

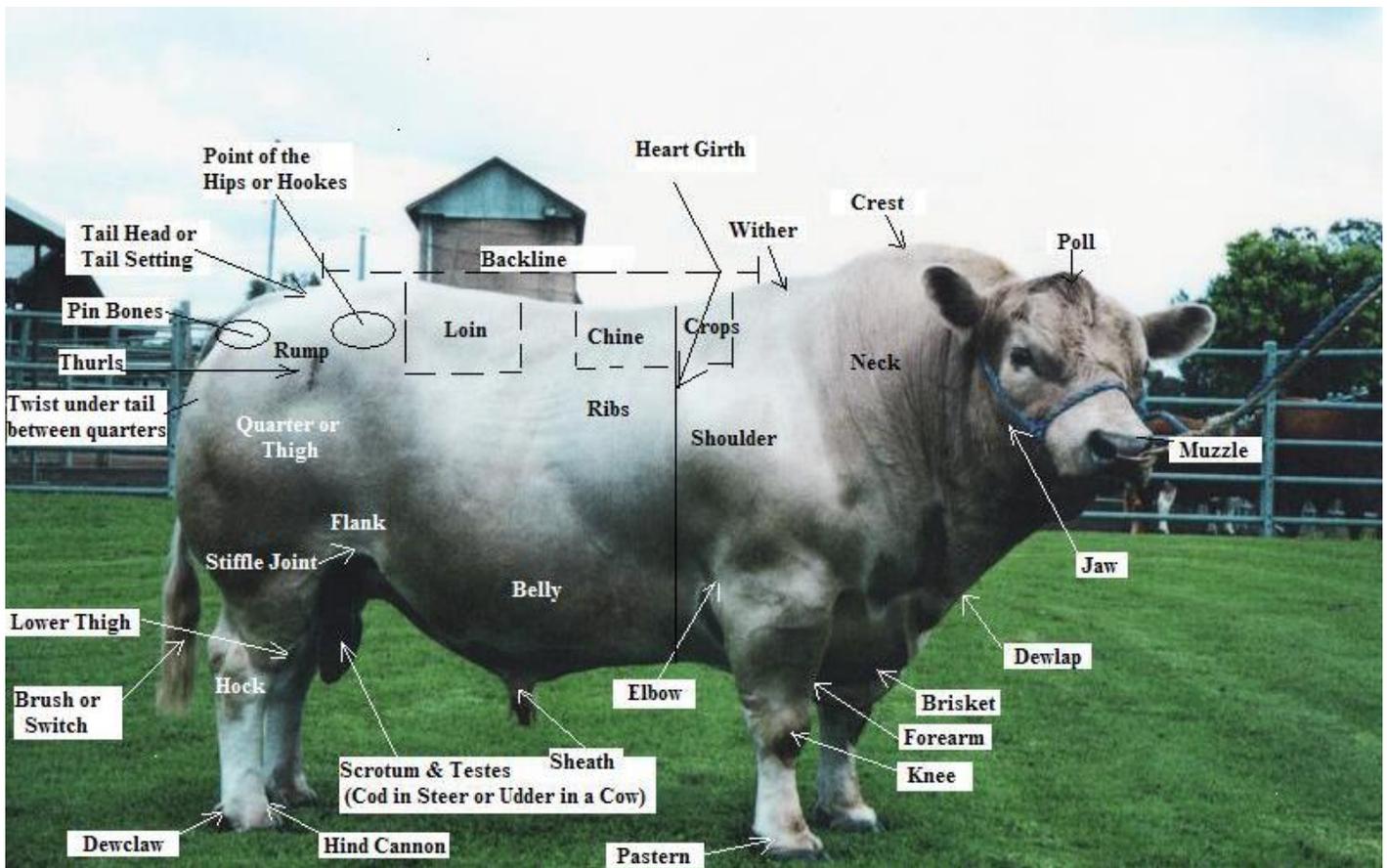
## BREED TYPE AND EVALUATION GUIDE FOR SQUARE MEATERS CATTLE

*To be read in conjunction with the Square Meaters Standard of Excellence*

Australian cattleman Rick Pisaturo, of Mandalong Stud, developed the Square Meaters breed in the 1990's. His objective was to create a breed that could achieve the following under commercial conditions: optimum vealer weights at nine months of age, superior muscling and high return carcass weights.

