

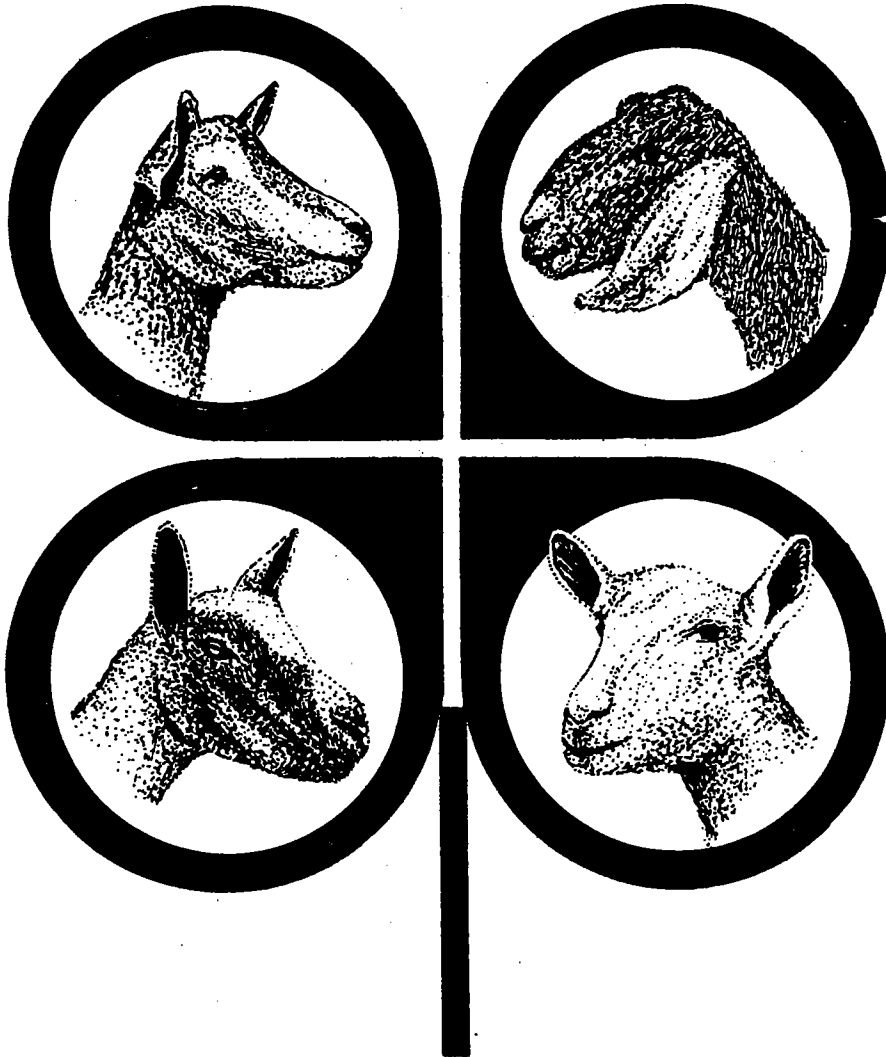
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4-H 321

4-H Dairy Goat Judging

by

Dr. Barney Harris, Jr., Extension Dairyman and
Sarah Vernlund, Graduate Student, Dairy Science Department



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4-H DAIRY GOAT JUDGING

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Do you know what makes one dairy goat better than another one? Of course, giving a good supply of milk over a long period of time is the important thing. But did you know that you can tell just by looking whether a doe is likely to be a good milker or not? You can if you know what to look for.

Judging dairy goats is not hard to learn, and it can be a valuable and rewarding experience. You can successfully compete in 4-H judging contests, wisely choose an animal for a 4-H project, or decide which animals to keep to improve a dairy herd. While you are learning, you do have to stick with it and practice if you're going to be a good judge.

Conformation and *Dairy Character* are words that are often used in talking about dairy goats. Conformation means the shape of an animal's body. Dairy character means the goat's ability to convert feed to milk rather than to muscle or fat like a meat animal. To tell if an animal has good conformation and dairy character you first have to learn the parts of the goat and how the best possible goat would look. Then you can develop the ability to pick out faults and decide how serious the faults are likely to be in reducing the goat's milk production.

For instance, a goat with a small udder probably will not produce as much milk as one with a larger udder. On the other hand, a goat with a large, but floppy and loose-hanging udder is more likely to injure herself. This, of course, would harm her milk production in the long run.

The diagram showing the parts of the goat and the American Dairy Goat Association's Dairy Goat Score Card on pages 2 and 3 are given to help you in learning to be a good judge of dairy goats. Study the diagram and then have someone help you to test yourself on how well you have learned the parts of the goat. You can do this by having someone point to the numbered parts, asking you to call out the name of each part. The Score Card may seem complicated at first, but each item on it describes what characteristics each part should have in a goat with good conformation. The following explanation should help you to understand the score card and learn what to look for in judging dairy goats.

Ideal Type

The structure of a goat's bones and other body parts make up the goat's physical appearance

which is called **type**. To be a good judge you must have a mental picture of the ideal type while you compare two animals. The score card tells you which characteristics are more important than others in making comparisons between two animals. For example, the characteristics of the mammary system (milk producing structures) alone count 30 out of the 100 points, as much as the general appearance of the entire animal.

The following explanations and illustrations should help you to understand the score card and the reasons for the items it contains.

1. General Appearance - 30 points

This is the overall attractiveness and beauty of the animal. It is shown by **correct** body structure and carriage. The score card describes the appearance of an ideal doe as an "attractive individual revealing vigor; femininity with a harmonious blending and correlation of parts; impressive style and attractive carriage, graceful walk." This means that the doe should have a healthy, alert, well-balanced, typically female look to her and carry herself in a smooth, proud-looking manner. An awkwardly put together goat with a lumbering gait or one who shuffles along not paying attention to where she is going would be penalized under this description.

The category of General Appearance is broken down into four parts: breed characteristics, head, shoulder blades and topline, legs and feet.

Breed Characteristics

This is the only part of the score card that is based purely on the characteristics considered beautiful for each individual breed. These include color, minimum height and weight requirements, shape of the bridge of the nose (profile), and shape and size of the ears. Here is a summary of the desired breed characteristics for the five main breeds of dairy goats.

