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**

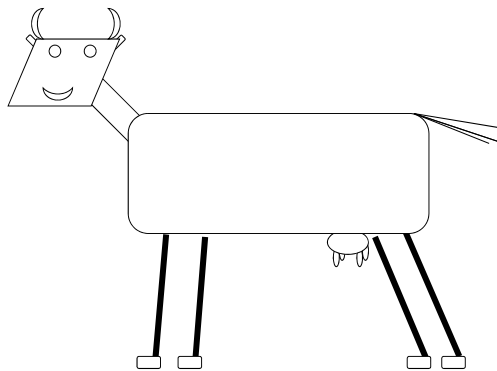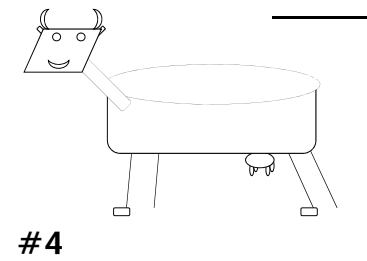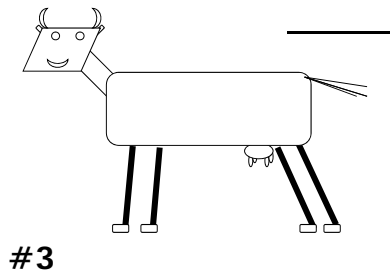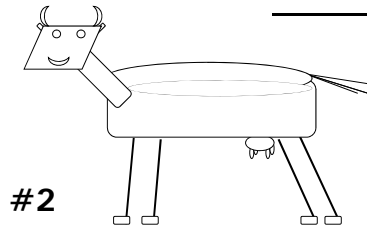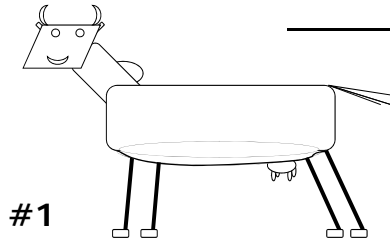# This is an "Ideal" Heifer

- **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

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____
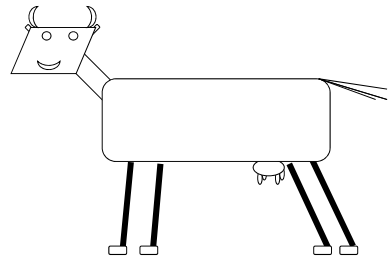
#4 _____

Compare "Ideal" to #1

#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

#2

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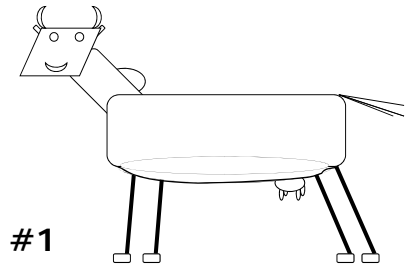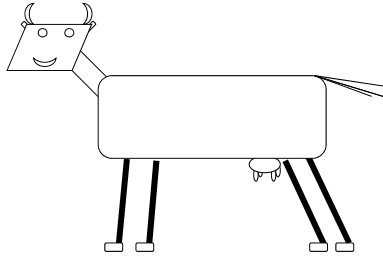- Sound feet and legs

- 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

#3

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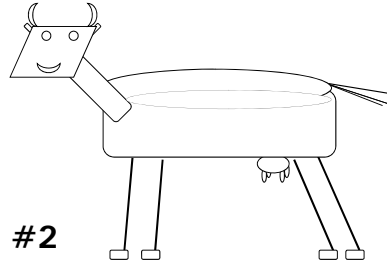- Sound feet and legs

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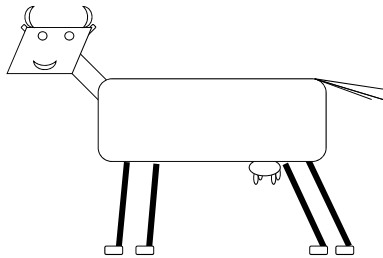- Sound feet and legs

Compare "Ideal" to #4

#4

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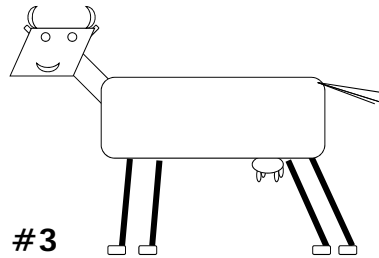- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs

- 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
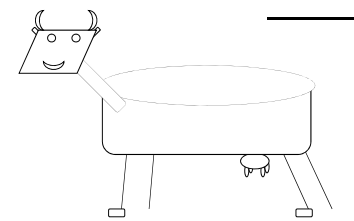
#4

Official Placings
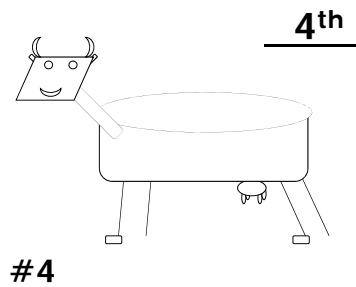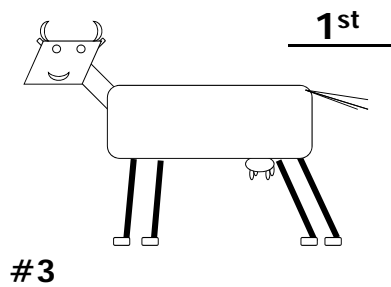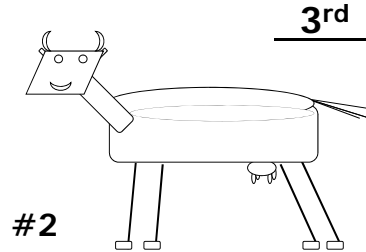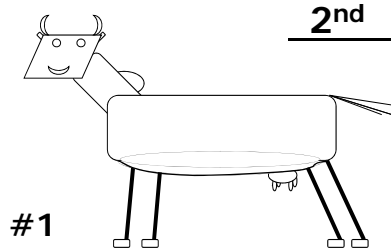
2nd

