



Beef Cattle

Farm Audit Checklist



Farm Audit Checklist for Beef Cattle

Version 1 – 2020



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Introduction

This Farm Audit Checklist for beef cattle provides a summary of the relevant SPCA Certified standards and is intended to help members assess their farm and prepare for an audit.

It is not exhaustive and not intended as a replacement for the standards, which should be read and understood before this checklist is used.

In addition, while completing this checklist and addressing any problems it raises, will increase the likelihood of a successful audit, it is not a guarantee of success.

Please do not send this document to SPCA Certified. It is provided purely for your own reference.

Date of assessment:		Herd ages:	
Overall comments:			

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Nutrition		
	Feed		
N1 – N4, N6	Cattle have unrestricted and non-competitive access to good quality feed of sufficient quantity. A written plan is provided for emergency situations, e.g. drought.		
N5	A trace element supplementation programme is in place.		

N7 & N8	Body Condition Score is regularly recorded and adult cattle are kept between BCS 6 – 8.		
	Water		
N9 – N11	Clean drinking water is freely available and accessible for cattle of all ages.		
N13 – N15	Troughs and drinkers are clean and well maintained. Cattle do not have ready access to surface water.		
N16 – N18	Water quality is tested and recorded.		
N19	An alternative water supply is in place for emergencies.		
	Calving and weaning		
N20 – N22	All calves receive adequate colostrum (or an appropriate substitute) at birth and beyond the first week of life.		

N23 & N24	Calves are not weaned before six months of age, and the area they are weaned into is appropriate for their needs.		
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Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Environment		
	Site plans		
E1	A detailed site plan is in place.		
	Fencing		
E2 & E3	All fencing is safe and secure, and electrified barbed wire is not used.		
E4 & E5	Fences are regularly inspected, and electric fences tested.		

	Shade and shelter		
E6 – E9	Suitable shelter and shade is provided and accessible for all cattle, especially those close to calving or with newborn calves.		
	Housing		
E10	Cattle are not routinely housed, and explanatory documents are available when it does occur.		
	Transport		
E11 & E12	Cattle are assessed before transport and any unfit animals are treated/euthanased, not transported.		
E13 – E15	A low-stress environment is provided, to allow cattle to settle.		
E16	Cattle are off green feed for between four and twelve hours before transport.		
E17	Cattle have access to water until the point of loading.		

E18	Holding yards provide enough space, shade and shelter for all animals to use at once.		
E19 & E20	Unfamiliar animals are not mixed, and horned cattle are transported safely.		
E22 – E26	All equipment and facilities are clean, well maintained and fit for purpose.		
E27 – E31	Transport, stress and handling times are minimised.		
E32	Detailed records of all animal transport are kept.		
E33	A detailed transport contingency plan is in place.		

	Emergency preparedness		
E34	A detailed emergency preparedness plan is in place.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Health		
	Animal health plan		
H1 – H2	An animal health plan is in place and regularly reviewed.		
H3	A euthanasia plan is in place.		
H4	Sick animals are appropriately treated and monitored.		

	Bull management		
H5 – H7	New bulls are quarantined on arrival, monitored for injury and disease, and treated the same as other animals on the farm.		
	Breeding		
H8, H10, H12 & H13	A welfare orientated breeding programme is in place that avoids the use of high pedigree cattle, mechanical calving aids and serving capacity tests.		
H9	Assisted calvings are recorded and minimised.		
H11	Breeding is done naturally or by AI.		
	Pharmaceutical use		
H15	Routine induction is not conducted.		

H14 & H16 – H19	All pharmaceuticals are stored and used appropriately by properly trained individuals and detailed records are kept.		
	Surgical husbandry procedures		
H20 & H21	All surgical husbandry procedures are performed by a veterinarian or trained, competent staff that have been approved by a veterinarian.		
H22 – H27	Animals undergoing surgical procedures are over 24 hours old, given appropriate pre and post-operative pain relief, monitored and records of the procedure kept.		
	Disbudding		
H28 – H31	Disbudding is done by thermal cautery, with pre/post-operative pain relief and regular monitoring of calves.		
	Dehorning		
H32 & H33	Dehorning is only conducted as a last resort, if there is a welfare risk to the animal itself.		

	Castration		
H34 – H36	Castration is done using pre/post-operative pain relief and only on animals staying on the farm past sexual maturity.		
	Inspection of animals		
H37 – H39	Animals are regularly inspected by trained and competent people and any problems identified are recorded and treated.		
H40 – H43	More frequent inspections are made during times of stress, e.g. near calving or during bad weather.		
	Animal identification		
H44, H46, H50 & H51	Animal identification is done by trained individuals, and none of the following methods are used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear marking. • Ear notching. • Hot branding. • Face branding. Freeze branding is used only as a last resort.		

	Euthanasia and mortality		
H53	All cases of death or euthanasia are documented.		
H54 – H63	Animals are euthanased by trained people, using appropriate methods and equipment, and in a way that minimises pain, suffering and distress. Blunt force trauma is not used to euthanase calves.		
	Biosecurity		
H65 & H66	A biosecurity plan and a humane pest control programme are in place and regularly reviewed.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Appropriate behaviour		
	Sourcing of beef cattle		
B1	Cattle are kept in stable groups throughout their lives and naturally weaned where possible.		

	Handling and moving cattle		
B2, B3, B5 – B7 & B9 – B11	Cattle and calves are moved safely, gently and with low stress at all times.		
B4 & B8	Electric prodders and goads are not routinely used, and dogs are kept under control.		
	Behavioural enrichment		
B12	There are fixtures (natural and/or artificial) in all pastures, which cattle can use to scratch/groom themselves.		
	Managers, stock-keepers and other staff		
B13 – B15	All staff are familiar with, and follow the relevant animal welfare guidelines, and are empowered to report problems.		
B16 & B17	All staff are offered animal welfare training and can demonstrate a good working knowledge of cattle husbandry.		

B19	Staff do not carry out tasks they have not been trained in without appropriate supervision.		
B20	Cattle are cared for by a sufficient number of people, in order to meet their needs.		

END OF ASSESSMENT



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