

BIF Guidelines for Teat and Udder Scoring in Beef Cattle

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Teat and Udder Scoring Subcommittee Members

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Udder Soundness

- Convenience trait
 - Contributes directly to profitability of seedstock or commercial cow-calf operation

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- Convenience trait
 - Contributes directly to profitability of seedstock or commercial cow-calf operation
- One of the most important functional traits of a beef cow (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2004)

Teat and Udder Quality

- Calf performance
 - Reduced milk flow
 - Inability to nurse/receive colostrum

Teat and Udder Quality

- Calf performance
 - Reduced milk flow
 - Inability to nurse/receive colostrum
- Cow productivity/longevity
 - Injury and mastitis
 - Deterioration of quality

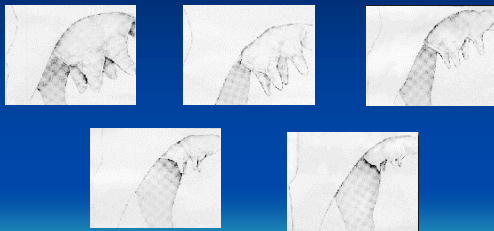
Teat and Udder Scoring Systems

- Seven out of 8 of the major US and Canadian beef breeds that have a scoring system record separate scores for teat size and udder suspension.

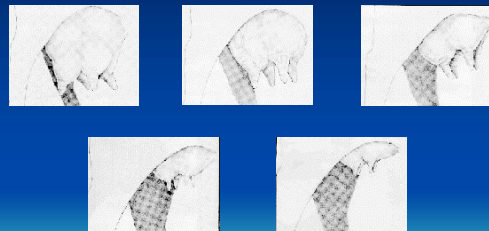
Teat and Udder Scoring Systems

- Three different scales
 - 0-50, 1-9 and 1-5
 - Low scores: large/pendulous
 - High scores: small/tight

Teat Size and Shape



Udder Suspension



Scales

- Sapp et al. (2003) analyzed teat scores measured on a 50-point scale as individual scores and as classes of 5 and 10 scores each.

Scales

- 10- vs. 50-point scale
 - Similar heritability (.21 vs. .22)
 - .99 correlation between EPDs
 - .93 correlation between systematic effects
- 5- vs. 50-point scale
 - Lower heritability (.16 vs. .22)
 - .93 correlation between EPDs
 - .88 correlation between systematic effects

Scales

- 10- vs. 50-point scale
 - More robust when handling miscoded data
 - May allow classifiers to better distinguish between and among classes and decrease the potential of misclassification
 - May reduce the burden/cost of data collection

Recommendations

- Separate scores for teat size and udder suspension
- 1-9 scale
- Require that scores be taken within 24 hours after calving
 - Preferably by same person
 - On weakest quarter

