

Foot and Leg Scoring Guidelines

Feet and leg soundness are important traits that can increase longevity in the herd. The Beef Improvement Federation has recommended the collection of three feet and leg phenotypes to obtain data on structural soundness. These phenotypes include hoof claw shape, hoof angle and rear hock angle.

For all three measurements, scores range from 1-9 with a score of 5 considered ideal. Scores 4 and 6 show slight variation from ideal but are considered acceptable. Scores 3 and 7 show greater variation from ideal but are considered borderline acceptable for a commercial herd. Such scores are not generally acceptable for seedstock operations. Scores 2 and 8 should be looked at as possible cull animals. Scores 1 and 9 are definite cull animals.

When scoring feet, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Animals should be scored prior to hoof trimming.
- For claw shape and hoof angle, score each animal's worst hoof (front or back).
- Animals should be scored on a dry, flat and hard surface.
- Age at measurement:
 - a. Score yearling bulls and heifers between 270-500 days of age.
 - b. Score mature females at weaning when collecting mature weight and body condition scores.
 - c. Scoring mature bulls will not likely contribute to genetic evaluation due to limited contemporary information.
- Score all animals within a group on the same day.
- Variation must exist in submitted scores to determine genetic differences.

Foot and Leg Scoring Reference

CLAW SHAPE

Reference: Shape (primarily curl) and unevenness of the claw set.



1



2



3



4



5

Desirable



6



7



8



9

Scissor Claws

FOOT ANGLE

Reference: Strength of pastern, depth of heel and length of foot.



1



2



3



4



5

Desirable



6



7



8



9

Shallow Feet Angle

REAR LEG SIDE VIEW

Reference: Angle measured at the front of the hock.



1



2



3



4



5

Desirable



6



7



8



9

Sickle Hocked Rear Leg

Straight Rear Leg