

2024-2028 Texas Show Steer Breed Classification Guidelines

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Classifying the breed of a show steer in Texas used to be easy. Only three British breeds were shown. Crossbreeding among them was rare and easily recognized, and only Brahman crosses were shown in Texas.

Today, there are as many as 17 breeds and breed-cross classes in Texas shows, among about 75 breeds of cattle in the United States that could contribute to the genetic makeup of a steer.

To an outsider or novice, placing a steer in a breed class might appear to be relatively simple. Just read the specifications for a class and then find an animal that meets the criteria-right? Please keep in mind, registration papers, breeder affidavits, or other paperwork is not considered in the classification process. Eligibility for the class is determined *only* by visual appraisal, as evaluated by classifiers appointed by show management.

Classification Terms:

Ideal Characteristics: Characteristics in combination that most accurately represent the breed

Acceptable Breed Characteristics: Characteristics that represent the breed

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics: Characteristics that are not reason for absolute disqualification but in combination with other discriminatory visual characteristics could lead to disqualification.

Absolute Disqualifications: Unfavorable visual characteristics resulting in removal from a breed division

Considerations: The following will be considered at the discretion of the classification committee: birthmarks or scarring (due to hot iron branding, freeze branding, or injury-caused discoloration)

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BRITISH TYPE

This group includes cattle that appear to be purebred Angus, Hereford, Polled Hereford, Red Angus, and Shorthorn.

Angus

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a purebred Angus
- Solid Black
- Polled
- Needs to have a sheath that is round and perpendicular to the ground
- Angus-type ear set, small to moderate ear size sitting high on the head and tying horizontally into the poll

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Continental breed type structure (being coarse about his joints, not to be confused with big-boned cattle) and head
- Bumps or a ridge where horns would be on a horned animal
- Birthmarks or white hair in the switch should be reviewed for the skin color (black skin color is acceptable; white or pink skin is a disqualification)
- Non-Angus-type ear set (Ear set and excessive ear size as in Continental breeds)
- Large navels and angular sheaths

Absolute Disqualifications

- White skin resulting in white hair above the underline or in the front of the navel (White on the navel is acceptable)
- White skin resulting in white hair on the leg, foot or tail
- Horns or scurs
- Brindle
- Diluter color pattern
- Dehorning scars
- Double muscling
- *A defined ridge/bump running vertically from the center of the skull into the poll.
(TH Bump)*

Hereford

Ideal Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a purebred Hereford
- Some white on the back of both ears
- Red body with white face, white underline, some white on lower 1/3 of leg
- Traditional feather on neck
- Horned Herefords must show evidence of being dehorned

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- *(These characteristics are not necessarily desirable and in combination may be discriminating)*
- Dark red color
- Red neck
- Eye pigment
- Solid red ear(s)
- Black hair in tail, or ear of animal
- Freckling on the nose/face
- White above switch in tail
- White across rump above the twist
- White on legs
- White above the underline

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Solid white ear(s)
- Larger ear size
- Straight-line white markings on legs or tail above the switch
- White above the hocks, on the outside and back side of rear legs
- Excess pigment or color around the eyes
- Red neck in combination with excess white on legs
- Excessive line back
- Coarse joints
- Head
 - Dish head
 - Excessive Long Head
 - Roman Nose
- Extreme Muscle Definition

Absolute Disqualifications

- Solid black nose
- Diluter color pattern
- Streaking of white from the feather off the shoulder
- Brindles
- Double muscling
- Any color pattern other than red or white (birthmarks excluded)
- Excessive black hair on legs

Polled Hereford

Ideal Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a purebred Polled Hereford
- Some white on the back of both ears
- Red body with white face, white underline and some white on lower 1/3 of leg
- Traditional feather on neck
- Must be polled or have loose scurs.

