Livestock Judging
For Beginners

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What is Livestock Judging???

Livestock judging is the evaluation of an animal’s characteristics and making a comparison to other animals and the ideal standard of that particular class.

After evaluating each animal individually, a ranking is assigned to that class.

A typical contest class consists of four animals, these animals shall be numbered 1 through 4. Animals that are loose in a pen will have numbers on the animal. Animals in a stanchion or haltered will be number from left to right when viewing them from behind.
The majority of livestock judging competitions will consist of classes from the following:

- breeding and market beef cattle
- breeding and market sheep
- breeding and market hogs
- breeding and market goats

To be successful, a judge must understand the anatomy of each particular animal and being able to apply that to the animals intended function.
Basic Components For Evaluating Livestock

1. Evaluation System & Taking Notes
2. Learn Parts of the Animal
3. Learn Selection Criteria
4. Develop Oral Reasons and Terminology
5. Incorporate Performance Data
6. Understanding Yield and Quality Grades
Evaluating System

1. **Stand Back:** Allow enough room between yourself and the animals so that you can see all animals at one time. This allows you to make better observations concerning the class.

1. **Use Different Angles to Observe:** Try to look at the class from the side, the rear, and the front. You should compare each animal to the others in the class and to the “ideal” animal you have pictured in your mind.

1. **Find the “Big Things”:** The Big things place the class. Always look for and analyze the good and bad characteristics of each animal. Make sure you place the class according to the big things.
Record Your Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal info and ID 1</th>
<th>Animal info and ID 2</th>
<th>Animal info and ID 3</th>
<th>Animal info and ID 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Name/ Location</td>
<td>Placing</td>
<td>Class Name/ Location</td>
<td>Placing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Why does 1st place win - good things
- What is something better about 2nd place over 1st - grant
- Why does 2nd stay 2nd - criticize
- Why does 2nd beat 3rd - good things
- What is something better about 3rd place over 2nd - grant
- Why does 3rd stay 3rd - criticize
- Why does 3rd beat 4th - good things
- What is something better about 4th place over 3rd - grant
- Why does 4th and the class - criticize

Write Your Reasons:
Completing Your Card

Write the Class Name  Ex: Angus Heifers

Write YOUR Contestant Number  Ex: 52A

Write the Placing for the class  Ex: 4132

Place an X in the block next to the Placing Score you selected for the class.
Part of the Animal

Breeding vs. Market Class will determine which body parts are a priority.

For Example: Beef Cattle

**Market Priorities**: Muscle, Correctness of Finish, Structure and Movement, Rib and Feeding Ability, Balance and Eye Appeal

**Breeding Priorities**: Functionality, Growth Performance, Balance and Eye Appeal, Muscle, Femininity/Masculinity
You Be The Judge

Poll Question: Which Boar Has Widest Belt?
Selection Criteria
Market Priorities: Muscle, Correctness of Finish, Structure and Movement, Rib and Feeding Ability, Balance and Eye Appeal

Breeding Priorities: Functionality, Growth Performance, Balance and Eye Appeal, Muscle, Femininity/Masculinity
Market Priorities: Muscle Content, Lean Growth, Skeletal Width and Dimension, Structural Correctness, Balance and Eye Appeal

Breeding Priorities: Functionality (Structural Soundness, Internal Dimension and Condition), Growth Performance, Muscle, Maternal Characteristics
Ideal Breeding Sheep

Ideal Market Animal
**Market Priorities:** Muscle, Correctness of Finish, Growth / Weight, Skeletal Correctness, Balance and Eye Appeal

**Breeding Priorities:** Growth and Performance, Functionality, Balance and Eye Appeal, Muscle
Ideal Meat Goat

- Large framed, well-balanced
- Straight topped
- Head held erect from top of shoulder
- Muscular, thick, long loin
- Trim fronted
- Trim middle
- Deep, wide chest
- Deep, wide chest
- Deep, wide chest
- Correct set of legs
- Long, square rump
- Long across stifle
- Bulging forearm
- Trim, firm finish
- Bulging leg
- Deep, full bulging leg
- Heavy boned
- Legs placed wide apart
Priorities:

- Based wide behind
- Abundance of muscling in hindsaddle
- Heavy muscled leg and loin
- Bulging forearm
- Firm, trim finish is desirable
- Adequate size and scale
- Bigger, longer, heavy-boned
- Structurally sound
- Weight Varies, No “ideal” weight
Legs-Front

- Splayed footed: Knees are “pushed in” and toes are “turned out”
- Pigeon-Toed: Knees are “pushed out” and toes are “turned in” (like a pigeon)
- Correct: Looks like a “column”, feet are squared
Legs-Back

- Same as the front legs.
- Knees “turned out” toes “turned in”-incorrect
- Knees “turned in” toes “turned out” incorrect
- Legs should look fluid from one joint to another
- When walking everything should move freely
You Be The Judge

Poll Question: Which Market Lamb Has The Least Desirable Leg Structure and Muscle Mass?
Oral Reasons
INTRODUCE CLASS:
I placed this class of ________________________________
___-___-___-___.

TOP PAIR:
MAIN REASONS: In my top pair, I used ___ over ___ as it is
__________________ and ___________________.
GRANTS: I will grant you that _____________________.
REINFORCEMENT: However, number ___ is
_______________.

MIDDLE PAIR:
MAIN REASONS: In my middle pair, I used ___ over ___ as it is
__________________ and ___________________.
GRANTS: I will grant you that _____________________.
REINFORCEMENT: However, number ___ is
_______________.

BOTTOM PAIR:
MAIN REASONS: In my bottom pair, I used ___ over ___ as it is
__________________ and ___________________.
GRANTS: I will grant you that _____________________.
REINFORCEMENT: However, number ___ is
_______________.

CONCLUSION:
Once again I placed this class ____-____-____-_____.
Thank you!
Performance Data & Yield / Quality Grades
EPDs: Expected Progeny Differences
Utilizing EPDs can help PREDICT . . .

1. Reproductive Performance & Mothering Ability
2. Measurement of Growth Rate Efficiency of Gain
3. Objective Analysis of Carcass Merit
4. Predictor of the Average Future Performance of the animal’s offspring
5. Used as a warning light to identify potential problems with an animal
6. Not a substitute for evaluating the animals
7. A Higher value is not always better
### Poll Questions:

1. Which Bull has the most desirable (WW) weaning weight EPD?
2. Which Bull has the least desirable (BW) birth weight for heifers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bull No.</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>Actual Birth wt.</th>
<th>Birth Weight</th>
<th>Weaning Weight</th>
<th>Yearling Weight</th>
<th>Milk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2/7/95</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/14/95</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/28/96</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3/4/96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yield & Quality Grade
**USDA Yield Grades** are an indication of cutability or yield of boneless, closely trimmed, retail cuts. The yield grade of a carcass is determined by:

1. External fat
2. Kidney, heart and pelvic fat
3. Ribeye area
4. Hot carcass weight

Remember that yield grades measure the combination of fat and muscle, not just fat.

**Yield Grades** can be determined by a “shortcut method”. USDA yield grades are expressed as a whole number. They range from 1 (lean and heavy muscled) to 5 (fat and light muscled). The fractional part of the yield grade is always dropped.

For example, if a calculated yield grade is 2.8, the final yield grade is 2.

**QUALITY GRADES** are determined by marbling and overall maturity. They predict the palatability of the lean.

There are EIGHT quality grade designations:

1. Prime
2. Choice
3. Select
4. Standard
5. Commercial
6. Utility
7. Cutter
8. Canner.

Prime, Choice, Select and Standard are classified as young beef (maturity level A and B) and must be less than 42 months of age, physiologically.

Commercial, Utility, Cutter and Canner are cow grades from carcasses greater than 42 months of skeletal maturity.

Marbling, or intramuscular fat, is the flecks of fat dispersed within the lean. The USDA grader evaluates marbling within the ribeye muscle that has been cut, or ribbed, between the twelfth and thirteenth ribs.
Quality Grades : BEEF
You Be The Judge

Poll Question:
How Would You Place The Class Of Red Angus Heifers?
Sources

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- Utilizing Livestock Performance Data

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- Mark the Card Judging Classes : By SureChamp

- University of Kentucky
  - http://afs.ca.uky.edu/livestock/judging/White-Face-Market-Lambs#Rear-Views