Alpine - This breed is further broken down into the French Alpine, Swiss Alpine, and Rock Alpine. The French Alpine and Rock Alpine may be any color except solid white or the typical Toggenburg color pattern described below. The Swiss Alpine is brown with black markings. All Alpines have erect ears, and they may have either a straight or a dished face profile.

ADGA DAIRY GOAT SCORE CARD

(Ideals of type and breed characteristics
must be considered in using this card.)
Based on Order of Observation

<p>1. GENERAL APPEARANCE</p> <p>Attractive individuality revealing vigor; femininity with a harmonious blending and correlation of parts; impressive style and attractive carriage; graceful walk.</p> <p>Breed Characteristics 10</p> <p>Head — medium in length, clean-cut; broad muzzle with large, open nostrils; lean, strong jaw; full, bright eyes; forehead broad between the eyes; ears medium size, alertly carried (except Nubians).</p> <p>Shoulder Blades — set smoothly against the chest and withers, forming neat junction with the body.</p> <p>Back — strong and appearing straight with vertebrae well-defined.</p> <p>Loin — broad, strong and nearly level.</p> <p>Rump — long, wide and nearly level. 8</p> <p>Hips — wide, level with back.</p> <p>Thurls — wide apart.</p> <p>Pin bones — wide apart, lower than hips, well-defined.</p> <p>Tail head — slightly above and neatly set between pin bones.</p> <p>Tail — symmetrical with body.</p> <p>Legs — wide apart, squarely set, clean-cut and strong with forelegs straight.</p> <p>Hind legs — nearly perpendicular from hock to pastern. When viewed from behind, legs wide apart and nearly straight. Bone flat and flinty; tendons well-defined. Pasterns of medium length, strong and springy. Hocks cleanly moulded.</p> <p>Feet — short and straight, with deep heel and level sole.</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>2. DAIRY CHARACTER</p> <p>Animation, angularity, general openness and freedom from excess tissue, giving due regard to period of lactation.</p> <p>Neck — long and lean, blending smoothly into shoulders and brisket, clean-cut throat. 20</p> <p>Withers — well-defined and wedge-shaped with the dorsal process of the vertebrae rising slightly above the shoulder blades.</p> <p>Ribs — wide apart; rib bone wide, flat and long.</p> <p>Flank — deep, arched and refined.</p> <p>Thighs — incurving to flat from the side; apart when viewed from the rear, providing sufficient room for the udder and its attachments.</p> <p>Skin — fine textured, loose and pliable. Hair fine.</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>3. BODY CAPACITY</p> <p>Relatively large in proportion to the size of the animal, providing ample digestive capacity, strength and vigor. 12</p> <p>Barrel — deep, strongly supported; ribs wide apart and well sprung; depth and width tending to increase toward rear of barrel.</p> <p>Heart girth — large, resulting from long, well sprung foreribs; wide chest floor between the front legs, and fullness at the point of elbow. 8</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>4. MAMMARY SYSTEM</p> <p>A capacious, strongly attached, well carried udder of good quality, indicating heavy production and a long period of usefulness.</p> <p>Udder 10</p> <p>Capacity and Shape — long, wide and capacious; extended well forward; strongly attached.</p> <p>Rear attachment — high and wide. Halves evenly balanced and symmetrical. 5</p> <p>Fore attachment — carried well forward, tightly attached without pocket, blending smoothly into body. 4</p> <p>Texture — soft, pliable, elastic; free of scar tissue; well collapsed after milking. 5</p> <p>Teats — uniform, of convenient length and size, cylindrical in shape, free from obstructions, well apart, squarely and properly placed, easy to milk. 4</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>TOTAL</p>	<p>100</p>

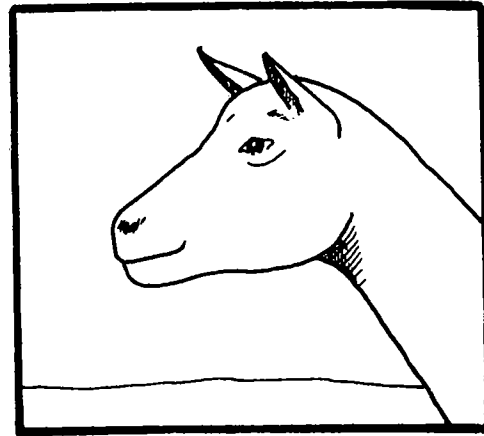
La Mancha - This goat is distinguished by its unusual ears which are very short. Some of them appear to have no ears at all, but of course the inner parts are there and they can hear perfectly well. This almost invisible ear is called a gopher ear and is required on La Mancha bucks. Does may either have the gopher ear or a short ear that turns up or down at the tip called an elf ear. The La Mancha may be any color and may have a straight or a dished face profile.

Nubian - This goat has long, drooping bell-shaped ears and an arched bridge of the nose called a Roman nose. They may be any color or combination of colors.

Saanen - This goat is always white or cream colored, has erect ears and a straight or dished face profile. Any dark hair is undesirable and is penalized in the show ring.

Toggenburg - This goat can be any shade of brown from light fawn to dark chocolate. It has white markings which include white ears with brown spots in the middle, two white stripes down the face from above the eye to the muzzle, and white on the legs and rump. Other white spots on the body are considered undesirable and are penalized in the show ring. The ears are erect and the face profile straight or dished.

- shows more breed character about the head especially in arch (Nubian only) or straightness (all other breeds) of nose.



A desirable head showing a strong jaw, full nostrils and bright eyes.



A head lacking strength and breed character with a weak jaw, pinched nostrils and dull eyes.

Head

The head is often thought to indicate what the rest of the body is like. It should be clean-cut with a strong jaw, wide muzzle, large nostrils and an alert look in the eyes. A good head is necessary to take in and chew the large amounts of food needed for high milk production.

