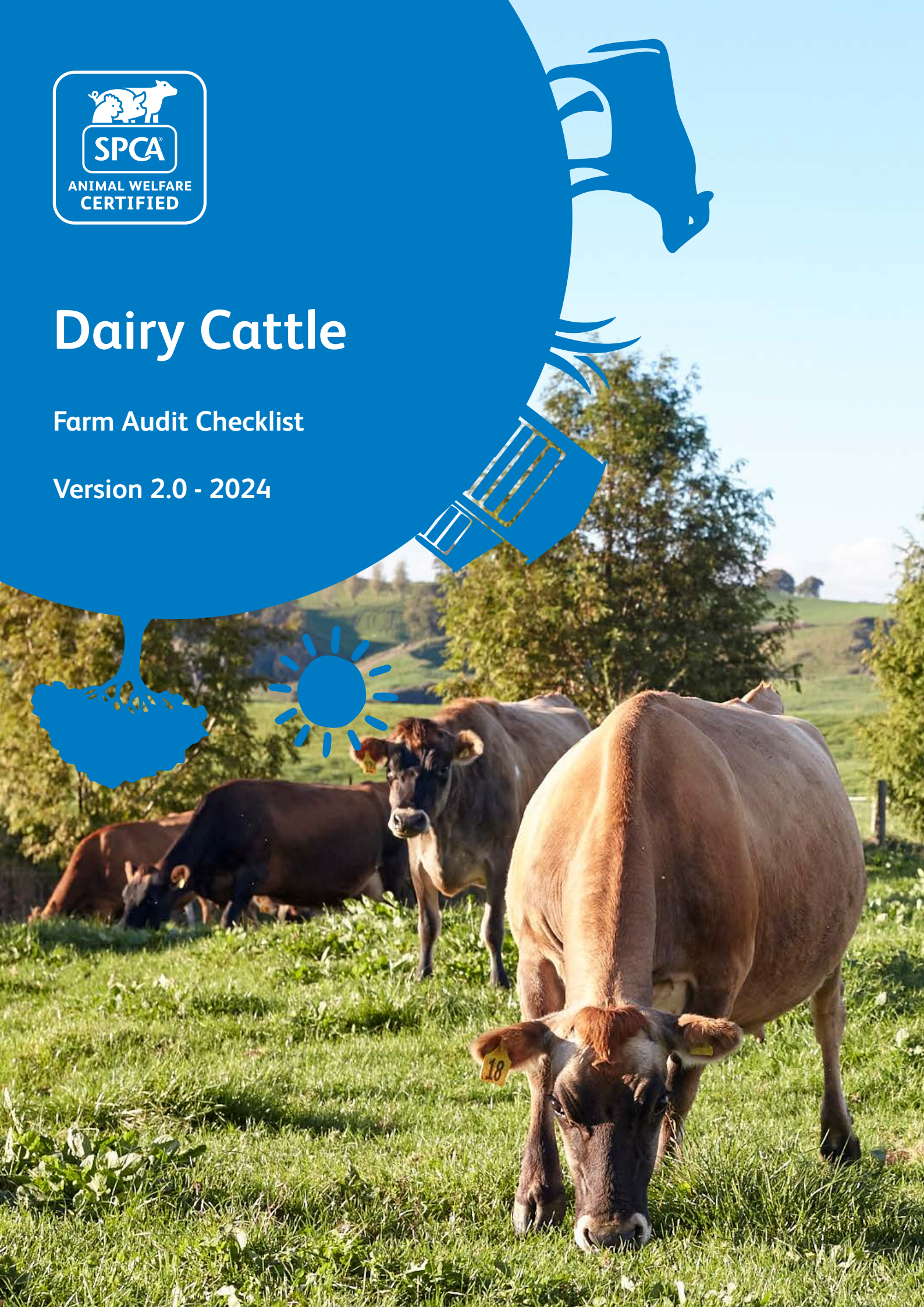




Dairy Cattle

Farm Audit Checklist

Version 2.0 - 2024



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Introduction

This Farm Audit Checklist for dairy 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.

