

Livestock Judging Guide



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Module 3: Beef Cattle



Judging Market Steers

Judging Market Steers



- ❧ Ideal Market Steer:
 - ❧ Weighs 1,100 to 1,250 lbs.
 - ❧ Adequate size & scale:
 - ❧ To carry this weight
 - ❧ Minimum finish
 - ❧ Enough finish to:
 - ❧ Produce high quality carcass
 - ❧ Choice grade
 - ❧ Increase carcass cutability



Judging Market Steers



☞ Ideal Market Steer:

☞ Heavy muscling is desired in:

☞ High-priced cuts

☞ Rib

☞ Loin

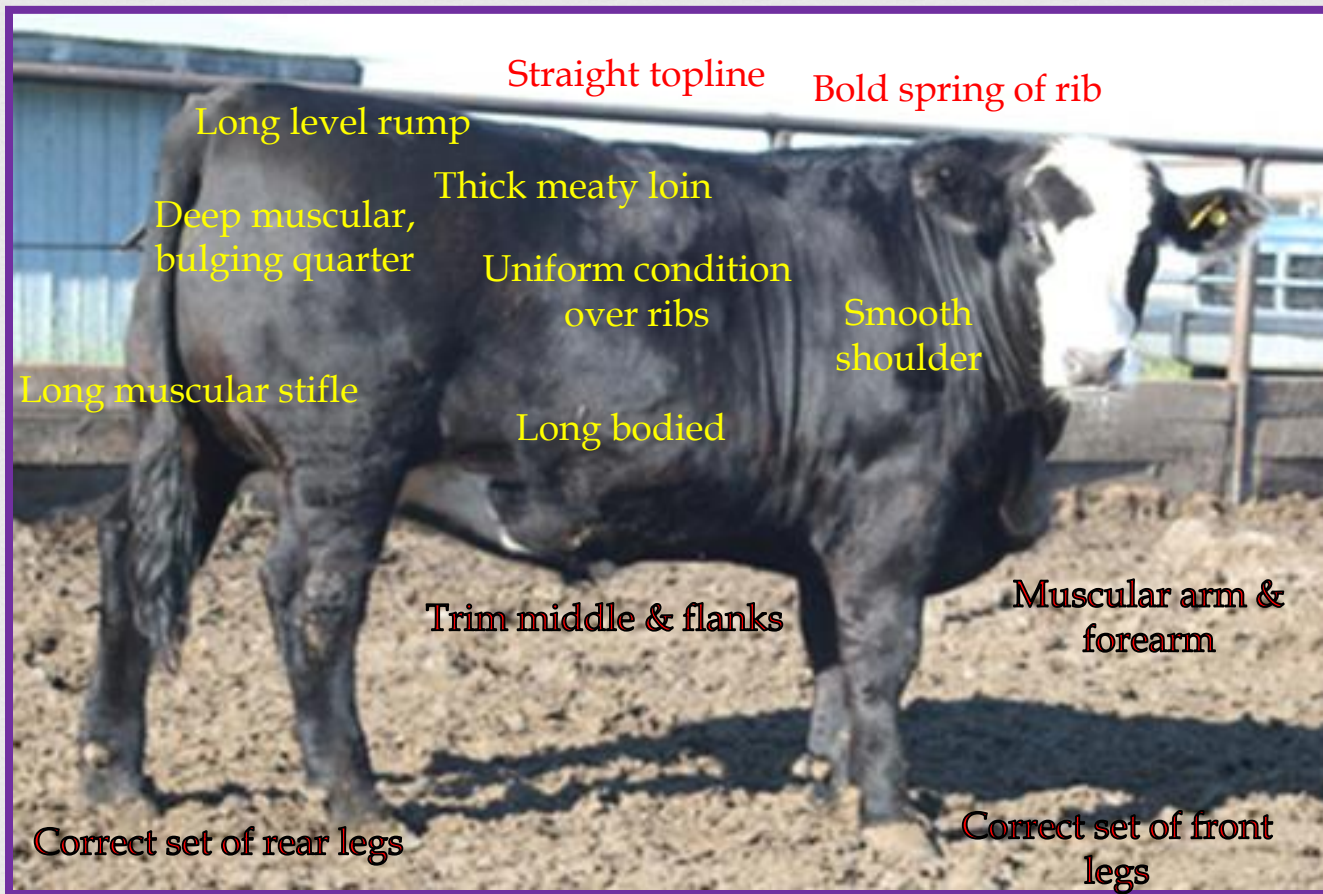
☞ Round

☞ Relatively trim middle

☞ Clean fronted



Ideal Market Steer



Straight topline

Bold spring of rib

Long level rump

Thick meaty loin

Deep muscular,
bulging quarter

Uniform condition
over ribs

Smooth
shoulder

Long muscular stifle

Long bodied

Trim middle & flanks

Muscular arm &
forearm

Correct set of rear legs

Correct set of front
legs

Judging Market Steers



- ❧ Steps to Judging Market Steers
 - ❧ Always start at the ground & work up
 - ❧ Then from rear & work forward
 - ❧ Rank animals based on traits of importance
 - ❧ Evaluate most important traits first
 - ❧ Eliminate any easy placings first
