Appendix 1 of Section 5 of the ICAR Guidelines - The standard trait definition for Dairy Cattle

Appendix 1 of Section 5 – StandardTrait Definition for Dairy Cattle
Version March, 2022
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3 Standard trait definition

The precise description of each trait is well defined and it is essential that the full range of linear scores to identify the intermediate and extremes of each trait be used. The assessment parameters for the calculations should be based on the expected biological extremes of a cow in the first lactation. The scale must cover the biological extremes of the current population.

Recommended Scale 1 - 9

Note:
The linear scale used, must cover the expected biological extremes of the population in the country of assessment.

1. Stature

Reference point: Measured from the top of the spine in between hips to ground. Precise measurement in centimetres or inches, or linear scale.

1 - Short
5 - Intermediate
9 - Tall
2. Chest Width

**Reference point:** Measured from the inside surface between the top of the front legs.
1 - Narrow
5 - Intermediate
9 - Wide

3. Body Depth

**Reference point:** Distance between top of spine and bottom of barrel at last rib - the deepest point: independent of stature.
1 - Shallow
5 - Intermediate
9 - Deep
4. **Angularity**  
*Reference point:* The angle and spring of the ribs; not a true linear trait.  
1 - Lacks angularity: close ribs, coarse bone  
5 - Intermediate: with open rib  
9 - Very angular: open ribbed flat bone  

Reference scale: weighing of the two components; angle and spring of the ribs

5. **Rump Angle**  
*Reference point:* Measured as the angle of the rump structure from hooks (hips) to pins.  
1 - High Pins  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Extreme slope  

Depending on the population rump angle can be scored level with a score in the range of 3-5.
6. **Rump Width**

**Reference point:** The distance between the most posterior point of pin bones.

1 - Narrow  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Wide

![Rump Width Diagram](image)

7. **Rear Legs Rear View**

**Reference point:** Direction of rear feet when viewed from the rear.

1 - Extreme toe-out  
5 - Intermediate; slight toe-out  
9 - Parallel feet

![Rear Legs Rear View Diagram](image)
8. Rear Legs Set

**Reference point:** Angle measured at the front of the hock.

1 - Straight  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Sickled

If the rear legs set is different, the most extreme one should be scored.

![Diagram of rear legs set with ratings 1, 5, 9]

9. Foot Angle

**Reference point:** Angle at the front of the rear hoof measured from the floor to the hairline at the right hoof.

1 - Very low angle  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Very steep

If the foot angle is different, the most extreme one should be scored.  
If the foot angle is difficult to score because of hoof trimming, bedding, manure etc. It is also possible to look at the angle of hairline.

![Diagram of foot angle with ratings 1, 5, 9]
10. Fore Udder Attachment

Reference point: The strength of attachment of the fore udder to the abdominal wall. Not a true linear trait.
1 - Weak and loose
5 - Intermediate
9 - Extremely strong and tight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loose</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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11. Front Teat Placement

Reference point: The position of the front teat from the centre of quarter as viewed from the rear.
1 - Outside of quarter
5 - Intermediate
9 - Inside of quarter

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Inside</td>
<td></td>
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12. **Teat Length**

*Reference point:* The length of the front teat.

1 - Short  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Long

Instead of scoring front teat, the rear teat can be scored. The choice of front teat or rear teat should be consistent in the whole system.

13. **Udder Depth**

*Reference point:* The distance from the lowest part of the udder floor to the hock.

1 - Deep  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Shallow

Potential point of reference is the level with the hock.
14. Rear Udder Height

Reference point: The distance between the bottom of the vulva and the milk secreting tissue: in relation to the height of the animal.
1 - Low
5 - Intermediate
9 - High

15. Central Ligament

Reference point: The depth of cleft at the base of the rear udder.
1 - Convex to flat floor (flat), broken ligament
5 - Intermediate
9 - Deep cleft/strong ligament
16. **Rear Teat Placement**

*Reference point:* The position of the rear teat from the centre of quarter:
- 1 - Outside of quarter
- 5 - Intermediate
- 9 - Inside of quarter

17. **Locomotion**

*Reference point:* The use of legs and feet, length and direction of the step.
- 1 - Severe Abduction - Short Stride
- 5 - Slight Abduction - Medium Stride
- 9 - No Abduction - Long stride

Score only if the cow can walk (cow has no lameness).
18. **Body Condition Score**

**Reference point:** The covering of fat over the tail head & rump. Not a true linear trait.

1 - Poor  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Grossly fat

With a score from 1-6 there mainly has to be looked at the loin, while the tail implant is important with the higher score (7-9).

![Body Condition Score Diagram]

1  
5  
9

**1** Poor  
**5**  
**9** Grossly Fat

19. **Hock development**

**Reference point:** Cleanness and dryness of the hock.

1 - Hock with a lot of fluid  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Complete clean and dry

![Hock Development Diagram]

1  
5  
9

**1** A Lot of Fluid  
**5**  
**9** Clean and Dry
20. Bone structure

**Reference point:** The thickness and width of the bone structure, assessed by both examining the rear leg from the rear and from the side.
1 - Broad and thick
5 - Intermediate
9 - Flat

21. Rear udder width

**Reference point:** Width of the udder at the point where the milk secretion tissue is attached to the body.
1 - Narrow
5 - Intermediate
9 - Wide
22.  **Teat thickness**

*Reference point:* Thickness of the teat in the middle of the front teat.

1 - Thin  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Thick

23.  **Muscularity**

*Reference point:* The amount of muscles as seen in the loins and thighs. Not a linear trait.  
1 - Poor  
5 - Intermediate  
9 - Grossly muscular

![Muscularity Diagram](image)