

GENERAL DEFECTS - Discussion

Defects are structural shortcomings that can impair productivity and longevity. Some defects vary in degree on a comparative basis from slight to moderate to serious. As a result, the severity of each defect is often a subjective judgment call. A defect recognized as slight would have little or no impact on a placing. If moderate, a defect may cause a minor change in a placing. A serious defect should definitely be reflected in a placing.

The next two stages of defect, Very Serious & Disqualifications, are not subjective. Very Serious defects must have a significant impact on placing and cannot be ignored. A disqualification applies to structural impairments that inhibit productivity and longevity so severely that their presence bars the animal from competition. However, rather than removing an animal with such a condition from the ring, they can be placed at the end of the placement line. Judicious comments about the observed defect may be made during oral reasons. Disqualified individuals may not be included in the total count of individuals exhibited in the breed sanction. It is the responsibility of the judge to inform the show secretary of such individuals.

Defects can also be divided into two categories - general and breed specific. General defects apply to all breeds of dairy goats and are deficiencies that impair productivity and longevity. Reproduction is as important as lactation productivity. Efficiency in management should also be considered. Defects that apply only to the specified breed are most often cosmetic or aesthetic in nature. For example, variations in color, ear carriage, and nose bridge structure have virtually no impact on productivity or longevity. However, minimum height and weight standards can impact function and should be considered non-cosmetic. Structural correctness in any given area often leads to correctness elsewhere. Conversely, defects in one area often lead to defects elsewhere. This observation should be well considered when evaluating defects.

In conclusion, evaluating defects while judging dairy goats encompasses a multitude of details. Only when any given defect reaches a stage of fourth or fifth severity, i.e., very serious or disqualification, does the defect necessarily need to be reflected in a placing. Most often defects are of the first three stages, slight to moderate to serious, and will tend to trade off and balance each other in pair evaluation. Obviously, the higher placing individual in any given pair should evidence the fewer defects. Since there really is no ideal goat in the population, one should look for the one with the fewest and least significant defects.

The details of general defects follow. First there are 21 defects that range from **slight to moderate to serious** depending upon degree.

1 - Large scurs or stubs are not only unsightly, but can be destructive and dangerous when used in an aggressive manner, thereby causing management problems. (Note that natural horns are disbarred from the show ring as per Rules Governing the Conduct of Official Shows, A.8.)

2 - Undershot or overshot jaws, where the teeth of the lower jaw do not meet evenly with the gum of the upper palate, can lead to reduced feed intake and ability to browse, lowering productivity. A difference of one inch would be considered a serious defect.

3 - Enlarged knees/non-disabling lameness impairs routing movement to feeding/browsing/milking areas and can contribute to lower productivity. This condition can be particularly detrimental to heavily pregnant does, where routing movement is vital for healthy fetuses. (Be sure when judging, that apparent lameness is not caused by too close hoof trimming.)

4 - Bowed over front knees (forward in side profile at knee), buck knees (curve backward in side profile at knee), (knees that curve in or out in front profile are also considered here) can cause a lowering of the whole front end assembly in extreme cases and consequent movement abnormality. It will often be associated with item 5.

5 - Small boned for body size indicates a lack of strength in skeletal structure that can be associated with frailty overall, more easily damaged bones and lowered productivity. Small boned animals are not necessarily short statured, but are usually narrow throughout.

6 - Loose, winged or heavy shoulders are contributory to deficiencies in Front End Assembly. In extreme cases, the wither can drop well below the top of the shoulder blades and lead to disability in motion.

7 - Narrow chest or pinched heart girth contribute to a lack of proportion and strength in Front End Assembly. In severe cases, reduced respiratory and pulmonary activity decreases productive potential.

8 - Short, shallow or narrow body contributes to a lack of digestive capacity and consequent loss of lactating potential, as well as reproductive efficiency.

9 - Low backed or steep rumped affects ease of motion, ruins general appearance of the back and, in the case of the latter, reduces potential for correctness in udder support and may cause birthing difficulties.

10 - Broken or wry tail is generally a slight defect in dairy goats. If apparent defecation and kidding abnormalities exist, more severity in evaluation is merited.

11 - Close in hocks is often associated with incorrectness in movement and interference with correct shape and support of potential mammary system. It can vary greatly in degree.

12 - Swollen hocks are indicative of stress on rear leg structure and most often lead to movement disability.