Terms to describe the head and the breed characteristics

- broader muzzle
- brighter eyes
- stronger jaw
- fuller nostrils
- shows more desirable breed character because of color

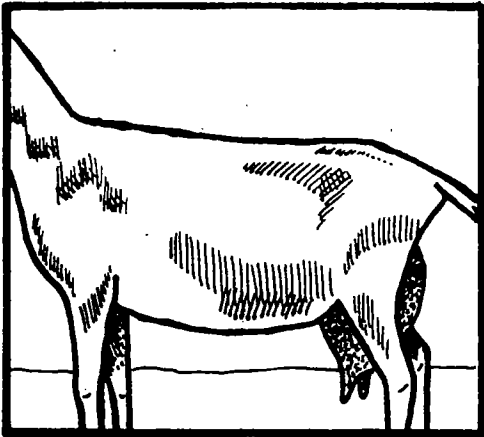
Shoulder Blades and Topline

The shoulder blades should lie close against the chest wall and be smoothly blended into the withers. The entire topline is from the withers to the tail. The back, which includes the chine and loin, should be strong, broad and nearly level with well-defined vertebrae. The rump (from hips to pin bones) should be long and wide with a gentle slope to the tail. Levelness and width is desirable from hip to hip and from thurl to thurl.

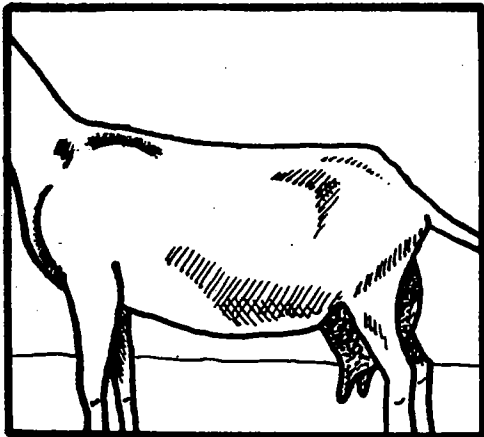
Terms to describe the shoulder blades and topline

- smoother blending of shoulder blades against the chest wall
- smoother blending of shoulder blades into the withers

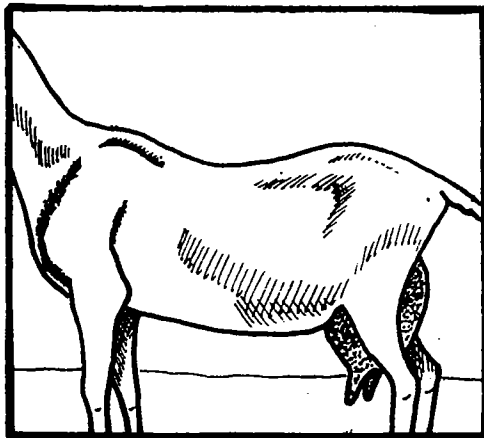
- sharper in the withers
- stronger and straighter in the topline, especially in the chine (or loin, or rump if that is the case)
- wide in the loin
- more nearly level from hips to pins
- stronger in the rump
- wider in the rump
- more nearly level from thurl to thurl



An excellent strong and straight topline. Smoothly blended shoulder.



Short steep rump. Loose shoulders.



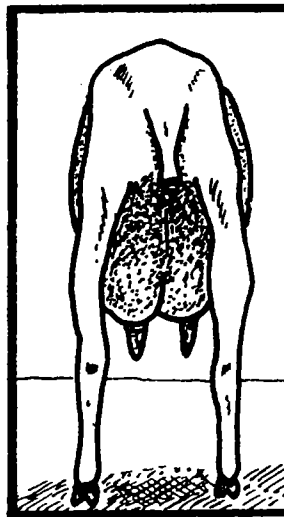
Weak chine. Winged shoulder.

Legs and Feet

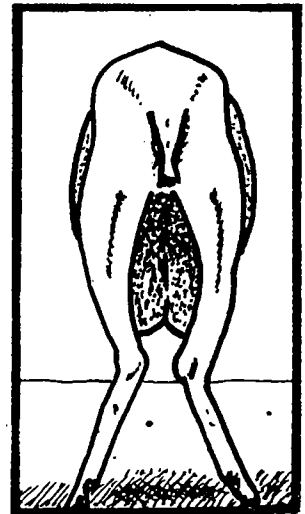
Good legs and feet are very important for a productive dairy goat. She must be able to move around easily to get food and to be milked. The legs should be squarely set, wide apart and straight when seen from the front or rear. When viewed from the side, there should be a proper amount of "set" or angle to the leg joints. The hind leg that is too straight or one that has too much of a curve will not be straight up and down from hock to pastern when the leg is squarely under the animal. The knees and hocks should be free from puffy or swollen areas. Strong, springy pasterns and a short, square hoof with the two halves of the hoof spaced closely are also desirable.

Terms to describe legs and feet

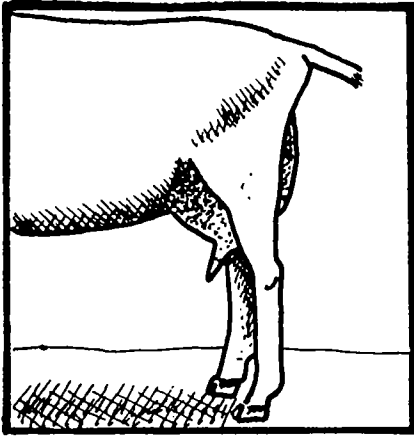
- stronger and straighter in forelegs
- wider in forelegs
- more desirable shape of foot
- more desirable rear leg set when viewed from rear (or side)
- more width between hocks
- more width in escutcheon area
- more cleanly molded hocks
- walks more gracefully
- walks more powerfully
- walks more easily



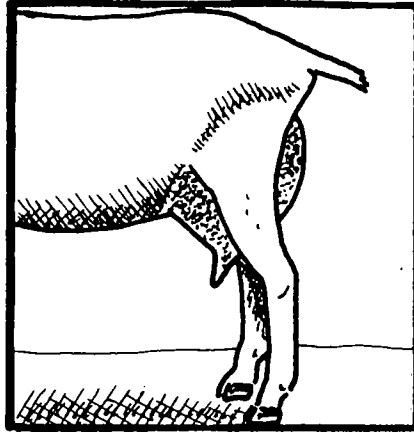
Excellent straight, wide and squarely set hindlegs.