 - ❧ Place remaining class based on the volume of important traits

Judging Market Steers



☞ Ranking of Traits for Market Steers:

- ☞ Degree of muscling
- ☞ Degree of Finish (fat cover)
- ☞ Growth capacity
- ☞ Soundness and structural correctness
- ☞ Balance
- ☞ Frame size

☞ Steers should be:

- ☞ Extra thick, Medium framed & Adequately finished

Judging Market Steers



- œ Evaluating Degree of Muscling
 - œ Thickness through center of rear quarter
 - œ Base Width (Standing & Walking)
 - œ Muscle expression over the top
 - œ “Butterfly” shape down the topline
 - œ Crease down the backbone

Judging Market Steers



Thin Muscle



Narrow Base

Average Muscle



Average Base

Thick Muscle



Wide Base

Super Thick



Super Wide

Judging Market Steers



∞ Evaluating Degree of Finish

∞ Goal of Choice grade

∞ Requires enough external fat to achieve adequate intramuscular fat or marbling

∞ Excessive fat:

∞ Yield grade of 4 or 5

∞ Discounted prices

∞ Ideal level of exterior fat is 0.4 to 0.6 inches

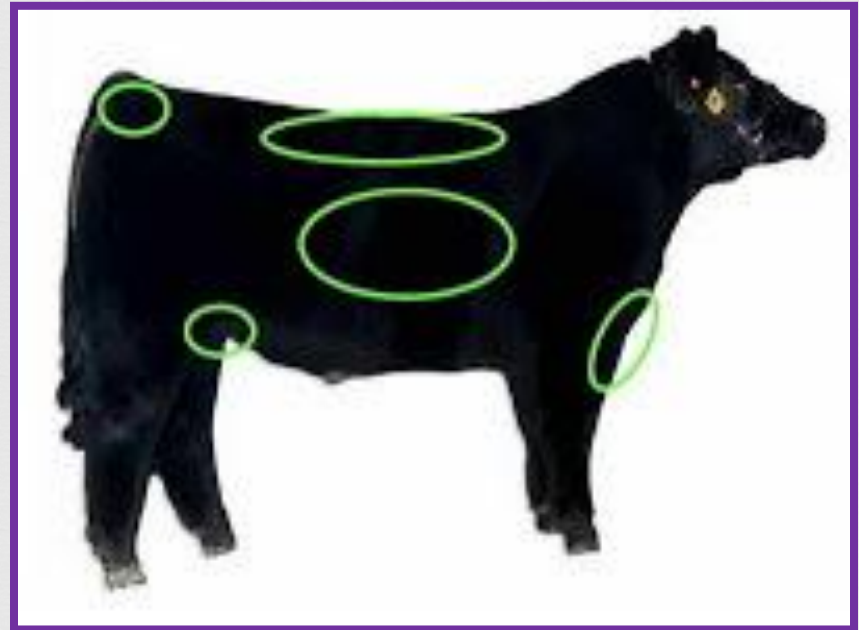
Judging Market Steers



∞ Evaluating Degree of Finish

∞ Areas to evaluate degree of finish:

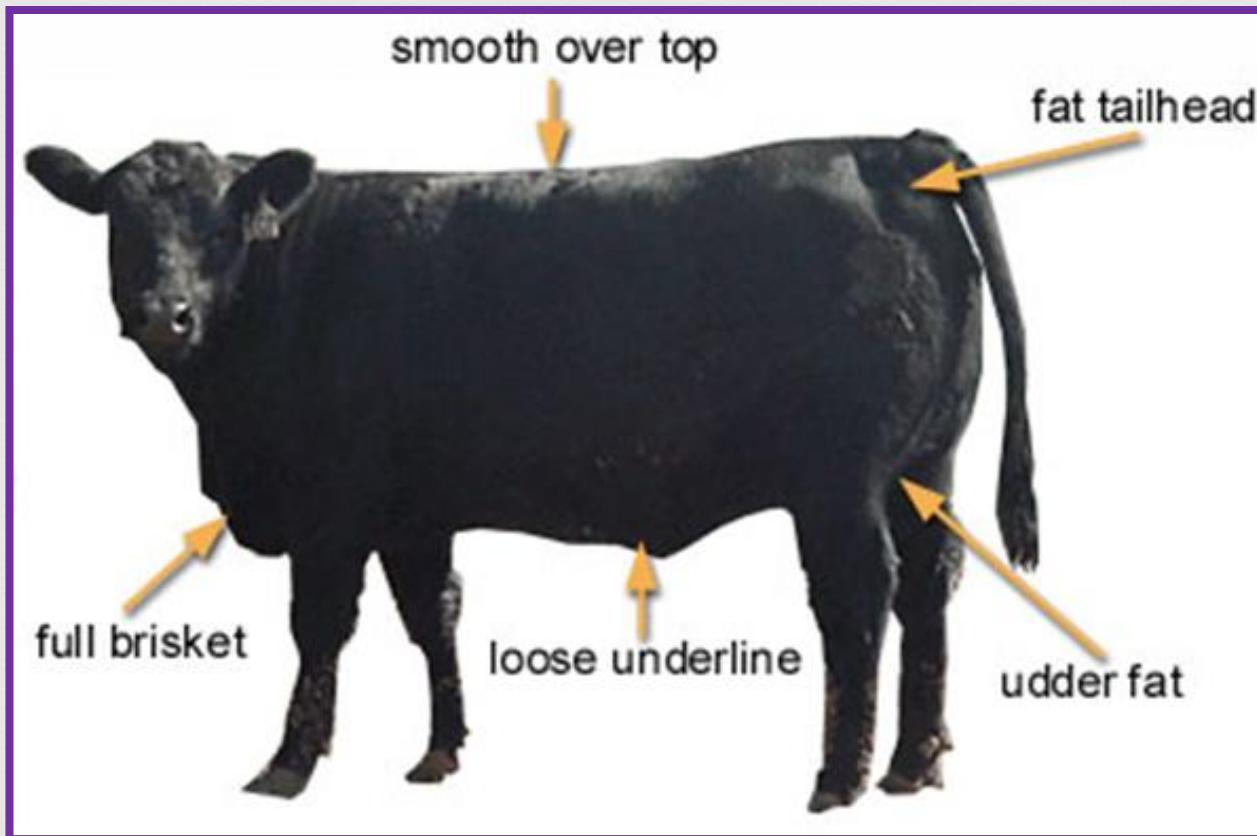
- ∞ Top line
- ∞ Underline
- ∞ Body depth
- ∞ Brisket
- ∞ Tailhead
- ∞ Cod or udder area
- ∞ Shoulder
- ∞ Over the ribs



