Learning to Give Dairy Oral Reasons
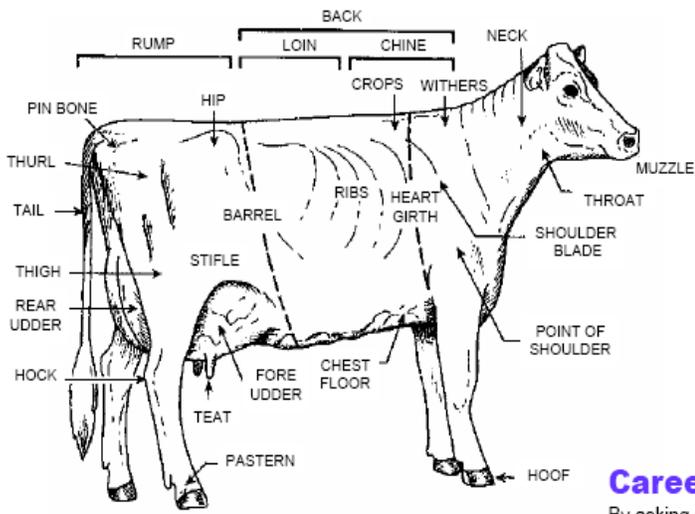## *(Or, Now Why the Heck did I place that animal first!)*

Reasons fluster every beginning dairy judge and can be feared by even seasoned judges. Often coaches expect too much- too soon from the beginning judge. It's hard to answer why you placed an animal in a class without any foundation or outline to help organize how reasons are developed.

Reasons can be divided into a three-step process that will help eliminate some of the anxiety of giving reasons by helping develop a foundation for organizing and communicating why a placing was made. This process will help young judges avoid the fear of giving oral reasons by:
- helping students organize their notes
- limiting the amount of information they try to include in their notes for reasons
- focusing their thoughts on comparative statements. Teaching reasons one-step at a time may never make reasons fun, but they won't be nearly so intimidating.

The first step is to learn the body parts of a cow or a heifer. From the nostril to the switch, it is the basis for the language of the dairyman and essential for giving oral reasons.

The Five Main Traits for Dairy Cows
The whole purpose of giving oral reasons is to explain why one animal is preferred over another. If you narrow down all the reasons why one animal would be selected over another (doesn't matter which breed) then you have five basic reasons why one animal would be preferred. These are, in order of priority:

1. has a more strongly attached *mammary system*
2. is cleaner and more angular, showing more *dairy character*
3. has a stronger *leg* with a more correct set to the rear *leg*
4. is taller and longer in her *frame*
5. shows more *body capacity* and *dairy strength*

Go back and look at these traits again- they are the five major traits on the PDCA Dairy Cow Unified Score Card.

The Four Main Traits for Dairy Heifers
1. is taller and longer in her *frame*
2. has a stronger *leg* with a more correct set to the rear *leg*
3. is cleaner and more angular, showing more *dairy character*
4. shows more *capacity* and *dairy strength*

Go back and look at these traits again- they are the four major traits on the PDCA Dairy Heifer Unified Score Card.

Notice that these are independent of each other. When someone selects an animal, it's almost always attributed to one or more of these major reasons. Each trait is comparative to the same trait on another animal, never descriptive on an individual animal.

Reasons Compare Pairs

A set of reasons are usually given about a class of four animals of approximately the same age. In a class of four there are three (3) pairs:

- First over second
- Second over third
- Third over fourth

Always Positive Comparative Terms

Taller, longer, straighter, deeper, more, less (leg set)

Details Support Main Comparisons

Main Trait Comparison 1 - *"has a more strongly attached mammary system"*

Details that prove the comparison as shown by:

- Higher, wider rear udder attachment
- More capacious rear udder
- More fullness to her udder when viewed from behind
- More symmetrical rear udder
- More fullness and capacity at the bottom of the rear udder
- More uniform width of the rear udder
- Carries her udder higher above her hocks
- Longer, smoother fore udder attachment
- Fore udder blended more smoothly and naturally into the body wall
- Deeper median suspensory ligament
- Stronger center support in the udder
- More cleft in the udder with a more prominent crease
- More defined seam
- More clearly defined udder cleft/ median
- And has the teats more squarely placed under the quarters of the udder
- More veining on the side of the udder

Main Trait Comparison 2 - *"is cleaner and more angular, showing more dairy character"*

Details that prove the comparison as shown by:

- A longer, leaner neck
- A more neatly chiseled withers and shoulder
- Is more prominent about the hooks and pins
- Is leaner and more angular in the thighs
- Is more open and angular about the ribs with a more definite sweep to the rear of the barrel
- Cleaner across the topline
- Cleaner and more refined in the head and neck
- Carrying less flesh
- Shows more definition from hooks to pins
- More open-ribbed

Main Trait Comparison 3 - *"has a stronger leg with a more correct set"*

Details that prove the comparison as shown by"

- A more correct set to the hock when viewed from the side
- Straighter between the hocks when viewed from the rear
- A freer gait that steps out well and more completely covers her track
- A stronger, more erect pastern
- A steeper hoof angle
- A hoof that keeps the toes closer together
- More correct shape to the foot
- Cleaner and flatter bone
- Cleaner at the hock
- Front legs or rear legs set more squarely beneath her body