13 - Swollen stifle joints indicate stress on rear leg structure and consequent movement disability. (Note that items 3, 12 & 13 may be observable manifestations of Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis conditions. As a judge, it is not one's job to diagnose a diseased condition, but merely to note structural abnormality and place accordingly.)

14 - Postiness is the lack of adequate rear leg angulation viewed in side profile at the stifle and hock. Early breakdown of locomotive function, i.e., ease of motion, usually is present. Items 12 & 13, swollen stifle and/or hock, may be concurrent. The opposite condition, i.e., over-angulation, is called sickle-leg. It is generally not debilitating, but rather unsightly and may lower rear end height.

15 - Hind legs close together is a condition different from close in hocks (Item 11), in that narrowness in escutcheon and close placement of lower rear legs and feet can be observed. Movement irregularity and inadequate space for mammary systems result. Most frail, narrow and light-boned animals will manifest the condition.

16 - Sprung pasterns indicate structural weakness and early motion disability. The condition varies greatly in degree and may be associated with irregularity in foot structure, especially depth of heel. Remember that pasterns are to be strong, yet flexible, of medium length. Dewclaws at the same level as the heel would be serious.

17 - Turned out or crooked feet contribute to early locomotive breakdown and management problems with more routing foot care and trimming. Such feet are more disease prone, particularly to foot rot under wet conditions.

The next four items relate only to mammary system.

18 - Udder of beefy texture or with pocket reduces lactating potential. The “beefy texture,” if observed to an advanced degree, may need to be considered under a more advanced stage of defect, such as very serious, “hard and swollen.”

19 - Front, rear or side udder attachment lacking contributes to an overall lack of udder support. Advanced cases of the defect, as in Item 18 above, would need to be considered under pendulous udder, a very serious defect. Of primary concern, as well, are consequent abnormalities in udder shape and overall capacity.

20 - Separation between halves of udder or presence of scar tissue relate to udder support, shape and quality. Lack of adequate medial suspensory definition and/or cleft in floor of udder should be evaluated more severely than over division of halves, since this latter structure is functional but unsightly, and leads mostly to incorrectness in shape.

21 - Teats that manifest seven subsidiary conditions, which inhibit milk flow and ease of milk out:

- (a) set close together,
- (b) bulbous,
- (c) extremely large or small,
- (d) pointed sideways,
- (e) uneven in size,
- (f) having small streams or otherwise hard to milk, and
- (g) not clearly separated from udder.

All seven of these teat conditions vary greatly in degree and should be subjectively faulted to the degree that the milking process would be inhibited. Optimal dairy efficiency and longevity demand fast, efficient milk-out, whether by hand or on machine.

The fourth stage of general defects is **Very Serious**. The presence of these structural blemishes severely restricts the productive longevity and functions of an animal, and must be considered in a placement. The first type refers to nine conditions of the udder:

1. Pendulous - such udders are prone to damage and disease and are not long lasting
2. Too distended to determine texture - often a result of over-uddering to show. Restriction of blood flow can lead to mastitis and consequent hardening of lactating tissue. When judging, do not ignore, but rather place soft, elastic correctly textured udders above hard ones.
3. Hard or swollen (except in does just fresh) - allow three to four weeks after kidding when evaluating (as in b. Preceding, over-uddering for shows can aggravate). Evaluate and place as presented in the ring.
4. So uneven that one half is less than half the size of the other is evaluated with balance, symmetry and quality of mammary system. Imbalance may be indicative of a low grade mastitis infection, lack of production and/or milk quality.
5. Udder lacking size is considered in proportion to size of doe and can reflect stage of lactation. Look for evident productivity in proportion to body size and frame.

6. Double orifice in teat of does usually inhibit milk flow and cause milking sanitation problems, i.e., milk everywhere.
7. Extra teat or teats that have been cut off on does are unsightly and, when cut off, may leave residual blind pockets in the udder, which are prone to bacterial problems and high count milk.
8. Leaking orifice can be temporary and caused by over-uddering. Still to be evaluated critically. When chronic, such orifices reduce functional longevity, because they are prone to bacterial invasion of the udder and general lack of sanitation and production.
9. Misplaced orifice is problematic in milk-out and usually unsanitary.

The second type of **Very Serious** defect is a crooked face on does and is evaluated with the head. This condition is unsightly and can affect the ability to consume food and breathing, although individuals may not experience eating and/or respiratory difficulties.

The third and final type of **Very Serious** defect is very crooked or malformed feet. Lack of ease of motion, early structural breakdown, susceptibility to disease and infection of the feet, and management stress in trimming are consequent problems.