Judging Market Steers



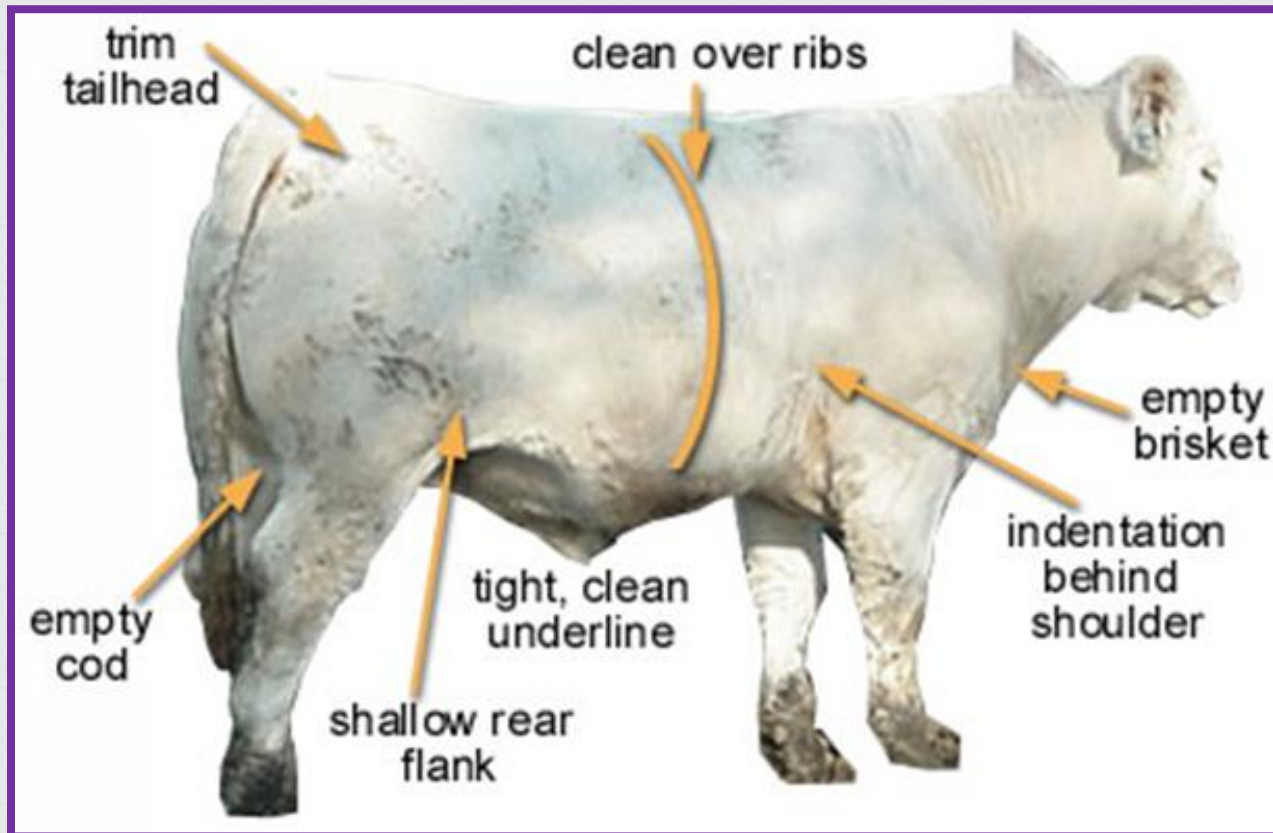
Too Fat



Judging Market Steers



Not Enough Fat



Judging Market Steers



Correct Finish



Full brisket indicates
correct amount of finish

Not Enough Finish



Empty brisket indicates
lack of finish

Judging Market Steers



Correct Finish



Cod fill indicates correct amount of finish

Excess Finish



Fat around tailhead indicates too much finish

Judging Market Steers



☞ Evaluating Growth Capacity

☞ Steers are sold by the pound

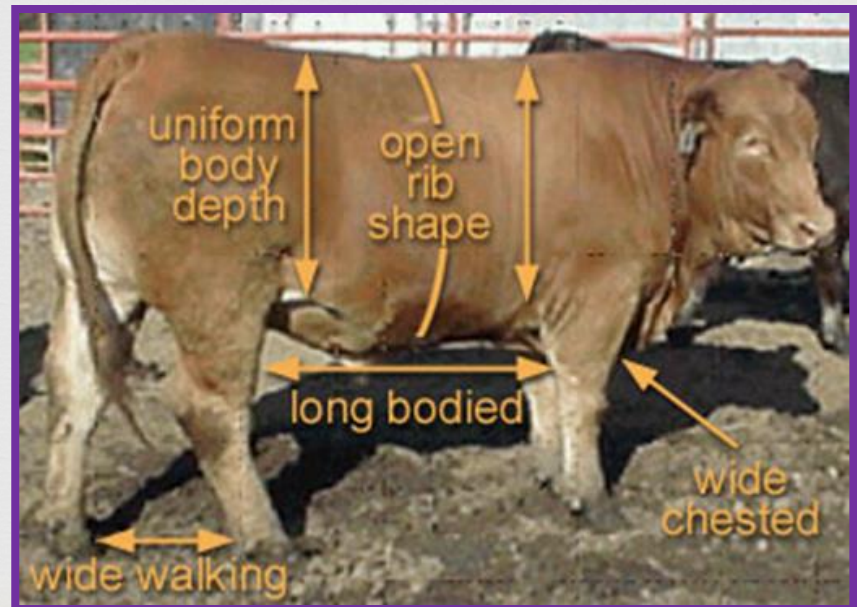