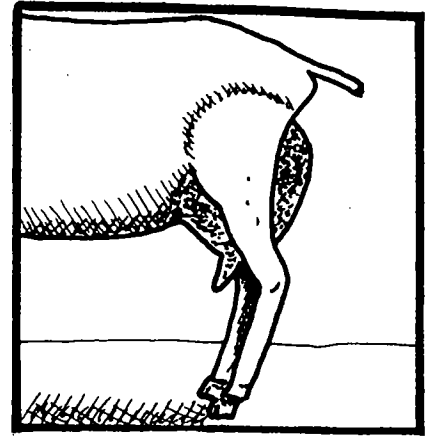
Weak hindlegs. Close at hocks, leaving insufficient room for the udder.



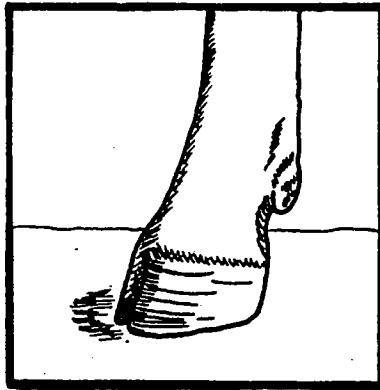
Too straight - post legged.



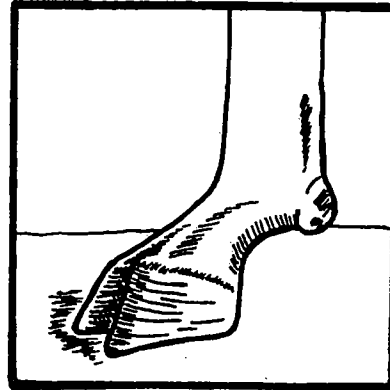
Excellent set to the hindlegs



Too much set - sicklehocked



Excellent foot. Strong short pasterns and square neat hoof.

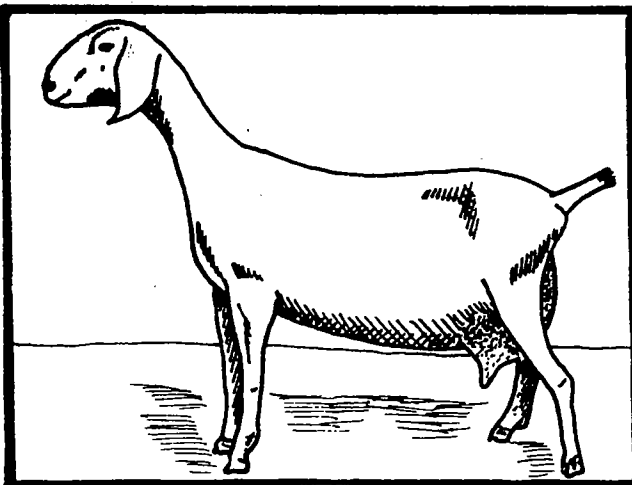


Poor foot. Long weak pastern and spread toes.

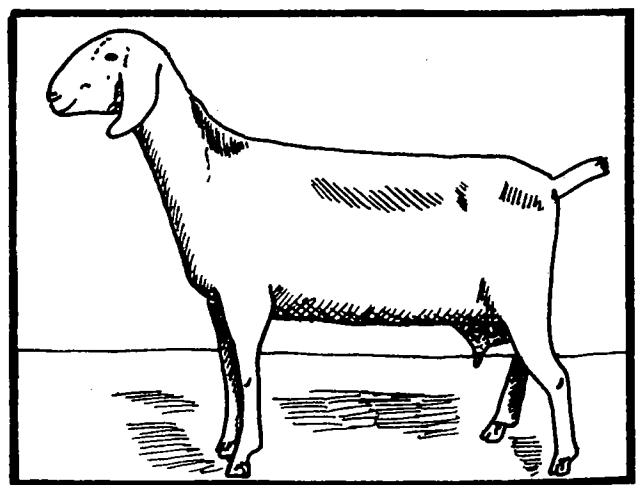
2. Dairy Character - 20 points

Dairy character is a general term used to describe the goat's ability to convert feed to milk rather than to muscle or fat like a meat animal. It has also been defined as "the will to milk with the strength to sustain it." Dairy goats have a somewhat bony appearance but strength is im-

portant and you must be careful not to confuse the desired angular character with a thin, bony weakness. Look for these traits to help you judge for dairy character: a long, clean neck, sharp, prominent withers, a wide, open, well-sprung rib cage, a deeply arched flank and fine textured, loose skin. An incurving thigh when seen from the



Excellent dairy character



Poor, lacking dairy character

side and thighs wide apart from the rear allow plenty of room for the udder.

Terms to describe dairy character

- sharper in withers
- wider (or flatter or more open) ribs
- finer (or looser or thinner) skin

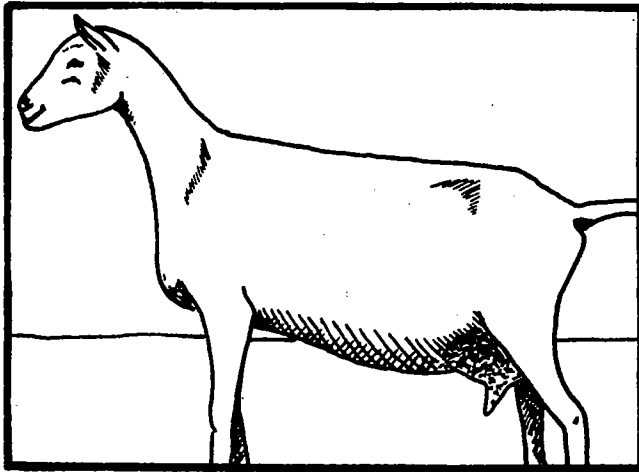
- more highly arched flank
- deeper in the flank
- flatter in the thigh
- more perfectly molded in the thigh
- leaner in the thigh

3. Body Capacity - 20 points

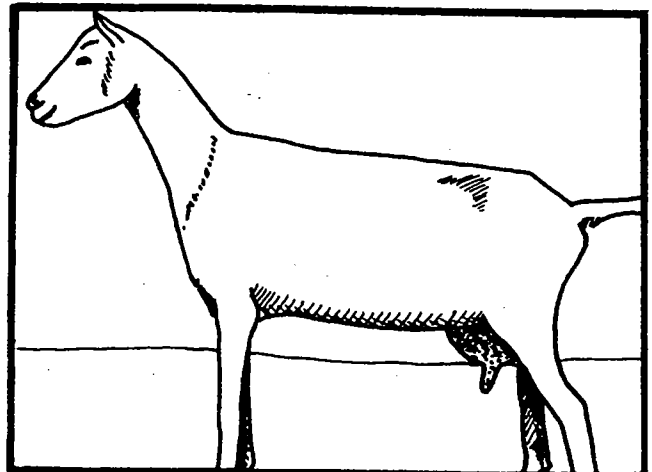
The goat's body needs to be wide, long and deep in order to provide the room needed for the internal organs and the digestion of large amounts of food, as well as space for the unborn kids to develop. The barrel should be deep with the ribs wide apart and well-sprung. This depth and width should increase toward the rear of the doe, giving her body a wedge-shaped appearance. A large heart girth is formed by long, well-sprung ribs. A wide chest between the fore legs and fullness at the point of the elbow indicate greater capacity in heart girth.

