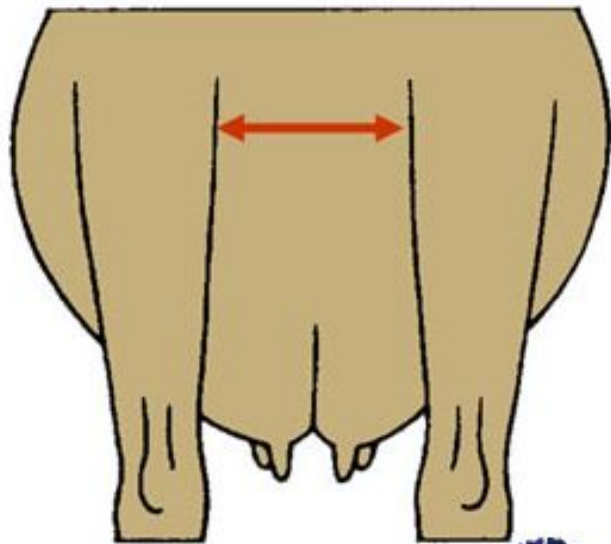
Front and Rear
Quarters Level



Udder Conformation - Rear Udder Width



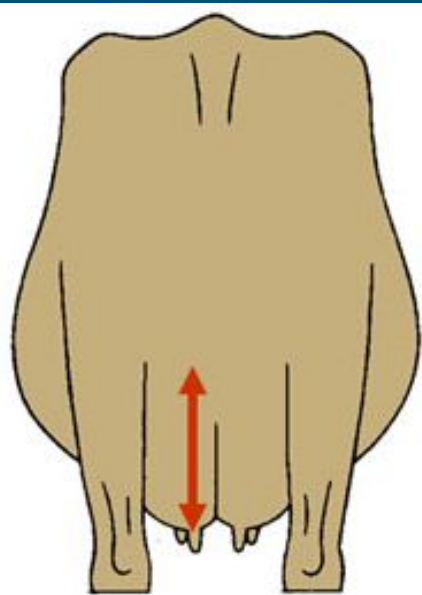
Very Narrow at Attachment



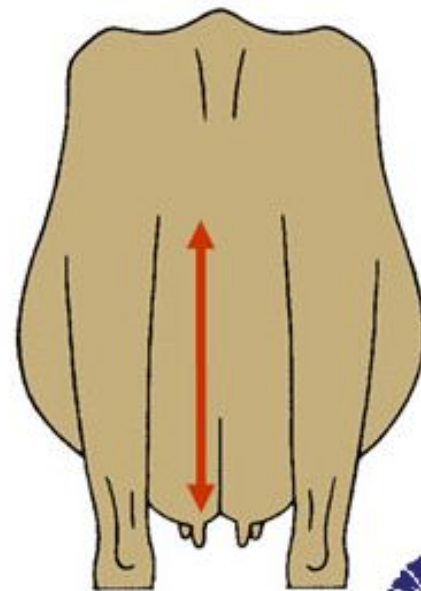
Very Wide at Attachment



Udder Conformation - Rear Udder Height



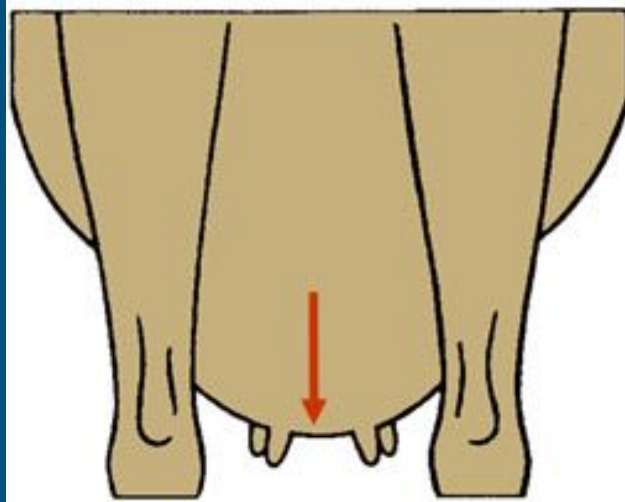
Very Low at Attachment



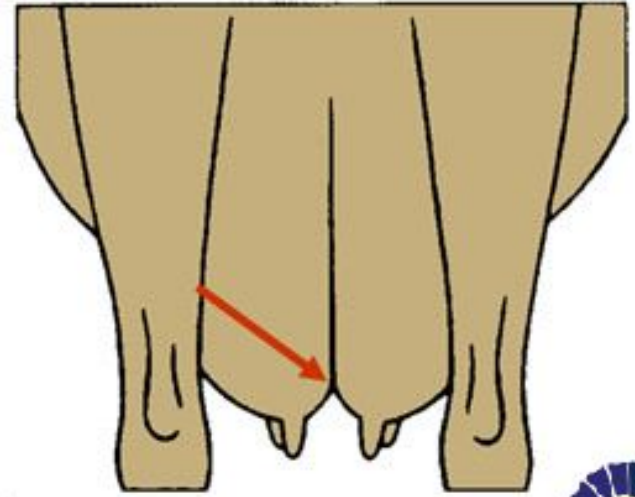
Very High at Attachment



Udder Conformation - Medium Suspensory Ligament



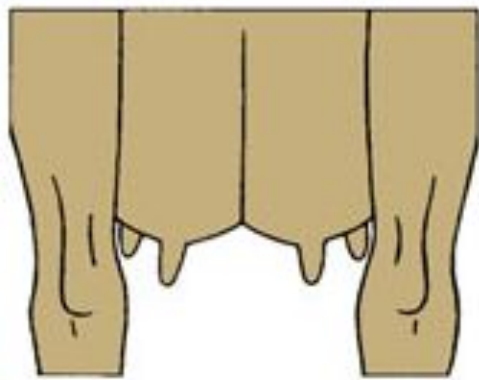