☞ Important to maximize feeding capacity

☞ Look for good:

☞ Body Width

☞ Body Depth

☞ Body length



Judging Market Steers



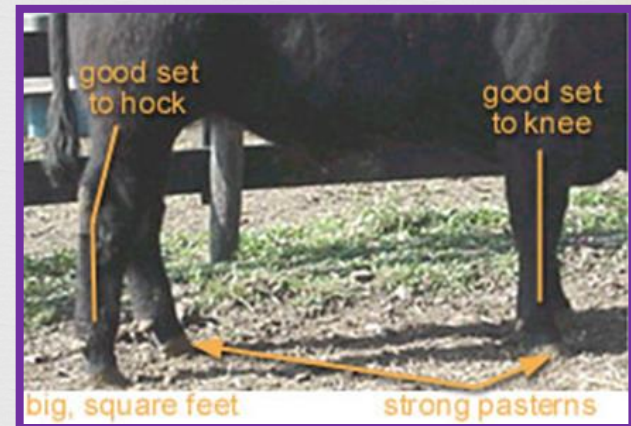
❧ Evaluating Soundness & Structural Correctness

❧ Lack of soundness:

- ❧ Limits trips to feed & water
- ❧ Decreases growth

❧ Sound & structurally correct steers will have:

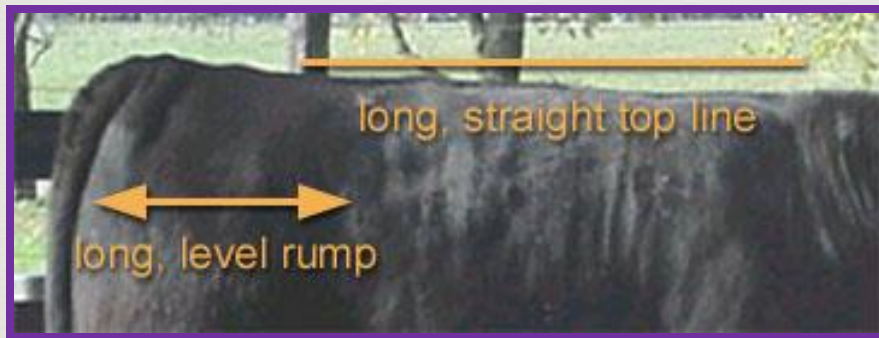
- ❧ Flexible, clean & flat joints
- ❧ Long powerful strides
- ❧ Strong pasterns
- ❧ Good set to hocks & knees
- ❧ Big feet that sit flatly on the ground