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

(These characteristics are not necessarily desirable and in combination may be discriminating)

- Dark red color
- Red neck
- Eye pigment
- Solid red ear(s)
- Black hair in tail, or ear of animal
- Freckling on the nose/face
- White above switch in tail
- White across rump above the twist
- White on legs
- White above the underline

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Solid white ear(s)
- Larger ear size
- Straight-line white markings on legs or tail above the switch
- White above the hocks, on the outside and back side of rear legs
- Excess pigment or color around the eyes
- Red neck in combination with excess white on legs
- Excessive line back
- Coarse joints
- Head
 - Dish head
 - Excessive Long Head
 - Roman Nose
- Extreme Muscle Definition

Absolute Disqualifications

- Horn attachment to the skull
- Evidence of tampering with horns, or dehorning scars
- Solid black nose
- Diluter color pattern
- Streaking of white from the feather off the shoulder
- Brindles
- Double muscling
- Any color pattern other than red or white (birthmarks excluded)
- Excessive black hair on legs

Red Angus

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a Red Angus
- Solid red (shades may vary)
- Polled
- A blond, light red, or mixed switch
- Cattle may have black hair on the tail, muzzle, face, neck, and legs
- Needs to have a sheath that is round and perpendicular to the ground

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Coarse joints (not to be confused with big boned cattle)
- Solid White Switch
- Smut/gray nose pigmentation

Absolute Disqualifications

- Horns or scurs breaking through the skin
- White skin resulting in white hair above the underline or in front of the navel (white on navel is acceptable)
- White skin resulting in white hair on the leg or tail/switch
- Black pigmentation of the skin. Not to be confused with freckling on the nose or anus
- Roaning
- Dehorning scars or evidence of dehorning
- Black skin on the Nose
- A defined ridge/bump running vertically from the center of the skull into the poll. (TH Bump)

Shorthorn

Acceptable Breed Classifications

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a purebred Shorthorn
- Red with white hair in tail switch
- White with red hair or red pigment on ear, muzzle, anus or tail
- Any combination of red and white, with the red and white color pattern bleeding together

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Orange or light red color
- Black nose pigment
- Coarse head
- Coarse joints/structure
- Solid red with red tail switch
- Round muscle pattern

Absolute Disqualifications

- Diluter color pattern, such as yellow or yellow roan
- Blacks, blue roans, or grays
- Brindle
- Solid white with no red pigment on the ears, tail, or anus
- Motley face or Brockle face
- Black hair – Any location

BRAHMAN TYPE

This group is sometimes called American Breeds. Physical evidence of Brahman background is important and includes ear length, ear shape, amount of hide and hump/crest. (Figures 1 and 2)



Figure 1. Sheath Scores



Non-Brahman Influence Head and Ears



Brahman influence

The ears are down and ear tips are somewhat pointed.

Figure 2. Examples of non-Brahman influence and Brahman influence ears

American Breeds Cross

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Any color or color pattern
- Progression of importance to include *Bos indicus*-influenced head (longer from eye to nose than from eye to poll); eye (almond shaped); ear of adequate length, slightly drooping, slightly tapering at the end, and opening down and forward; showing *Bos indicus* influenced sheath
- Crest or evidence of hump
- With adequate *Bos indicus* head, eye, and ear characteristics; sheath score is of less importance

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- *Bos taurus* head
- *Bos taurus* short ear
- *Bos taurus* eye
- Sheath score of 1
- Slick neck (lack of crest or evidence of hump)

Absolute Disqualifications

- A combination of a *Bos taurus* head, eye, and ear

Brahman

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a 50% Brahman
- A prominent hump beginning at the shoulder and going forward but must angle back down to the neck to create a hump – the width of the hump base should wrap around neck or shoulder and not be a crest
- Any color or color pattern
- With adequate *Bos indicus* head, eye, ear sheath/navel should represent brahman characteristics

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Sheath and navel score of 2 or less

Absolute Disqualification

- A crest with an inadequate hump, or lack of hump
- Inadequate *Bos indicus* head, eye, and/or ear

Brangus

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a purebred black Brangus
- Solid black with no white above the underline or in front of the navel
- Polled (Scurs and Slick Spots acceptable)
- Progression of importance to include *Bos indicus*-influence head, eye, and ear of moderate length, slightly pointed, drooping and opening down and forward
- With adequate *Bos indicus* head, eye, and ear characteristics; sheath score is of less importance
- Shows some evidence of a crest

