

CASE

*Curriculum for Agricultural
Science Education*

Principles of Agricultural Science – Animal

Animal Conformation

Unit 9 – Lesson 9.2 In Search of the Ideal
Animal

What Is Conformation?

The appearance or type, form, and shape of a live animal.



Conformation Priorities in Animal Selection



- Muscularity
- Capacity
- Frame Size
- Condition
- Structure
- Balance
- Udder
- Sex Character
- Breed Character

Muscularity

- The natural fleshing of an animal
- Inheritable trait
- Evaluate at the
 - Hip and rump
 - Back
 - Shoulder



Capacity

- Also referred to as volume
- Considerations:
 - Spring and shape of rib
 - Depth of body
 - Length of body
 - Width of body

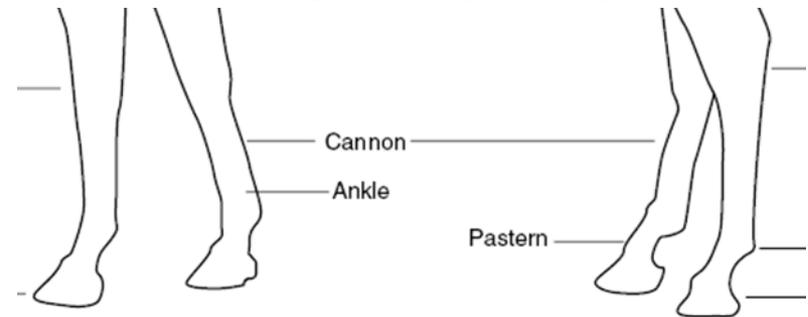


Frame Size

- Skeletal size
- Used in moderation in beef cattle

- Indicators:

- Length of body
- Length of cannon bone
- Height
- Length of face and neck



Condition

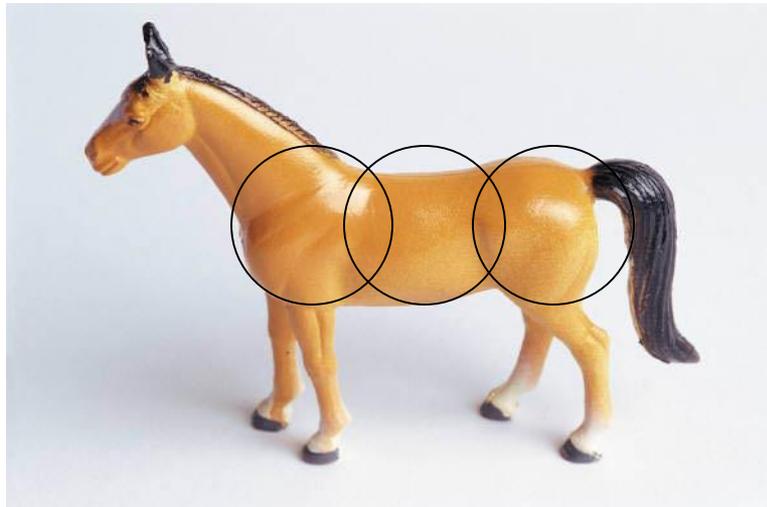
- The degree of fatness
 - Also referred to as finish or leanness in market animals
- Market animals need adequate quantity for meat quality
- Breeding animals need adequate quantity for health and reproductive soundness

Structural Soundness

- The physical condition of the skeletal structure, especially the feet and legs, of an animal.
- Considerations
 - Levelness of top and hip
 - Angle to shoulder, pastern, hock
 - Ease of movement

Balance

- The way an animal puts other traits together in proportion
- Combination of desirable qualities



Udder or Underline

- Important in producing females, particularly dairy animals
- Inheritable trait - sires can pass desirable and undesirable traits to female offspring



Sex Character

- Masculinity
 - More rugged appearing
 - i.e., broad shoulders, thick neck, wide head, thick musculature
- Femininity
 - Daintier appearance
 - i.e., refined head, neck, and shoulders, lighter muscling

Breed Character

- Animals should exhibit the traits that make their breed desirable and identifiable.
- Examples:
 - Arabian horse – dished face; long, arched neck; high tail set
 - Holstein dairy cattle – black and white spots, large frame size

References

Wood, C.H., & Jackson, S.G. (2004). *Horse judging manual*. Retrieved from <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/asc/asc118/asc118.pdf>