As Square Meaters cattle are the direct descendants of Murray Grey cattle, they share the same phenotype, but are of a medium compact frame with increased fleshing similar to those of the pre-1975 era. Square Meaters are not considered to be a miniature breed, they are a measured breed; females must measure between 100cm and 110cm at the shoulder, bulls between 103cm and 113cm, at twelve months of age. These regulations are designed to provide a safeguard against animals becoming too small or regressing back to a taller, slower growing, later maturing type. Bulls go on to be around 800kg at maturity, females around 500kg. Typically Square Meaters have a deep well-muscled body on short legs.

### PARTS OF A SQUARE MEATERS



## **SELECTION AND EVALUATION FOR STRUCTURAL SOUNDNESS**

**Many structural faults do cost, by reducing working life, libido or fertility this document has been prepared to assist in the selection of suitable Square Meaters stock.**

The function you are looking for with the breeding of Square Meaters Cattle is multifaceted in that they must:

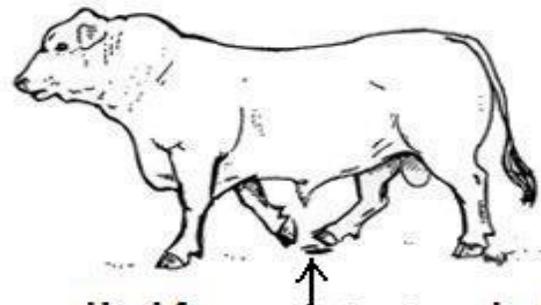
- Have the vigour to hold condition when the seasonal conditions are not ideal.
- Produce offspring over a long period of time.
- To turnout calves that at approximately 12 months of age have enough quality and weight to be commercially viable and profitable when sold.

***The following characteristics should be visually appraised in the selection of Square Meaters animals for your breeding herd.***

***Firstly when evaluating stock look at the animal as a whole from a distance watching the gait of the animal and its ability to move freely.***

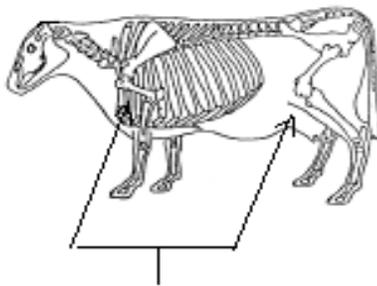
***Then once you have singled out a particular animal or animals that are pleasing to your eye carry out a closer inspection!***

**GAIT (Walk)** The gait of the animal should be free moving with hind feet stepping into the footprints of the front feet (this is referred to as tracking). If the animal over or under steps or has uneven footprints from the claws this is an indication of structural problems.

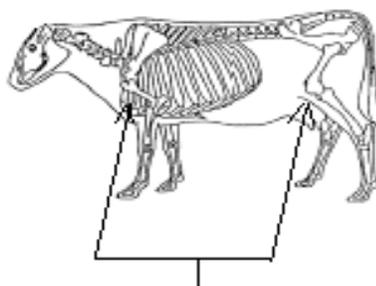


**Hind feet stepping into the footprints of the front feet**

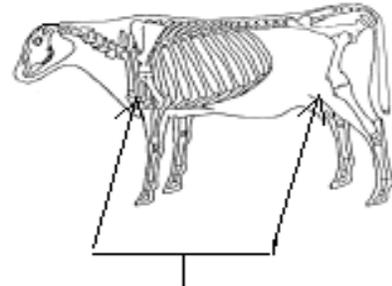
**LEG STRUCTURE** An animal should stand squarely with good balance and weight distribution otherwise complications can arise leading to stress on joints and muscles and the ability to breed correctly.