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Inadequate *Bos indicus*-influence head, eye, and ear characteristics
- Brown dilution over ribs, fore flank, twist and muzzle
- Sheath score of 1

Absolute Disqualifications

- Horns
- Dehorning scars
- White above the underline or in front of the navel
- White on the legs, feet, or tail
- Any brindle

Santa Gertrudis

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a 50% purebred Santa Gertrudis with adequate *Bos indicus* head, eye and ear characteristics
- Any color pattern of black, red, yellow or orange
- Moderate crest; no definite hump
- Moderate dewlap development
- Moderate length of ear, slightly drooping and opening forward
- Sheath score 2–5

Discriminatory Breed Characteristic

- Straight, pendulous sheath
- Sheath score of 1
- Brindle coloring
- Excessive White

Absolute Disqualification

- Absence of any visible Santa Gertrudis characteristics
- Absence of *Bos indicus*-influenced head, eye, ear, or sheath
- Smokes, silvers, grays

Simbrah

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- A sheath score of 2 or greater
- With *Bos indicus* head, eye, and ear characteristics; sheath score is of less importance
- Stocking legs
- Bald, blaze, or streak face or mottled face
- Solid black, solid red or solid dun/tan combination with white or any of the previously listed colors
- Brindle color pattern with white markings

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- A sheath score of 1
- A *Bos taurus* head
- A *Bos taurus* ear
- A *Bos taurus* eye
- Brindle color pattern with no white

Absolute Disqualifications

- A combination of a *Bos taurus* head, ear, eye, and sheath
- Roans
- Grays
- Smut
- Silver
- Solid Yellow

CONTINENTAL or EXOTIC TYPE

Included here are Charolais (half-blood and higher), Limousin, Maine-Anjou (half or higher), and Simmental (purebred).

Charolais

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a 50% purebred Charolais
- White, yellow, gray, or silver
- Expression of diluter gene
- Minimal Painting or spotting (less than 20%)
- Skunk tail, line back, baldy

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Painting or spotting (over 20%)
- Double muscling
- Frail bone work and frail general appearance
- Light red color or orange
- Short, stubby head
- Overly refined, narrow head
- Moderate black pigmentation (skin around eyes, nose, ears, or anus)
- Moderate dappling

Absolute Disqualifications

- Black, red, dark smuts
- Showing no diluter gene, unless solid white
- Excessive painting or spotting
- Brindles/Brindling, Roans
- Excessive dappling
- Excessive black pigmentation (skin around eyes, nose, ears or anus)

Limousin

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a Limousin
 - Head Character
 - Eye – Deeper socket, prominent brow, light pigment around eye on reds
 - Poll – Typically have a wider poll
 - Ear – Tends to be smaller and set lower on head
 - Muzzle – Tends to be short
 - Sheath
 - Tend to have a forward angle
 - Legs/foot
 - Tend to be smooth jointed
 - Tend to be flat boned
- Tend to be smooth shouldered
- Acceptable Color - Solid black, red/orange, light red, charcoal black, chocolate black, orange, bald or brockle-face
- Brindle color pattern will be allowed providing it does not extend below the mid-rib of the body

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Head character issues (i.e. roman nose), coarse joints/skeleton
- Coarse open shoulders
- Pointed poll
- Bigger and more elongated ears / high ear set
- Pencil sheath, hanging straight down
- Excessive crest
- Yellow color
- Red cattle with black nose
- Diluter gene
- Excessive Dappling

Absolute Disqualifications

- Stocking leg(s) w/white extending above the dew claw
- Brindle below the mid-rib
- Spotting above the underline
- Roans, Gray, Silver, white
- Monkey/Parrot mouth
- Shows an excessive influence of another breed other than Limousin

Maine Anjou

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Solid red
- Solid black
- Red and white
- Black and white
- Heavy skeletal structure
- Cattle may have black hair on the tail, muzzle, face, neck, and legs

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Slight Brindling on topline and down towards loin edge (Figure 3)
- Signs of Feathering on Neck

Absolute Disqualifications

- Brindle (down past the topline, extending onto the rib and down)
- Roans
- Diluter color pattern (yellow, orange, gray)
- Appears to be more than 50% of any other breed