Judging Market Steers

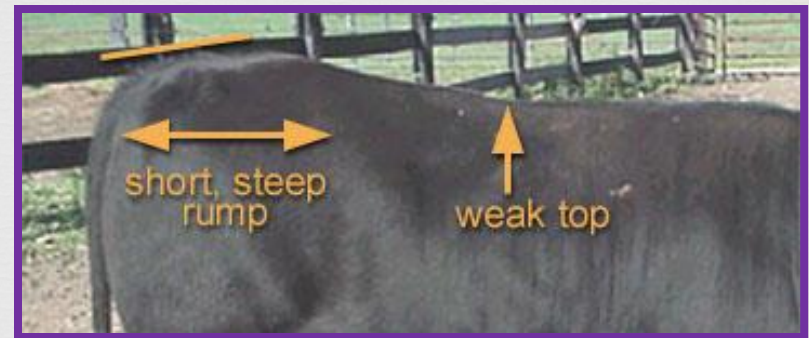


Correct Structure



Long and straight top line, with
a long and level rump

Poor Structure



Weak topped, with a short and
steep rump

Judging Market Steers



∞ Evaluating Balance

∞ Balance is having correct portions of:

∞ Width

∞ Depth

∞ Length

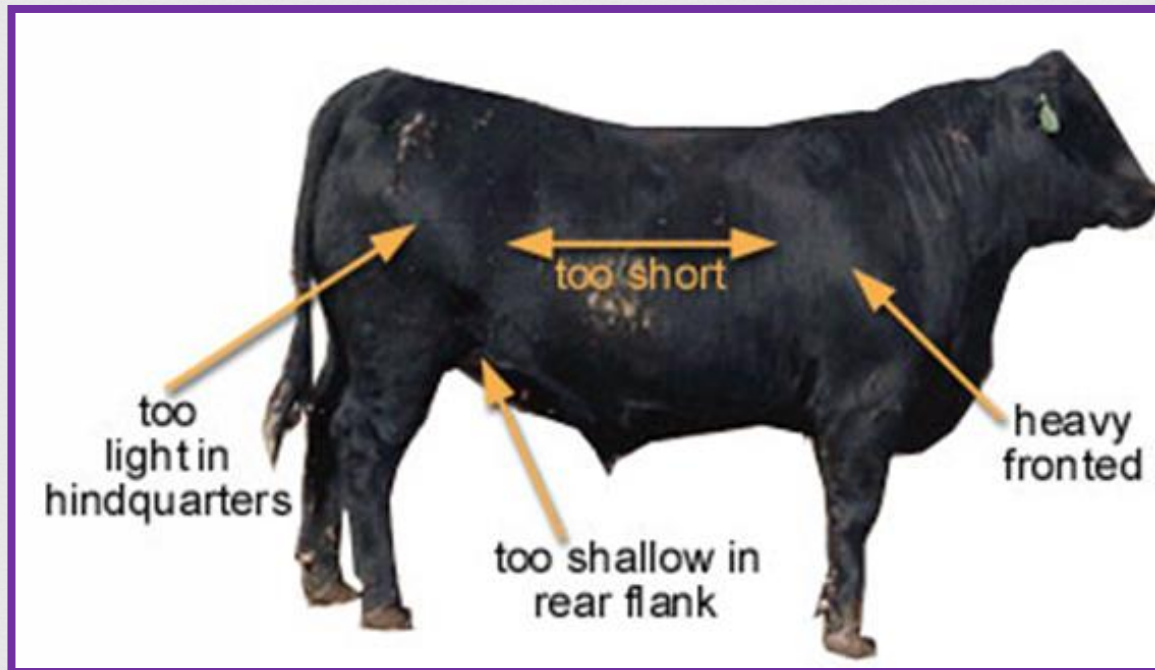
∞ Equal proportions that blend together



Judging Market Steers



Poorly Balanced



Test Your Skills



Place this Class of Market Steers



Official Placing



Official Placing: 2 - 4 - 3 - 1

Cuts: 3 - 5 - 6

1st



2nd



3rd



4th