**Too Much Angulation**

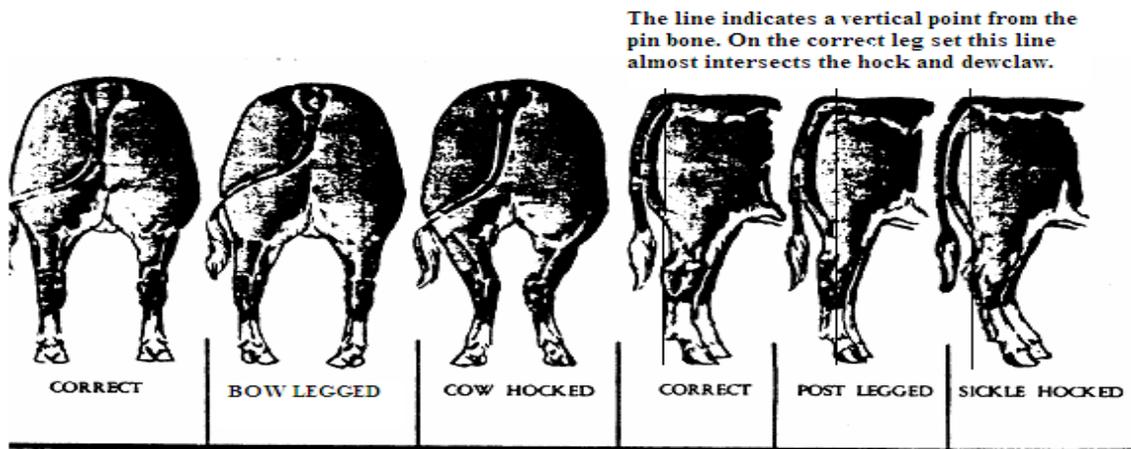


**Correct Angulation**



**Not Enough Angulation**

## LEG ANGULATION

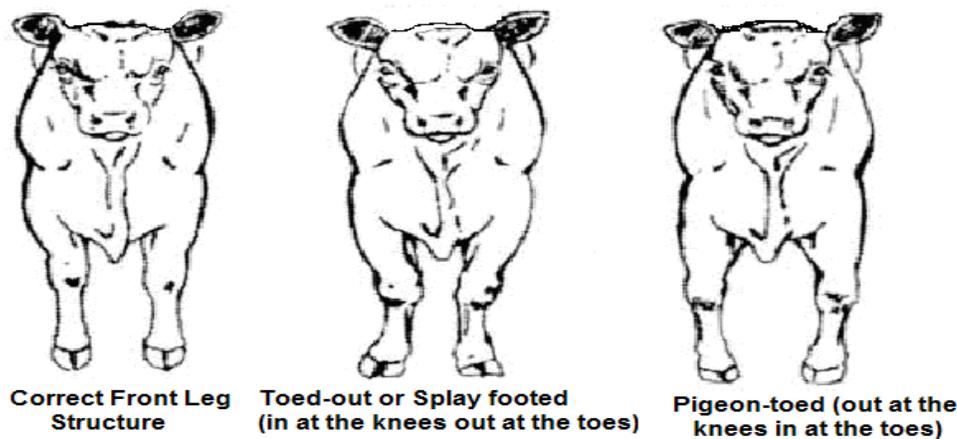


**BOW-LEGGED** This trait although not as common as cow hocks is more serious as the animals stance is narrower at the base. Hence more weight is carried on the outside claw of the hoof which often results rolled or corkscrew claw and can lead to lameness.

**COW-HOCKED** This is a relatively common fault with the toes turned out and the hocks closer together.

**POST-LEGGED (Straight Hocks)** This fault is possibly the most serious in an animals structure (rear legs are too far back), more than ever in bulls. It is often linked with steep pasterns and places more strain on the hind limb joints and muscles. This in turn will shorten the longevity and libido of the bull.

**SICKLE-HOCKED** The rear legs are under the body of the animal to far and this places more strain on the muscles and bones of the stifle joint, legs and hips.