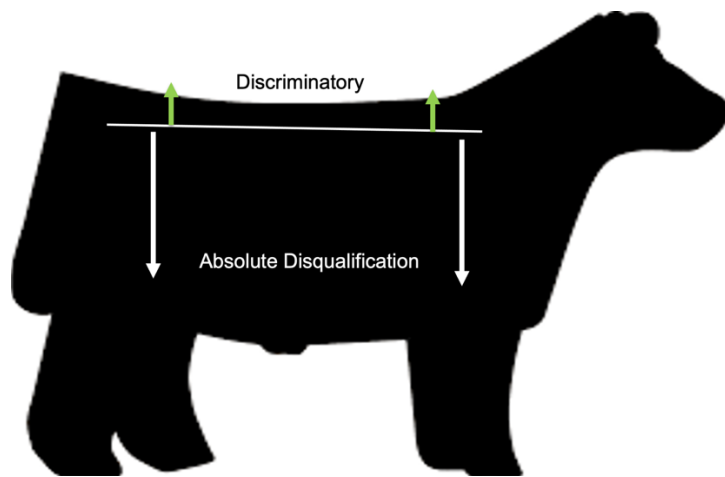


Figure 3. Maine Anjou Brindling Guidelines

Simmental

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must physically exhibit breed characteristics of a Purebred Simmental
 - Typically, longer head and larger ears
 - Somewhat lower ear set
 - Heavy skeletal structure
- Acceptable Colors and Patterns
 - Solid black or red
 - Red and white, black and white, yellow and white
 - Bald, blaze, or streak face
 - Some painting above the underline (No bleeding of colors, i.e. spotting)

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics

- Excessive Spotting
- Excessive white above the underline
- Motley, Brockle, star, or diamond shaped white in the head
- Excessive white on the tail above the switch
- Refined skeletal makeup

Absolute Disqualifications

- Shows excessive influence of another breed type other than Simmental
- Silver, smoke, white, smut, gray or any combination of these
- Solid Yellow or Orange
- Brindle
- Roans
- Skunk tail

Cross Divisions

Black Cross Division (Figure 4)

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must have a black body cavity. Defined as the area behind the top of the shoulder blade down to the point of the shoulder and above the belly line.
- White in the body cavity is only acceptable in the following instances:
 - White is a continuation of the feathering
 - White is at the fore and/or rear flanks similar to Hereford color pattern
 - White spotting not collectively larger than 9 inches (basketball size) in diameter per side (cannot be all on the same side)
- Skunk tail cattle are permitted provided the white above the rectum does not exceed the amount of white spotting allowed (basketball size)
- Absent of diluter gene

Discriminatory Characteristics

- Slight Brindling is allowed provided it does not extend below the fore and rear flanks

Absolute Disqualifications

- Roans
- Excessive white in the body cavity collectively larger than 9 inches (basketball size) in diameter per side (cannot be all on the same side)

Red Cross Division (Figure 4)

Acceptable Breed Characteristics

- Must have a red body cavity. Defined as the area behind the top of the shoulder blade down to the point of the shoulder and above the belly line.
- White in the body cavity is only acceptable in the following instances:
 - White is a continuation of the feathering
 - White is at the fore and/or rear flanks similar to Hereford color pattern
 - White spotting not collectively larger than 9 inches (basketball size) in diameter per side (cannot be all on the same side)
- Skunk tail cattle are permitted provided the white above the rectum does not exceed the amount of white spotting allowed (basketball size)
- Absent of diluter gene
- Black hair outside the body cavity and below the anus is permissible