Terms describing body capacity

- the barrel:
- is deeper in the rib
 - has greater spring of rib
 - increases more in depth going back into the flank area
- she is:
- longer (or deeper) in the body
 - deeper in the heart girth
 - wider in the chest floor
 - more open in area of elbow
 - stronger in the brisket
 - more powerful in the chest.



Excellent body capacity.



Lacking body capacity in the chest, heart girth and barrel.

4. Mammary system - 30 points

Great emphasis is placed on the udder because it is the goat's "milk factory" and milk is the doe's main product. The rest of the body must be good to support high milk production, but without a good udder, this production can not be sustained over a long period of time. A good udder should give a lot of milk for a long time and be quick and easy for the owner to milk out. The following categories are used to judge the udder in relation to the above statement:

Udder Capacity and Shape

Udder capacity is the actual volume of the udder, but it is mainly determined by the shape. A

low-hanging, pendulous udder may look bigger than one that is carried high with strong, wide attachments, but actually the well-attached udder probably has more total volume or capacity.

The medial suspensory ligament is the main support for the udder. It divides the udder into two halves and holds the udder to the body. The strength, elasticity and length of the ligament determine how high the udder is carried and how much cleft or division there is between the halves. Therefore, the ligament is judged under this category since it has so much effect on the udder's shape and capacity. The two halves should also be nearly the same size to maintain balance and symmetry.

Fore Udder Attachment and Rear Udder Attachment

The fore and rear udder attachments are important to keep the udder carried high and prevent it from swinging when the goat moves. This is important to help prevent injury to the mammary system.

The rear attachment should be high and wide to give maximum capacity and strength. The fore udder should be carried well forward and tightly attached without a pocket and blended smoothly into the body.

The fore udder attachment carries one more point on the score card than the rear udder attachment. This is because a really good fore udder attachment is rare, and when there is a good rear udder attachment and a strong medial suspensory ligament, too, it adds to capacity and helps prevent udder injury. The fore udder, however, should **not** be over-scored if the rear udder is not good.

Udder Texture

The texture is judged by gently handling the udder to tell if there is a lot of fibrous or scar tissue in the udder which is reducing milk capacity by taking up space where milk-producing tissue should be. The milk-producing tissue is softer than the scar tissue.

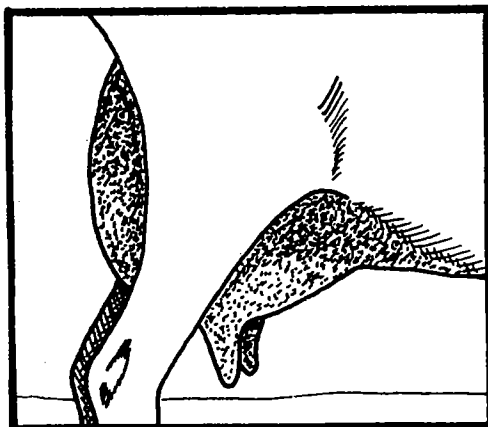
Teat Size and Placement

Teats are evaluated for size, shape, placement, delineation from the main part of the udder, ease

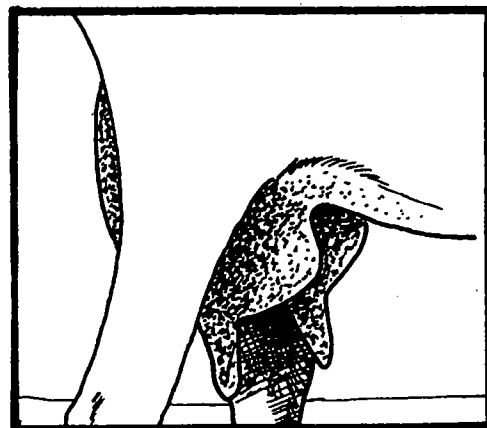
of milking and number of orifices (the holes where the milk comes out). These characteristics are important because they determine how easy or difficult it will be to milk the goat. If you milk regularly you will quickly be convinced why good teats are important.

Terms describing the mammary system

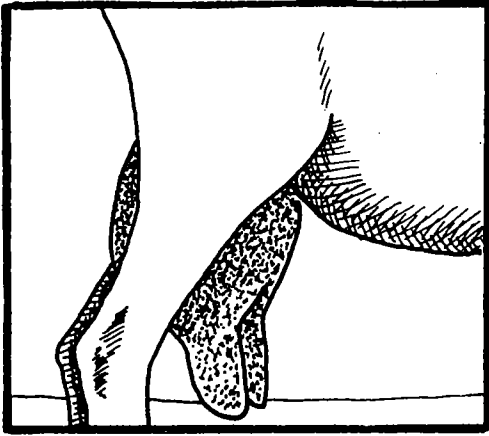
- more depth to the udder
- more capacious udder
- a more desirably shaped udder
- a more symmetrical udder
- a higher (and/or wider) rear udder attachment
- a wider (or tighter or stronger) fore udder attachment
- a more smoothly blended fore udder
- a larger area of udder attachment
- a stronger medial suspensory ligament
- a more distinct (or desirable) medial suspensory ligament
- a softer, more pliable udder texture
- less excess tissue in the udder
- the teats are:
 - more even in size
 - a more desirable size
 - more clearly delineated
 - a more desirable shape
 - easier to milk
 - more properly placed
- the teats have less tendency to leak milk



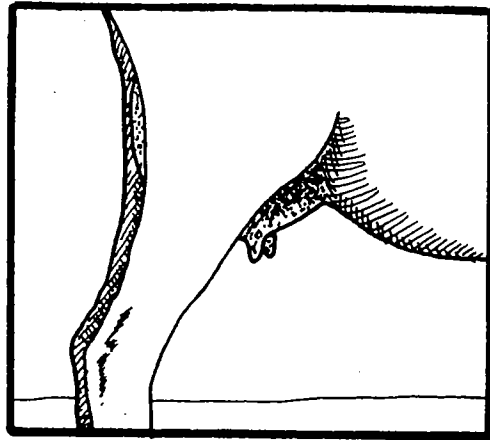
Excellent udder, teat size and placement.