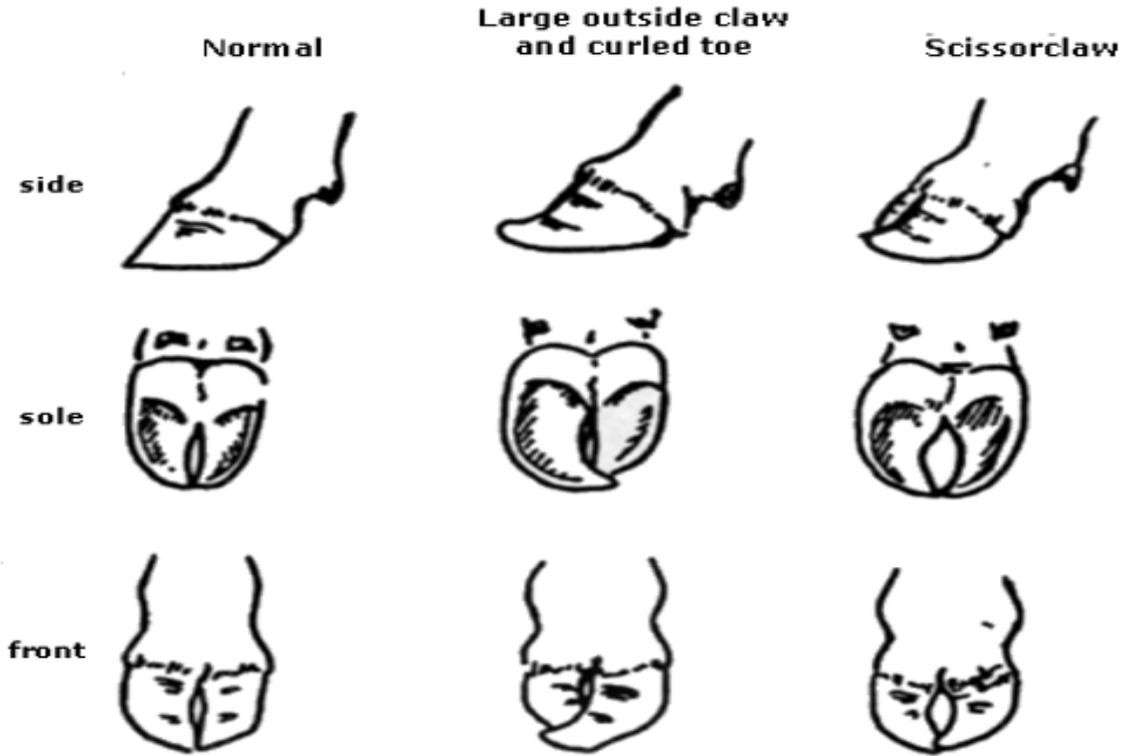


**SPLAY-FOOTED (Toed-Out)** This defect is usually linked to knock knees (the knees closer together) and hence the leg twists out from the knee down.

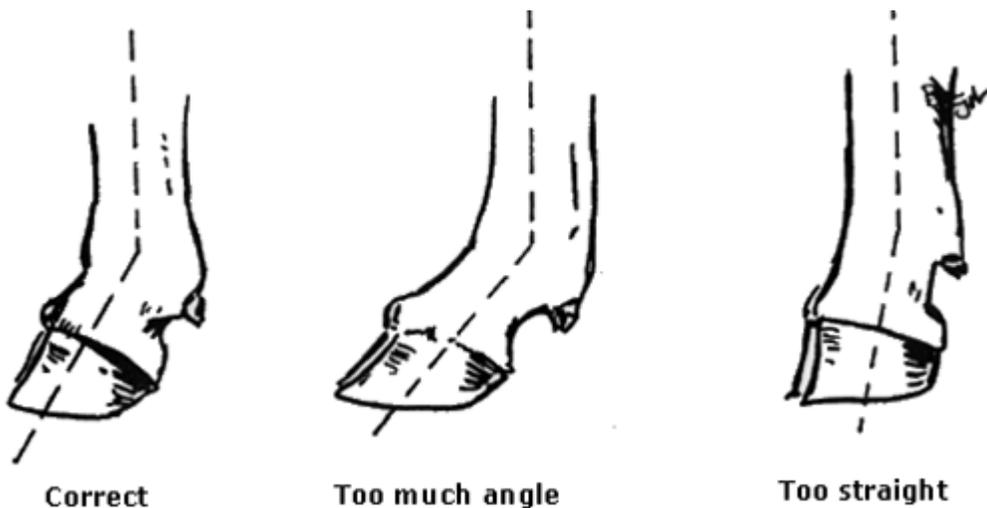
**PIGEON TOED (Toed-In)** This condition is not as common as the splayed-footed defect with the knees wider apart giving a bow legged appearance. In extreme cases this narrowing of the base gives

uneven weight distribution to the outside claw of the hoof. The pigeon toed defect is generally accompanied by coarse and protruding shoulder.

**HOOVES (Feet)** Problems of bad feet can be two fold they are an inherited trait and adding to this can be other factors such as soil type , weather conditions (wet season) or mineral deficiencies. **The soundness of an animals feet is very important**, if they are overgrown or the claws are uneven general indicates limb structure problems or early signs of hip arthritis. The main points to look for are long flat toes and toes which curl and cross at the point.