Weak (Broken) Median
Suspensory Ligament



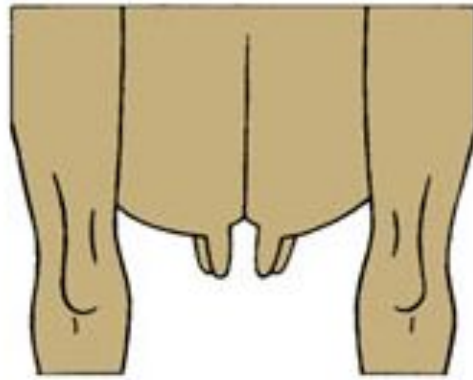
Strong Median
Suspensory
Ligament



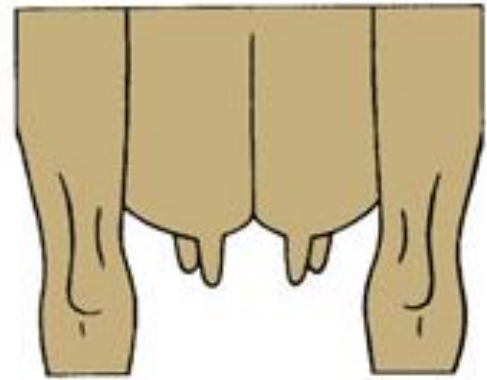
Udder Conformation - Teat Placement



Teat Placement Too Wide



Teat Placement Too Close



Frame

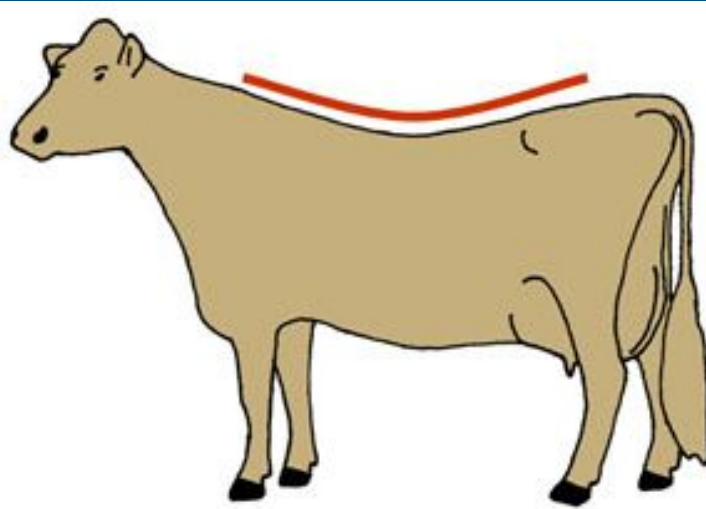
Excels

- Tall.
- Long from her muzzle to her pins.
- Straight in her lines.
- Balanced and smoothly put together.
- Long and wide in her rump with a moderate amount of slope from the hooks to the pins.