Date of assessment:		Herd ages:	
Overall comments:			

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Nutrition		
	Feed		
N1-N4, N9	Feed meets the nutritional and health needs of cattle, trace element supplementation where necessary, and a feeding plan for emergency situations is in place. Ensure feeding crops does not pose a risk to welfare.		
N5-N8	Additional feed is introduced gradually where required, all feed stored safely, and PKE and fodder beet are not fed.		
N10, N11	BCS is managed between 4 – 6 and checked at least four times each year for each cow.		
	Water		
N11-N17	Clean and palatable drinking water is freely available and accessible, troughs, drinkers and areas around them are clean.		

N17, N18	Water clarity and quality records are kept. All new water sources are tested before use.		
N19	An emergency water supply is in place.		
	Calf rearing and weaning		
N21-N23	Adequate good quality colostrum is fed to all newborn calves as soon as possible after birth. Colostrum is stored appropriately.		
N24, N25	Calves are fed sufficient warm liquid feed in multiple feeds until weaning. Action is taken where calves have digestive problems.		
N26, N28	Calves are not tube-fed or bucket fed.		
N27	Selected calves tested for failure of passive transfer of immunity.		
N29	Calves given fibrous feed from birth.		
N30	Calf feeding equipment is cleaned after each use.		
N31	Milk from treated cows (waste milk) is not fed to calves.		
N32-N34	Calves are not weaned until at least 8 weeks of age. Calves are weaned gradually in an area that provides shade/shelter, food and water.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Environment		
	Site plans		
E1	A detailed site plan is in place.		
	Fencing		
E2-E4	Fencing is safe and regularly inspected. No barbed wire is used.		
	Shade and shelter		
E5-E9	Suitable shelter and shade are provided and accessible for all cattle. Lying areas are comfortable and dry.		
	Feed-pads and stand-off areas		
E10	Feed pads are not used for more than two hours per day.		
E11-E13	Stand-off areas are only used during extreme weather, are comfortable, well drained, sheltered, and allow 3.5m ² /cow.		
	Housing (with unrestricted access to pasture)		
E14, E15	When housed, cattle have unrestricted access to pasture, and housing provides at least 8m ² /cow.		

E16-E24	Housing is clean, well-lit, ventilated without causing draughts, and has comfortable, dry bedding for all animals.		
E25, E26	Brushes are provided for grooming, sick cattle are housed so they can see and hear others.		
E27	Calves are housed in groups with at least 2.5m ² /calf.		
	Milking		
E28, E29	Tracks are well maintained, encourage cow movement, and walking distances are minimised.		
E30-E32	Holding yards have safe flooring and provide shade and shelter.		
E33, E34	Backing gates are not used to push cows. Electrified top and backing gates are not used.		
E35-E37	The milking shed, surrounding area and any feeding equipment are clean and safe. All chemicals are secured.		
E38, E39	Electrical equipment within the milking shed is tested annually.		
E40	Teat liners are fit for purpose, regularly inspected and replaced.		
E41	Training of staff to ensure consistent milking routines.		
E42	Heifers are familiarised with the milking shed before their first lactation.		

E43	Oxytocin is not used for milk let-down.		
E44	Sick or lame animals are recorded, marked, treated, and kept separated from the main herd.		
	Preparation for Transport		
E45-E48	Cattle are assessed for fitness for transport and unfit animals are not transported.		
E49-E54	Cattle are rested before loading and kept in comfortable facilities with free access to hay and water and shade and shelter, without mixing unfamiliar animals.		
E55	All loading and transport equipment is safe, fit for purpose and well maintained.		
E56, E57	Cattle are loaded at normal walking speed, and person in charge is present at loading.		
E58	Stockpersons request animals to be sent to closest slaughterhouse, and inform transporters of at-risk animals.		
E59, E60	Accurate transport records are kept, copy of transport operator contingency plan requested.		
	On-farm and between-farm transport		
E61	Trailers for picking up calves are comfortable and clean.		
E62, E64	Transport between farms does not exceed 2 hours and transport is managed to avoid heat/cold stress.		

E63	Cows are not transported for at least 7 days after birth.		
	Emergency preparedness		
E65, E66	An emergency preparedness plan is in place.		
E67, E68	Temporary housing is documented and reported, housing allows for quick release in emergency.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Health		
	Animal health plan		
H1 – H5	An animal health plan is in place, with treatment and monitoring plans for sick/injured animals.		
	Inspection of animals		
H6, H7	Cattle are inspected daily by trained and competent staff.		
H8-H10	Pre-calving inspections are done regularly before and after calving and all calving problems are recorded.		
H11	Inspections are done twice daily during periods of extreme weather or where welfare concerns are noted.		
H12	Tail audits are done once a year for the entire herd.		

