



Cattle Producer's Handbook

The Beef Cow Mammary System

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The mammary system is one of the most important functional traits of the cow. Anyone who has ever attempted to milk out a sore-bagged, balloon-teated cow can certainly relate to the need for quality udders.

Udder and teat soundness are a concern for many reasons:

1. Labor associated with extra costs and reduced convenience.
2. Longevity, which may be reduced because of injury or mastitis.
3. Calf performance can be affected by a reduction in milk flow, or lower colostrum intake by newborn calves having difficulty nursing oversized teats.

4. Most udder and teat characteristics can be inherited by offspring and, therefore, be changed through selection.

Characteristics

It is vital that cattle producers be able to recognize a desirable, as well as a faulty udder (Fig. 1). An ideal udder is snugly attached, symmetrical, and of moderate length. The quarters should be evenly balanced, with the teats of medium size and length. The teats should be placed squarely under each quarter. A side view of the udder should show a level udder floor without any quartering.

The median suspensory ligament is the center support that ties the udder to the cow's body wall. This is the

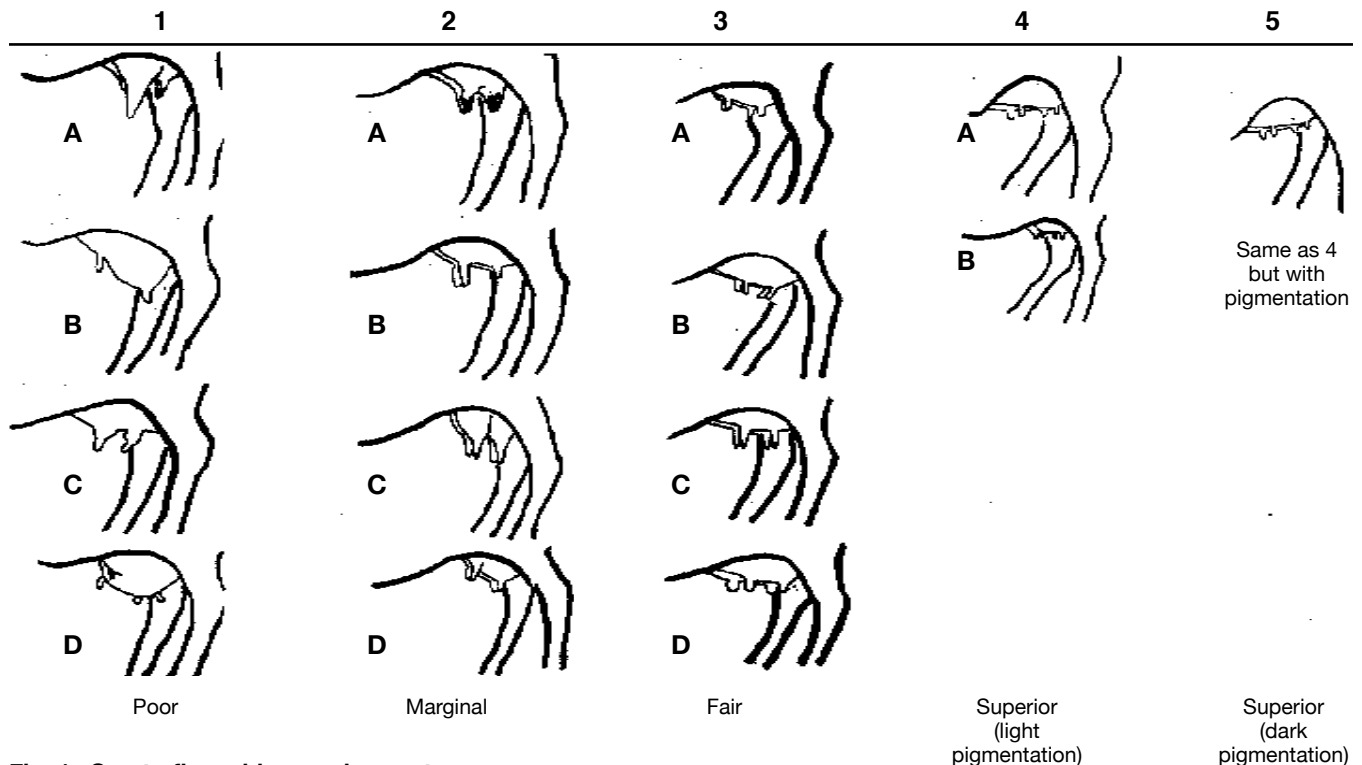


Fig. 1. One to five udder scoring system.