Main Trait Comparison 4 – *"is taller and longer in her frame"*

Details that prove the comparison- As shown by:

- Is taller at the wither and proportional to the hooks
- Is longer between the pins and hooks
- Has thurls wider and more centrally placed between the pins and hooks
- Higher and wider in the thurls
- Shoulders blending more smoothly into her body
- Stronger, straighter, smoother back
- Longer from head to pins
- More nearly level from chine to loin
- Stronger in the chine
- More level topline
- More functionally correct slope from hooks to pins
- Wider in the pins (or thurls)
- Straighter and smoother over her topline

Main Trait Comparison 5 – *"shows more body capacity and dairy strength"*

Details that prove the comparison as shown by:

- Longer and deeper barrel with more spring of rib and a more definite sweep of the ribs to the rear of the barrel
- Fuller fore flank
- Wider chest floor with more well sprung fore ribs blending more smoothly into the shoulder
- Deeper in heart and barrel
- Deeper in the chest or chest floor
- Deeper bodied
- Greater circumference in the heart girth

Grants - Not every trait is superior in the top animal in each pair comparison, almost always you will need to grant some trait of the second animal that is superior to the higher placing animal in the pair- this is called granting back.

- Place the grant after all the detail that support the main comparisons in the placing of the pair
- Phrase the grant unapologetically Example: *"While two has the stronger leg with a more correct set to the hock, I recognize that three has less width between the toes."*
- Giving grants are important; however, if there are none, then don't give any

Reason Style
1. The number one rule in giving reasons is DON'T LIE!
2. The number two rule is don't forget rule number one!

Posture
- Stand squarely on both feet, facing the reason-taker directly
- Speak in a strong voice
- Clasp your hand behind your back with your notes in your right hand- Don't talk with your hands
- Smile and be pleasant

Begin your Reasons
- begin with "good morning" or "good afternoon" Even if you know the reason-taker do not address him/her by their first name.
- Look the official in the eye. Convince them your placing is correct.
- Your reasons should begin with "I place this class of …;" "After closely analyzing this class of…I decided upon the placing of…," "After evaluating this class of … I placed them," or "In a close placing I placed this class of…"
- Emphasize the most important points first.
- Your ending statement should be "For these reasons I placed this class…"

Develop your reason finesse
- If the class breaks down into two obvious pairs, mention that in your opening statement
- Mention if you found the class to have an easy top (bottom) animal
- If there is a specific identifier for an animal in the class use it.
  - Example- the black cow, the white cow, the cow with horns, the heifer with the extra teat, the heifer with a false switch; One, the best uddered cow in the class; Three, the tallest heifer in the class, etc.
- Vary detail lines.
  - Example- As shown by, As evidenced by, That is supported by
- Vary grant lines.
  - Example- I grant; I concede; Yes, I recognize that; I realize; I admit; Yes, I admit; However, one has; Three has an advantage in
- Do not say: I think, I feel or I remember.
  - Example- Three is taller at the withers.
- Are you sure on a major point, then convey that to the reason-taker.
  - Example- In a point that cannot be argued, three is taller at the withers.
- Vary your active verbs: She presents; She exhibits; She shows; She displays.
- Use qualifying statements to emphasize specific points of advantage.
  - Example- Two is smoother in fore udder attachment, particularly when viewed from the right side.
- Include an opening statement describing the class.
- Oral reasons are to be presented to the judge without the use of any notes.

How To Use the 4-H Judging Card

PLACING CARD

Class —————————

4-H JUDGING CONTEST

Placing Score

Contestant No. ————
C0051 (6/94)

1234	
1243	
1324	
1342	
1423	
1432	
2134	
2143	
2314	
2341	
2413	
2431	
3124	
3142	
3214	
3241	
3412	
3421	
4123	
4132	
4213	
4231	
4312	
4321	

← **If your placing is 1-2-3-4, mark here**

← **If your placing is 2-1-3-4, mark here**

← **If your placing is 3-1-2-4, mark here**

← **If your placing is 4-1-2-3, mark here**

Before You hand in your card, mark in:
- **-The class name**
- **-Your name**
- **-Your contestant number**
- **-The class placing**

Dairy Cattle Judging Reasons Note Card for Cows

Udder ___ ___ ___
Dairy Character ___ ___ ___
Frame ___ ___ ___
Feet & Legs ___ ___ ___
Body Capacity ___ ___ ___
Placing ___ ___ ___

Name _____
___ ___ ___ ___ is my placing for this class of
_____

1. a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.

   ___ places over ___ because of her decided advantage in:
   1.
   she is also:
   2.
   and:
   3.
   I admit that ___ is:
   1.

2. a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.

   Next, I place ___ over ___ because of her definite advantage in:
   1.
   in addition, she is:
   2.
   further, ___ is:
   3.
   However, ___ has:
   1.

3. a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.

   Finally, ___ places over ___ primarily because:
   1.
   she is also:
   2.
   more over, ___ is:
   3.
   I realize that ___ is:
   1.

4. a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.

   but, I'm placing ___ last because:
   1.
   and:
   2.
   to place any higher in this class.

   These are my reasons for placing this class of
   _____, ___ ___ ___ ___

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