



LAMENESS SCORING FOR DAIRY CATTLE

1. PURPOSE

Lameness can lead to other animal welfare concerns, such as low body condition score, as well as poor production performance. This SOP describes the methods to evaluate lameness in Dairy Cattle based on the visual assessment.

2.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 METHOD 1: GAIT SCORING

Gait scoring is the most accurate and preferred method for detecting lameness in cattle and should be encouraged over SLS (In-stall scoring) and conducted during daily outdoor access.

Score	Description	Behavioural Criteria
1 Sound	Smooth and fluid movement	Flat back when standing and walking. All legs bear weight equally. Joints flex freely. Head carriage remains steady as the animal moves
2	Ability to move freely not diminished	Flat or mildly arched back when standing and walking All legs bear weight equally. Joints slightly stiff Head carriage remains steady

4.2 METHOD 2: IN- STALL PROTOCOL:

- 4.2.1 Encourage the cow to stand. The cow must be standing for at least 3 minutes before the assessment begins (allows for urination/defecation and recovery of balance).
- 4.2.2 If the sample size means that you need to score adjacent animals, do not score them immediately after each other, as the scoring of the first animal may affect the second one. Move to the next animal to be scored and then return to the skipped animal once she has had at least 3 minutes of standing undisturbed.
- 4.2.3 Record the identification of the animal.
- 4.2.4 Observe the animal:

If the animal urinates or defecates during the assessment, stop scoring and return to assess her later, or ignore the behaviours just before and during urination or defecation, and continue scoring once the animal has returned to normal resting posture.

The assessment consists of two parts:

- 4.2.4.1 Animal Standing in 0.75urnAnimal Standaq0.00000912 0 61

TABLE 5 Lameness Scoring Cows in Tie Stall Barns

Behavior Indicator	Description	