	Animal identification		
H13-H15	Ear marking, notching/splitting and branding are prohibited and a maximum of two tags in each ear.		
	Bull management		
H16, H17	Bulls are in good condition, checked on arrival and monitored daily during mating.		
	Breeding		
H18, H19	A welfare orientated breeding programme that benchmarks assisted calving is in place.		
H20	Only natural breeding or AI are used for mating.		
H21, H22	Caesarian sections are not used routinely, only manual aids are used to assist difficult calvings.		
H23	Use of the Blockey test or any capacity test and electroejaculation of bulls are not used.		
	Pharmaceutical use		
H25	Inductions are not used routinely and all use is recorded.		
H24, H26- H28	Staff are trained, antibiotics are used only on veterinary advice at therapeutic levels, off-label use is accompanied by a veterinary declaration, an antimicrobial stewardship plan is in place.		
H29	Up-to-date records are kept.		

	Painful husbandry procedures		
H30, H32	Animals are given pain relief, regardless of their age. No procedures on animals less than 24hrs old.		
H31-H35	Procedures are done by trained personnel, while animals are humanely restrained, using suitable equipment. Records are kept.		
	Tail docking and claw amputation		
H36, H37	Tail docking and claw amputation are only done by a vet, using pain relief.		
	Disbudding and dehorning		
H38-H40	Disbudding only done using thermal cautery, preferably before six weeks of age, using sedation with pain relief.		
H41, H42	Polled cattle are preferred. Horn tipping and dehorning in exceptional circumstances by vet with pain relief.		
	Castration		
H43, H44	Castration is done within the first month of life with pain relief.		
	Mastitis		
H45, H46	Udders are regularly inspected. Affected animals are treated.		
H47, H48	Teats are sprayed or dipped, and staff follow good hygiene practices during the milking process.		

H49, H50	Somatic Cell Counts are monitored regularly and do not exceed limits. A herd test is done at least twice a year.		
H51-H54	A detailed drying-off plan is in place.		
	Lameness		
H55-H58	Lameness scoring is done 4 times a year. Lamé cows are treated and remedial action taken. Lameness management plan is in place.		
	Recumbent animals		
H59-62	Recumbent animals are provided with soft bedding and appropriate care, are regularly inspected, handled gently, and provided with pain relief.		
H63, H64	Lifting equipment is appropriate and used under supervision, only used when the cow can support her own weight. Hip clamps are padded and used with a breast strap.		
H65	Recumbent animals receive veterinary treatment or are humanely euthanised if not improving.		
	Euthanasia and mortality		
H67	A euthanasia plan is in place, veterinary advice is sought where necessary.		

H68-H74	Euthanasia is done by competent people, using appropriate equipment and restraint, rendering animals insensible. Staff stay with the animal until death is confirmed.		
H75, H76	All deaths and euthanasia are recorded.		
	Biosecurity		
H77, H78	A biosecurity plan is in place and all cattle coming onto the farm are quarantined.		
H79	Pest management plan is in place.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Appropriate Behavioural Interactions		
	Low stress handling of cattle		
B1-B8	Facilities for handling/moving cattle are safe and low stress handling methods are used.		
	Social environment		
B9	Cattle are not sourced from or sold to saleyards.		
B10, B11	Cattle are kept in stable groups with others of a similar age/size/stage of production.		

	Physical environment		
B12	Cattle have access to comfortable dry areas to lie and rest.		
B13	Calves have enough space to exhibit play behaviour.		
	Behavioural enrichment		
B14-B17	Cattle have access to grooming/scratching structures in all paddocks. Calves have access to enrichment in pens.		
	Managers, stock-keepers and other staff		
B18-B19	All staff meet the cattle's needs and comply with the law and SPCA standards.		
B20, B21	All staff are offered animal welfare/husbandry training and are supervised until competent.		
B22	An animal welfare complaints policy is in place.		

<END OF DOCUMENT>



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