#1

3rd

#2

1st

#3

4th

#4

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!
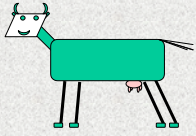
- **Take notes on the class**

- **Learn your reasons**

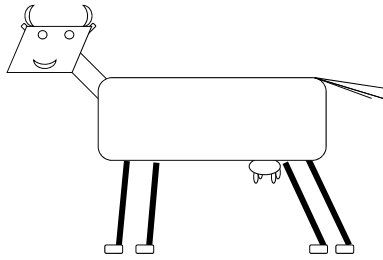- **Present your reasons**

Compare "Ideal" to #1

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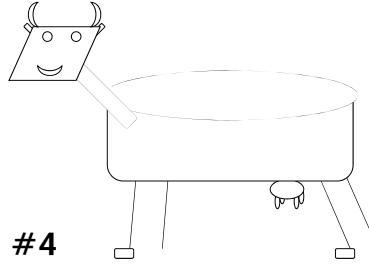- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs

#1
- 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
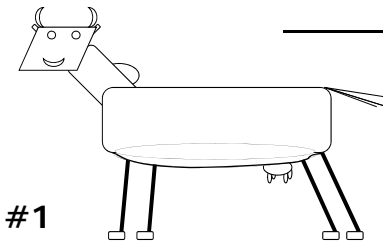- Sound feet and legs
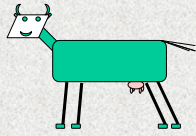
Compare "Ideal" to #2

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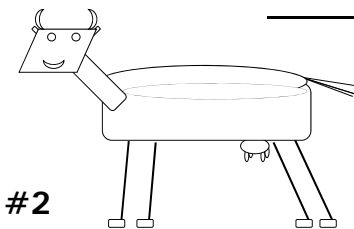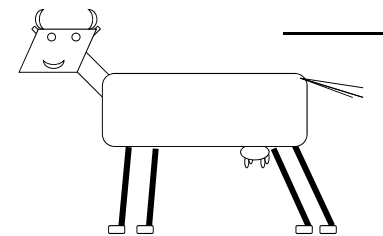- Feminine through head and neck
- Sound feet and legs

#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
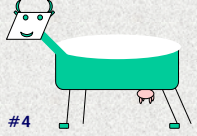
Compare "Ideal" to #3

- 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

#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, tail, 4 legs, 2 feet
- Weak top line
- Longer sided
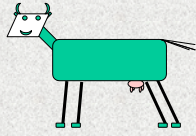- Lightest muscled
- Lacks femininity

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."**
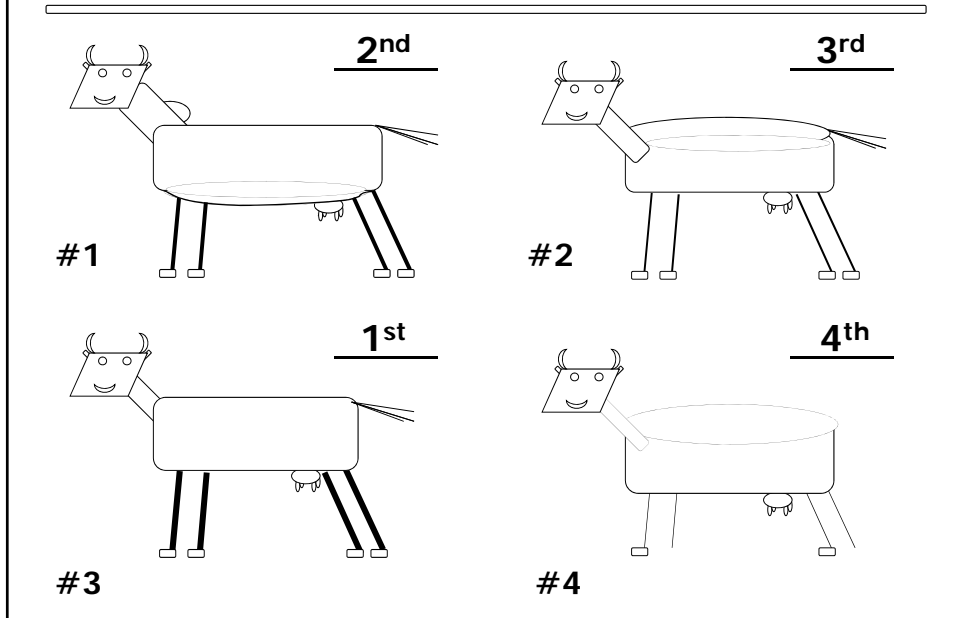
- **Grants are treated the same**

Last Place Criticism

- **This is the last place animal, so she probably is the worst at something**

- **Use <u>est</u> 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

	2nd
#1	

	3rd
#2	

	1st
#3	

	4th
#4	

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 judgers**
  - 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**