Discriminatory Characteristics

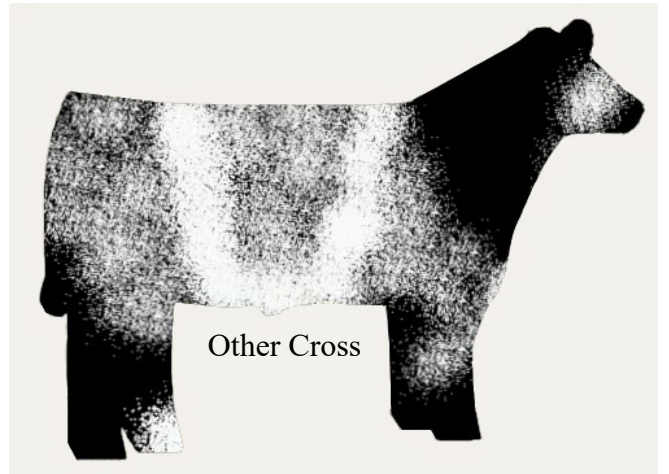
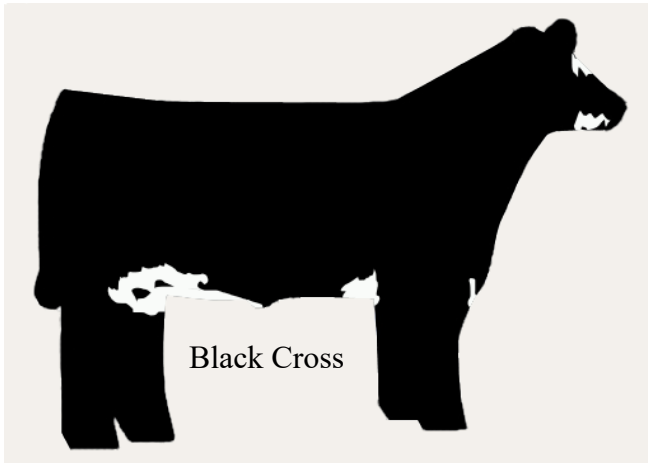
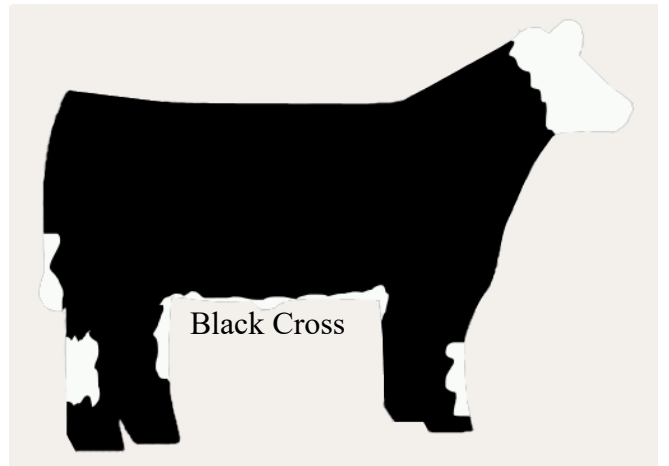
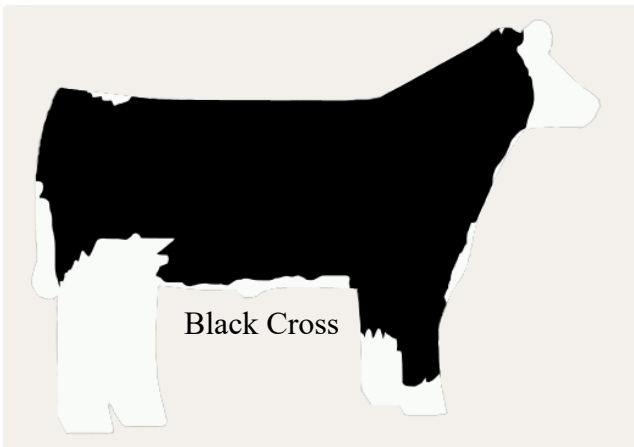
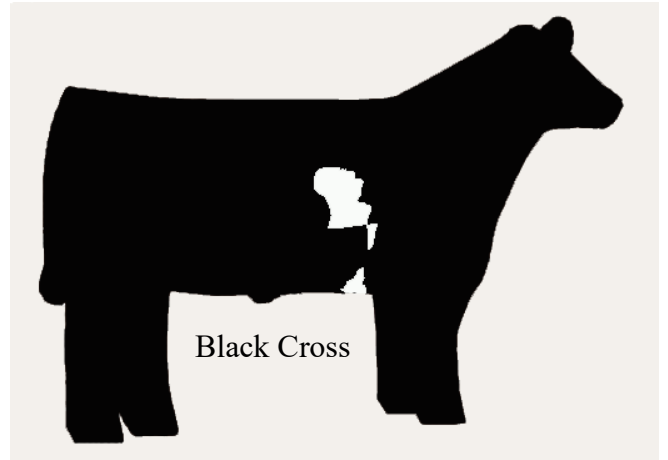
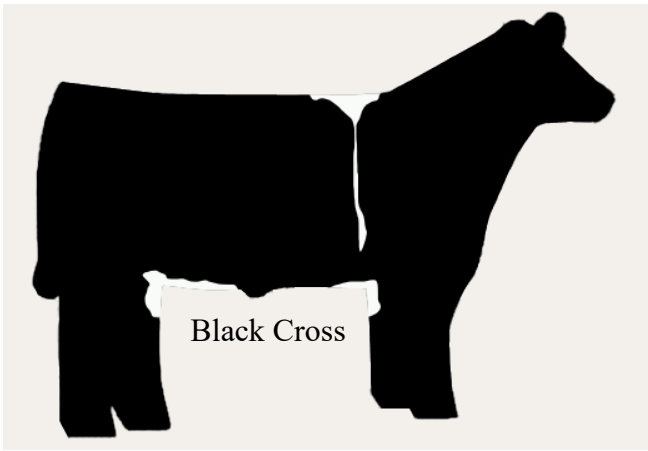
- Slight Brindling is allowed provided it does not extend below the fore and rear flanks