Udder with pocket

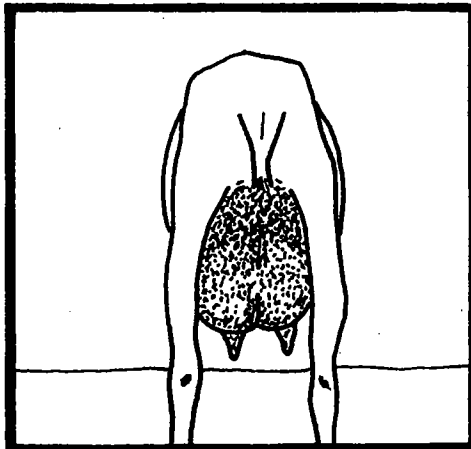


Udder lacking fore and rear attachments with bulbous teats.

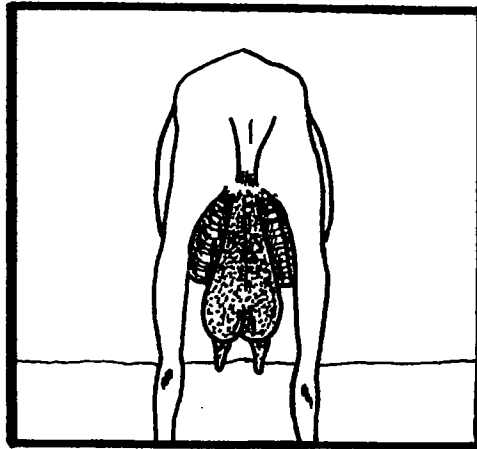


Udder lacking capacity with extremely small teats.

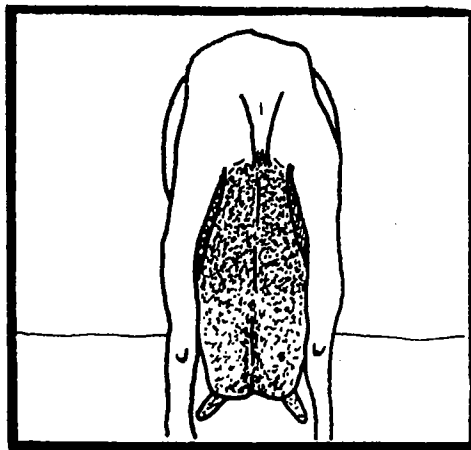
Mammary System
rear view



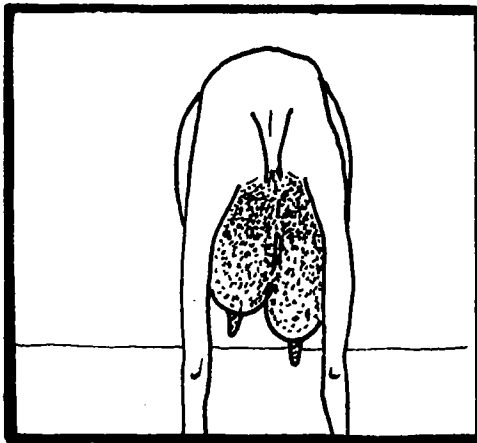
Excellent high wide rear udder attachment and strong medial suspensory ligament.



Poor, narrow rear and side udder attachments.



This pendulous udder with teats pointing out and lack of cleft in udder floor is caused by a weak medial suspensory ligament.



An uneven udder caused by mastitis or other injury.

Judging Procedure

When you are familiar with the parts of the goat and the standards used in judging dairy goats, you will be ready to learn about how the actual judging is done in the show ring. The following list tells some important things to remember when you are judging.

1. When the goats come into the ring and walk around the circle, make a general evaluation of them. First view from the side and then watch from the rear as the goats are walking.
2. While you are watching the does walk and observing them from a distance, try to decide which one or two goats you think you will probably place at the top of the class, and which one or two you will probably place at the bottom.
3. Always keep in mind that judging is **comparing** one animal to another in relation to the conformation ideal that you have learned.