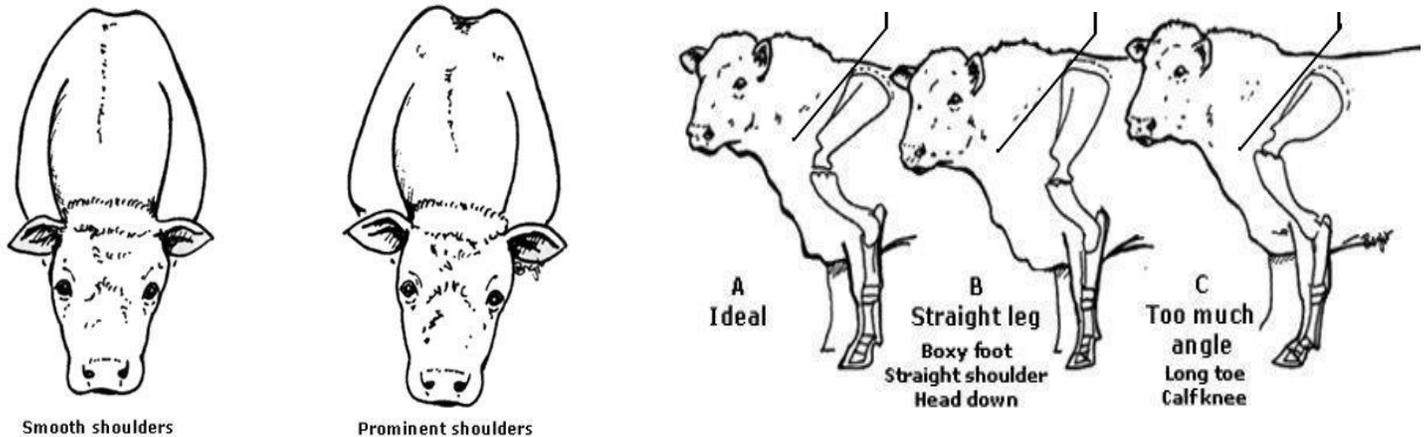
**Pastern angle of front and hind legs**



**STEEP PASTERNS AND WEAK PASTERNS** Steep pasterns (too straight) place extra pressure on the limb structure of the animal this is caused by the reduction of the area of the front limb to absorb shock.

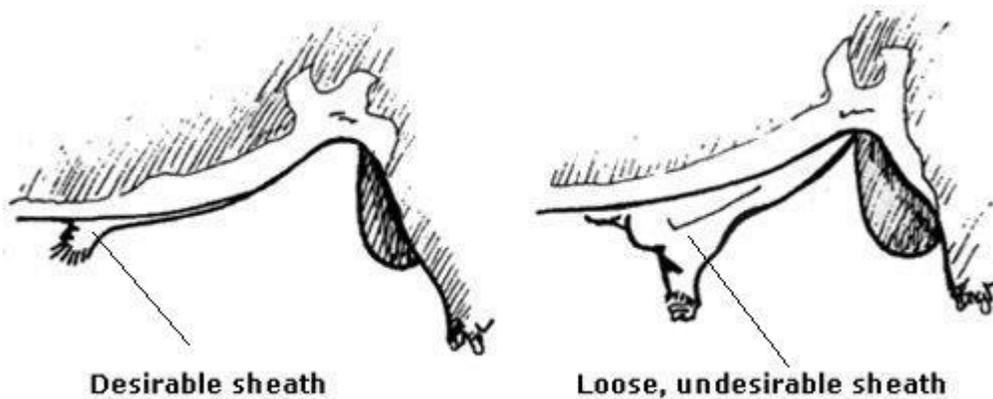
Weak pasterns (too much angle) are indicated by over long claws. These conditions can lead to reduced mobility, joint problems and eventually lameness.

## THE SHOULDERS



Note the different angulation of Shoulder Blade -Scapula

**FRONT LEG AND SHOULDER STRUCTURE** The shoulders slop naturally, with a slope of 45-60 degrees considered acceptable. The more prominent a bull is in the shoulder could add to calving difficulty through being inherited by his progeny. Note: calving difficulty can also be attributed to the dam's pelvic size and this will have the greatest effect on ease of calving.