Absolute Disqualifications

- Roans
- Excessive white in the body cavity collectively larger than 9 inches (basketball size) in diameter per side (cannot be all on the same side)

Other Cross Division

- Steers of any coloration pattern are acceptable



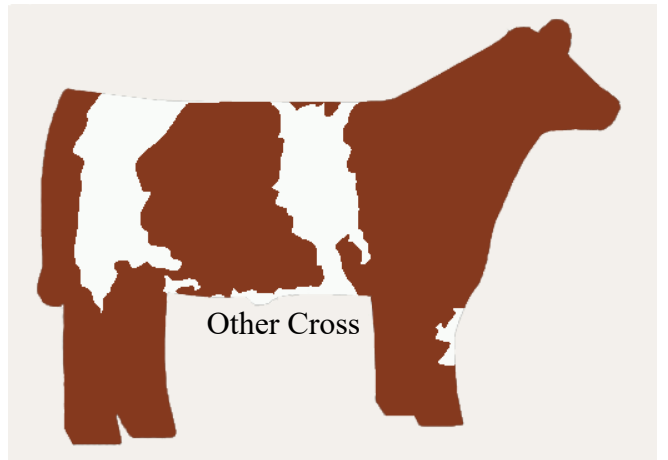
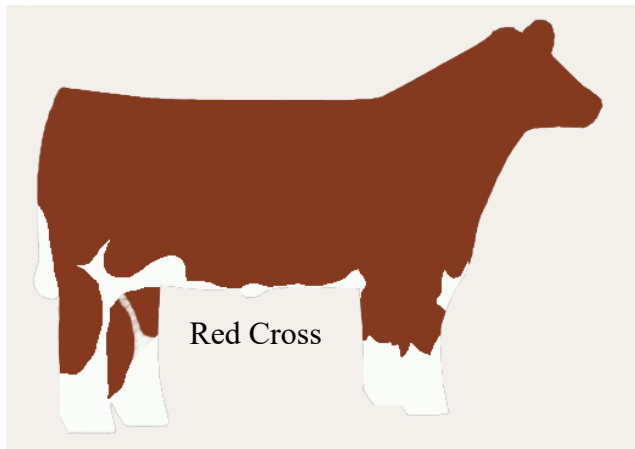
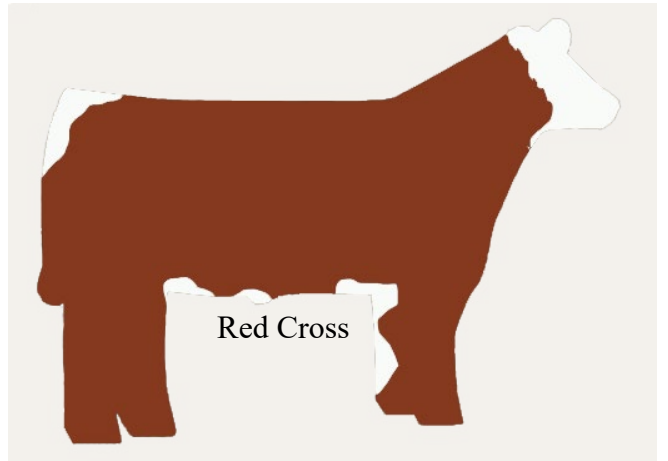
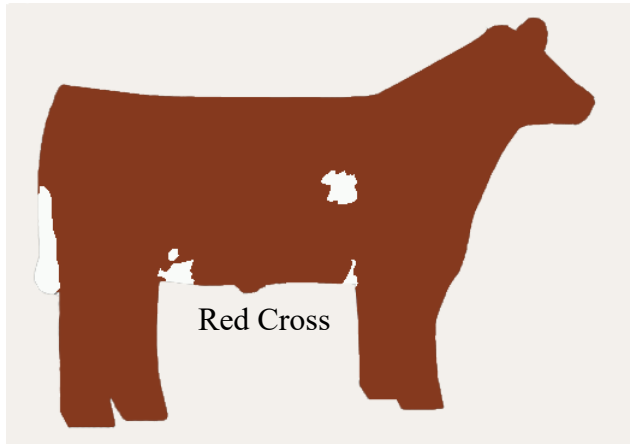