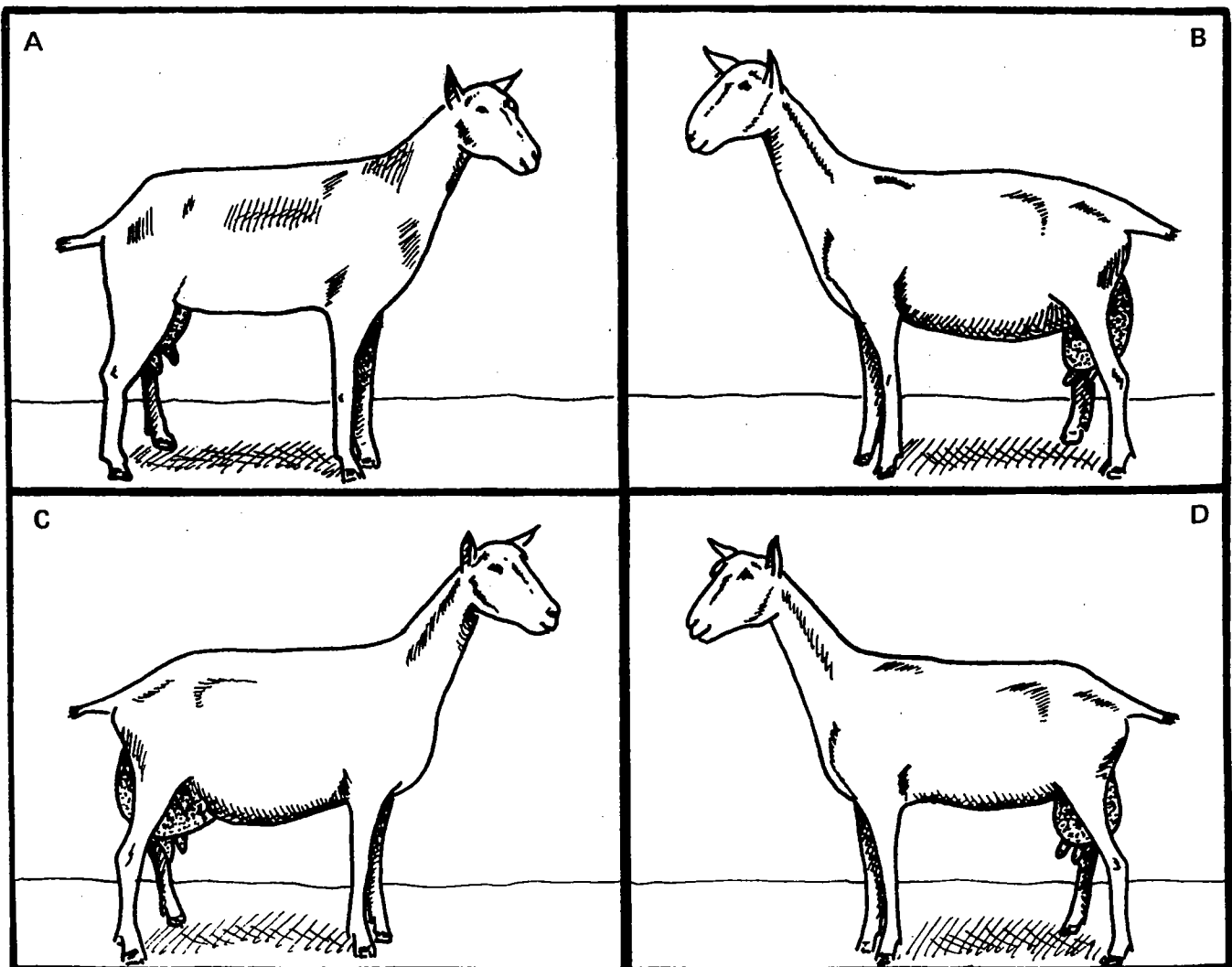
4. After you have made your tentative placings, observe the goats closely to confirm your placings. Be sure to check the following points carefully: width of chest, flatness and openness of ribs, texture of skin, correct number of teats and orifices. On milking does, check the area of udder attachment, udder texture, and ease of milking.

5. Be sure to look at each goat from all angles as there might be a fault which can only be seen from one side.

6. Make your final placings and write reasons or make notes for oral reasons to justify your placings. Use the comparative terms suggested under each category.

7. Don't change your placings at the last minute. Last minute changes are often incorrect - your careful, thorough evaluation is more likely to be right.

8. Don't let other contestants or judges influence your placing during a contest.



WRITTEN REASONS PRACTICE SHEET¹

Use the written reasons practice sheet on this page to test yourself by placing the four does on page 12. When you are finished, check your placings and reasons against

the ones on page 14. Sometimes in making placings numbers are used and sometimes letters are used, depending on the individual competition. 1234 or ABCD are commonly used.

I have placed this class of _____
(age) (breed)

(kids — dry yearlings — milkers — bucks) (Letters or numbers marking the goats)

1 places over 2 because she (or he)

a. _____

b. _____

(However she (he) does grant to 2 _____)

2 places over 3 for the greater

a. _____

b. _____

(It might be pointed out, however, that 3 excels in _____)

3 stands out over 4 for having more

a. _____

b. _____

(3 does yield to 4 a more _____)

4, although standing last is commended for _____

1. Use proper English in filling in the blanks.

2. Avoid using the "grants" or "yields" (in the brackets). When used, one in a class of four animals is usually sufficient. When overused they tend to weaken the case for placing the class the way you did.

Giving Good Oral Reasons²

Reasons are accurate, precise, short statements that clearly explain the difference between two animals. They should be positive

statements, describing in what areas or ways one animal is better than another one. You do this by pointing out the major stronger points of the higher placing animal, but sometimes the one

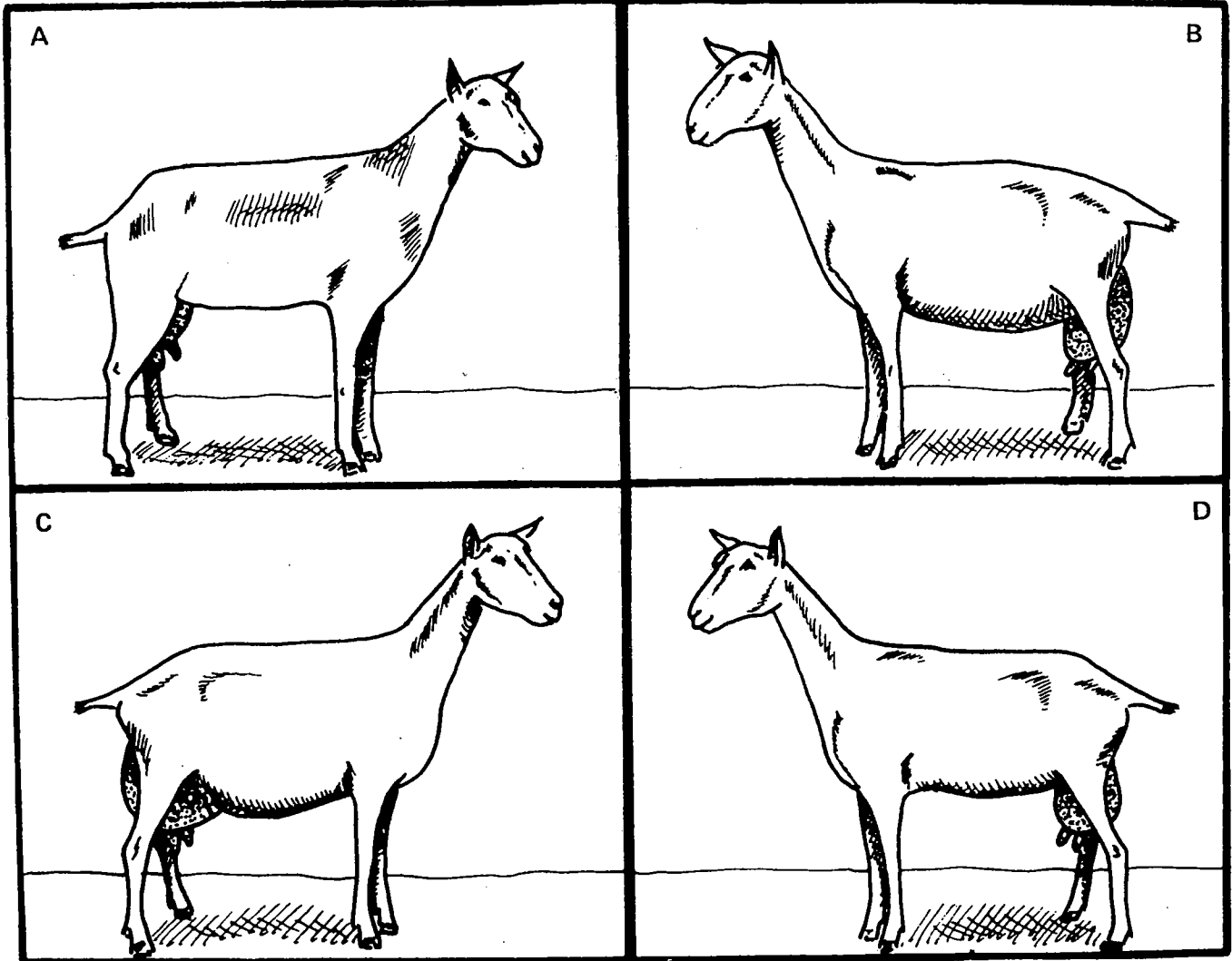
¹Considine, H. and G. W. Trimberger. 1978 *Dairy Goat Judging Techniques*. Scottsdale, Arizona.

