

A guide TO PICKING OUT YOUR SHOW CALF

Step 1:

PLAN BEFORE YOU GO

Understand the endpoint

It is important to understand the endpoint for your calf before thinking about purchasing. The time frame of your endpoint will influence:

- What age you are looking for.
- What maturity pattern they have.
- How you will work with the breeder to find what you need.

Know your budget

Know the breeder or seller

It might be easier to find what you are looking for and negotiate a price if you have built a relationship with the breeder.

Have a goal for your project in mind.

What is your goal? What do you want to get out of it?

Step 2:

ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PEDIGREE AND BACKGROUND OF THE CALF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN.

Sample questions to ask:

- What does the pedigree/breeding on the dam look like?
- What does the pedigree/breeding on the sire look like?
- How has this mating worked in the past?
- Is the sire and dam here for me to look at?

IMPORTANT TIP: Don't be afraid to ask the breeder lots of questions! They know their stock better than anyone and an informed buyer is an empowered buyer. You should make it your goal to learn as much as possible and feel informed when making your purchasing decision.

For additional livestock nutrition and stock show resources, visit surechamp.com/blog.

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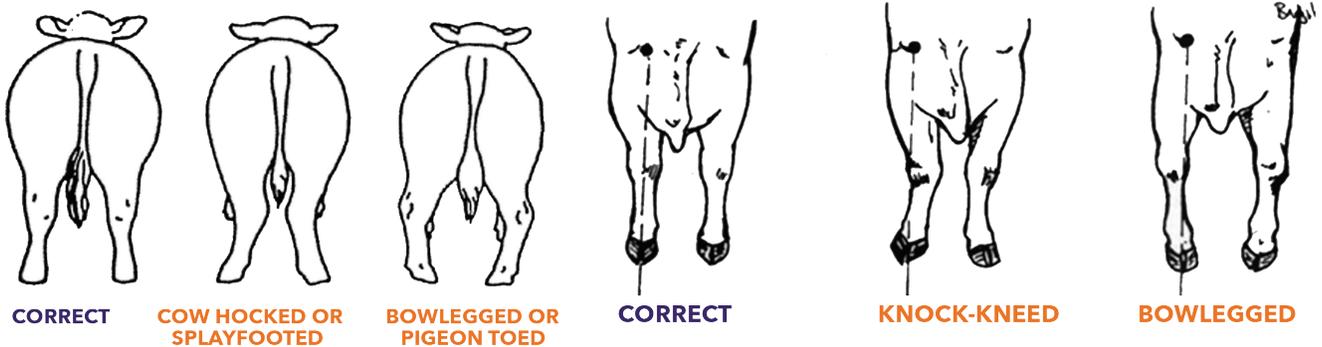
Step 3: SELECTION CRITERIA

Structure

Structure and the way an animal's skeleton is put together, is the most important selection trait to look for, regardless of what gender you are picking out.

Tips for Evaluating Structure: **Start at the ground and move up**

- Cattle should not toe in or toe out. They should be square built at the ground and have a big, square foot shape at the surface with plenty of give and flexibility to their pastern.
- Be sure to study their lower joints to make sure they are smooth and functional in appearance.
- Make sure their shoulder is at a 45-degree angle and they have plenty of flexibility and reach out of their hip and hind leg, particularly from their hock down.



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SELECTION HIGHLIGHTS FOR HEIFERS

Maternal Function/Practicality

- Your heifer should have good body shape and curvature to her rib design as you step in behind her.
- She should also have some depth and softness of body from the side.
- Make sure she has some dimension and power as you step in behind her, she should not be flat or one-dimensional.

Balance and Eye Appeal

- She should look like a lady.
- Look for her freshness of condition and a feminine head shape with limited fat deposit in her brisket and throat latch.

SELECTION HIGHLIGHTS FOR STEERS

Muscle Shape

You don't have to have the stoutest or heaviest muscled calf. You should look for indicators of muscle such as:

- Width of chest
- Clearance at the ground
- Spring of rib
- Shape and turn over the top of their skeleton

Eye Appeal

- You should aim to find a steer that is well balanced, where all parts fit and blend together well.
- Their front end should be clean and youthful as a calf.

Extra tip!

- Make sure to see your calf prospect in person. A picture or video is not good enough to see the small details that can make a big difference such as foot and joint shape.
- If you can't make it yourself, send someone you trust to give you their opinion!