Figure 4. Black Cross, Red Cross and Other Cross Examples

Classification Glossary

American breeds. Breeds created in the United States by interbreeding existing breeds, including at least one tropically adapted breed (most often American Brahman).

Bald face. Appearance when white covers most of the face.

Blaze or streak face. A wide strip of white down the face to the muzzle.

Bos indicus (zebu). Subspecies of cattle originating in south Asia; has a prominent hump on top or in front of shoulder.

***Bos taurus*.** Subspecies of cattle; originated in west Asia but is usually called European.

Brindle. A streaking of black, brown, or white on the body of the steer (tiger stripe).

British/English. Cattle originating in the British Isles; Angus, Hereford, and Shorthorn are most numerous in the United States.

Brockle or motley face. Red or black spotting on a white or bald face.

Continental. Breeds originating in Continental Europe; sometimes called European or Exotic.

Diluter gene. A gene that determines color. Cattle that carry both copies of the gene will appear white. Non-diluter cattle will appear black or dark red, whereas those carrying a single diluter gene will appear gray or yellow.

Discriminatory Breed Characteristics. Characteristics that are not reason for absolute disqualification but in combination with other discriminatory visual characteristics could lead to disqualification.

Horned. Horns are solidly attached to the skull, or there is evidence of dehorning.

Painting. Large white markings covering a major portion of the steer.

Pigmentation. Dark skin coloring on the points of the steer (eyes, nose, ears, anus, tail).

Polled. Naturally hornless.

Purebred. Showing visual characteristics of a particular breed and none of any other breed.

Scurs. Horny tissue or rudimentary horn attached to skin but not the skull.

Sheath score. Scoring system from 1 to 5 based on the length of the sheath (1 = little sheath; 5 = excess sheath).

Smut. Dark gray color pattern.

Spotting. White spots on the steer.

Summary

In the commercial beef industry, most cattle are sorted by visual characteristics into numerous groups for marketing purposes. Similarly, during livestock shows, participating steers are sorted into breed classes based on visual characteristics. As you can see, in most classes there are generally few factors that will absolutely disqualify an animal, and those are usually easily identified. Instead, most disqualified animals have more than one subjectively evaluated discriminatory characteristic.

Steers should be selected and shown based only on their visual appearance because that is how they will be evaluated for classification. Remember that classifiers are asked to exercise their judgment. If your steer is classified out, it doesn't mean that the classifier or anyone else is accusing you of lying, cheating, or being unethical. Nor does it mean that the steer cannot be the breed you say it is. Look at breed classification as the first stage of judging. Don't be too upset if the classifier makes (or you think he or she has made) a mistake. It's all a matter of judgment.