²Considine, H. and G. W. Trimberger. 1978 *Dairy Goat Judging Techniques*. Scottsdale, Arizona.

placing lower is better than the other in some particular point, and a fair judge points this out. These statements must be comparative as well as positive, for instance, say "cleaner hocks," not just "clean hocks."

When you give your reasons, the contest judge will evaluate you and your reasons in the following areas:

- 1) Accuracy of observation
- 2) Adequate and proper terminology
- 3) Organization - your reasons are easy to follow
- 4) Forcefulness and confidence
- 5) Poise or ease in the ring



Example Class With Reasons

I place this class of mature Saanen milkers C, B, D, A. I find a distinct top pair and bottom pair in this class.

C places over B because she has a stronger more smoothly blended fore udder attachment and she has a more smoothly blended shoulder against the chest wall and into the withers.

B places over D for greater body capacity with a deeper heart girth and more increase in the depth of barrel going back into the flank area. She also has a higher rear udder attachment.

D places over A for an advantage in Dairy Character because she is leaner in the thigh and has a longer, leaner neck. She also has a more nearly correct slope to the rump.

A, although standing in last place, is commended for her correct Saanen color.

**SAMPLE NOTES FOR ORAL REASONS
FOR EXAMPLE CLASS**

Placing - C, B, D, A

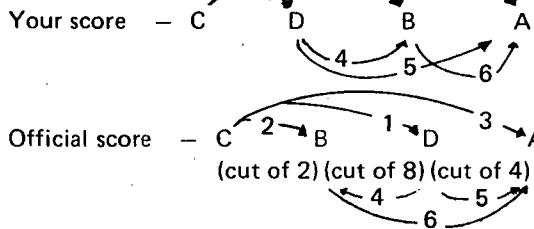
- C
 - Mammary - fore udder attachment
 - General Appearance - shoulder
- B
 - Body Capacity - heart girth, barrel
 - Mammary - rear udder attachment
- D
 - Dairy Character - thigh, neck
 - General Appearance - rump
- A
 - Breed Characteristics - color

GRADING YOUR PLACING IN A CONTEST

In a judging contest, the judge puts an official placing on each class. He also puts a number between each placing. This number is called a cut. It shows how easy or difficult it was to make that placing. A low number means that there was not much difference between the goats. A high number means that there was a lot of difference so the placing was easy to make. These cuts are used to calculate your placing score. A perfect score is 50 points.

To calculate a score, follow the arrows of each step in this example and then try it on your own placing.

Example:



If the arrow is the same direction on the official score as it is on your score, you get full points for the placing. If the arrow is going to the left on the official score for the order of your placing, then your placing is wrong. You then subtract the number of points for that cut from 50. If you get more than one placing wrong, add the numbers together first and then subtract from 50.

- Step 1 - C over D (correct)
- Step 2 - C over B (correct)
- Step 3 - C over A (correct)
- Step 4 - D over B minus 8
- Step 5 - D over A (correct)
- Step 6 - B over A (correct)

Total incorrect points = 8

Perfect score 50
- incorrect point - 8
Your score 42

Your score for this class is 42 points.

FLORIDA 4-H JUDGING CARD

CONTESTANT NUMBER _____

1-2-3-4	_____
1-2-4-3	_____
1-3-2-4	_____
1-3-4-2	_____
1-4-2-3	_____
1-4-3-2	_____

Class _____

2-1-3-4	_____
2-1-4-3	_____
2-3-1-4	_____
2-3-4-1	_____
2-4-1-3	_____
2-4-3-1	_____

CIRCLE THE PLACING WHICH SHOWS HOW YOU PLACED THE CLASS -

EXAMPLE: **2 - 1 - 4 - 3**

3-1-2-4	_____
3-1-4-2	_____
3-2-1-4	_____
3-2-4-1	_____
3-4-1-2	_____
3-4-2-1	_____

PLACING SCORE _____

4-1-2-3	_____
4-1-3-2	_____
4-2-1-3	_____
4-2-3-1	_____
4-3-1-2	_____
4-3-2-1	_____

REASON SCORE _____

Cooperative Extension Service,
Institute of Food and
Agricultural Sciences,
University of Florida

REASONS CARD

CONTESTANT NUMBER _____

Class _____

Placing _____ = _____ = _____ = _____

4-H 202

This card is used for the 4-H Judging Contest in Florida. Know how to fill out this card before entering the contest.

NOTES

Design and layout by Greg Deming

This public document was printed at a cost of \$197.20, or 9.9 cents per copy, to inform 4-H youth about dairy goat judging. 4 - 2M - 80

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