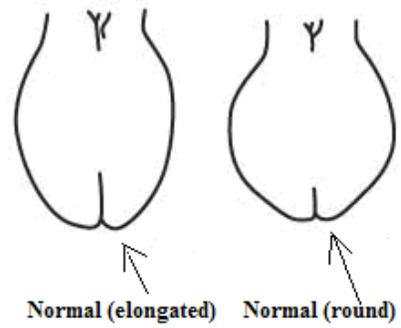


**SHEATH** The sheath should be trim and close to the body. A slack prepuce (the fold of skin covering the penis) should also be avoided. A bull whose prepuce hangs out for long periods of time should be regarded as having a serious structural fault.

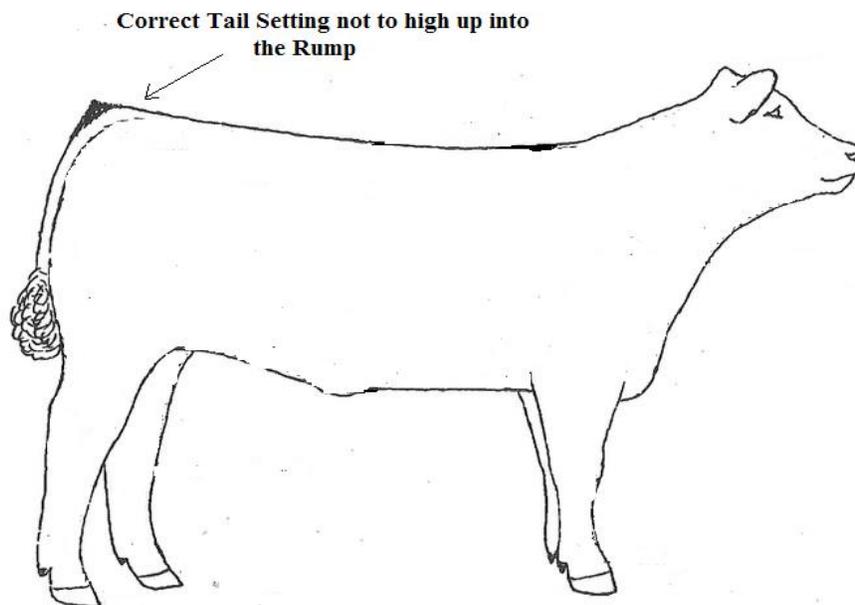
**SCROTUM** The scrotum of a bull should have two well developed, evenly sized testicles with the sheath being relatively tight and not extremely pendulous.

A measure of testicle size is a relatively accurate indicator of bull fertility.

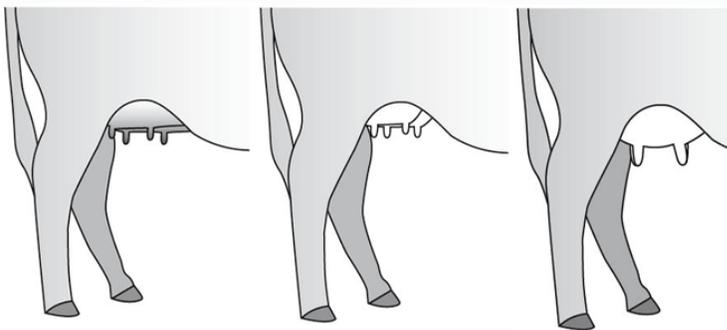
Bulls with underdeveloped (small) testes should be avoided as they will have reduced fertility and this trait is highly heritable.



**TAIL SETTING** A tail head that is set too far up into the rump is considered undesirable. In females, this condition is sometimes associated with a vulva that slants forward, which is not desirable from a hygienic and/or fertility standpoint (can be more difficult for the bull to serve the female).



**UDDERS** Cows should have a well developed udder with four even quarters. The front attachment will be strong and appear to join smoothly into the underline, with wide attachment to the rear. The teats should be moderately sized, well-spaced and of medium length.



**Ideal udder suspension from a side view**



**Rear View of udder with teats well placed**

**Photos Of Early Maturing Development  
Patterns Of Square Meaters Cattle**



The Square Meaters Bull at left is shorter in stature illustrated by the height of the handlers, with a shorter cannon bone (shorter leg) which is relative to the overall height ratio.



Increased muscling, thickness and depth of body shown by the Square Meaters Steer at left. Length, depth and width of body all equate to additional weight and better yields.



On the left are good examples of true-to-type Square Meaters showing the ability to hold condition.



**Photos Of Slower Maturing Development Patterns**



On the right are examples of Non-true to type showing length of leg and lack of muscular development