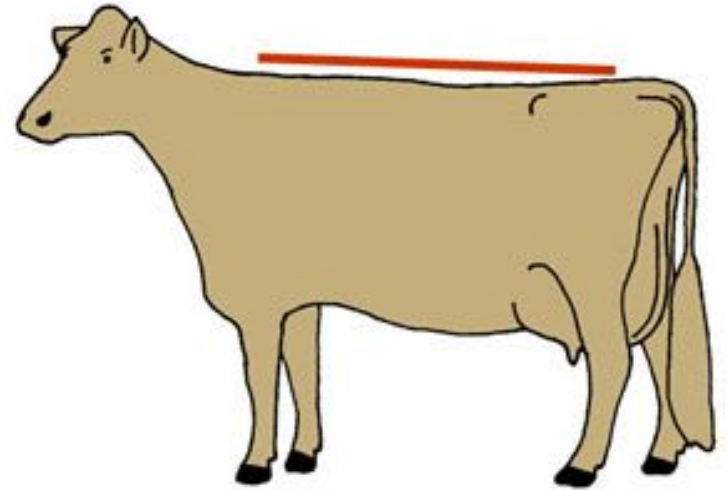
Does Not Excel

- Low set.
- Short from her muzzle to her pins.
- Sway backed.
- Rough at the shoulder.
- Steep sloped from the hooks to the pins.
- Reverse tilted in the rump with the pins being higher than the hooks.
- Narrow in the hooks, thurls, and pins.

Frame - Straightness of Design



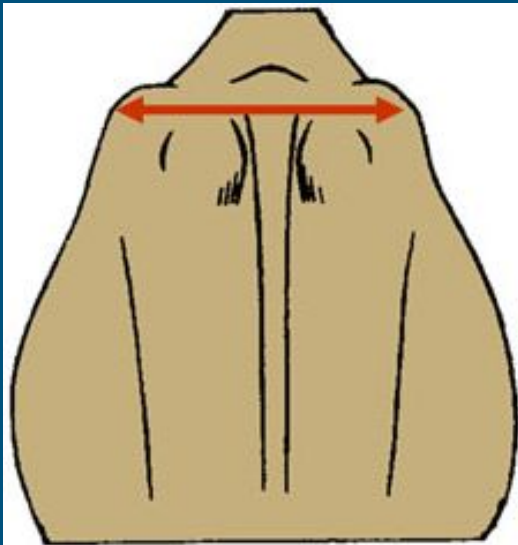
Sway-Backed and
Lacks Balance



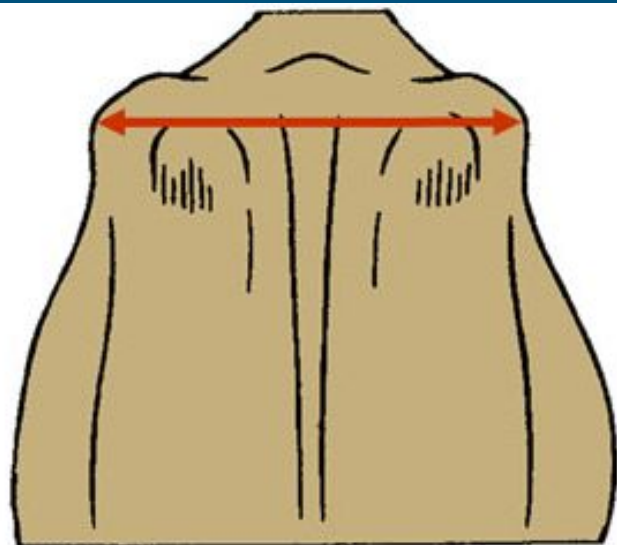
Straight Lines
and Well
Balanced



Frame - Rump Width



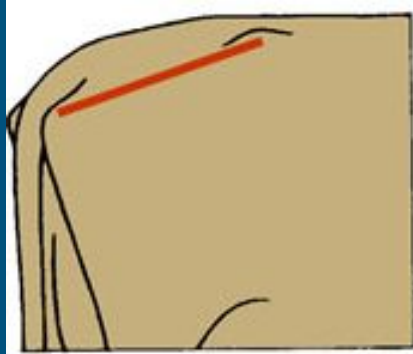
*Narrow Rump (Narrow
in Hooks, Thurls, and
Pins)*



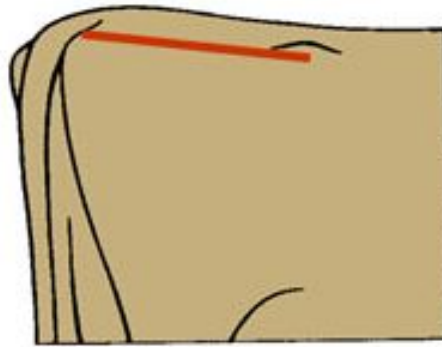
**Very Wide
Rump**



Frame - Rump Slope



Steep Slope from
Hooks to Pins



Pins Higher Than
Hooks (Reverse
Slope)



Nearly Level
Rump



Judge Dairy Cattle

When judging a class of four dairy animals, your assignment is to:

- First, evaluate what is correct and incorrect about the conformation of each animal.
- Second, rank the class based on their overall conformation.
 - Most correct animal goes 1st
 - Second most correct animal goes 2nd
 - Third most correct animal goes 3rd
 - Least correct animal goes 4th

<https://afs.ca.uky.edu/livestock/dairy/judging>