

STOCKLIVE

Beef Language



v2.0
November 2025

Contents

p3. Introduction

p4-5. Transport, Welfare & Chain of Responsibility

p6-7. Livestock Description

- Production Systems
- Sex Definitions
- Category & Sub Category

p8. Breed Descriptors & Definition of Ownership/Traceability

p9. Age/Weaning

p10. Joining

p11. Treatments

p12. Animal Health

- Understanding Export Slaughter Interval & Withholding Periods

p13-14. Movement Control & Grazing

- Grazing Condition
- Tick Zone

p15. Certifications

p16-17. Assessments

- Liveweight, Curfew & Dressing
- Understanding Curfew Weight, Liveweight Loss & Shrink in Cattle

p18-32. Scores

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Cow & Calf, Canva 2025

Figure 2. Calf Suckling, Canva 2025

Figure 3. Feedlot, Canva 2025

Figure 4. Tick Zone, MLA 2023

Figure 5. Beef Carcasses, Canva 2025

Figure 6. Fat Score Sites, Brett Littler 2025

Figure 7. Muscle Score Sites, Brett Littler 2025

Figure 8. Muscle Score Descriptions, Brett Littler 2025

Table of Tables

Table 1. State and Territory Legislation

Table 2. SL Cattle Breeds

Table 3. Liveweight Loss

Table 4. Fat Scores

Table 5. Muscle Scores

Table 6. Temperament Definitions

Introduction

This document outlines the standard language used across the StockLive platform when describing beef cattle during commercial auctions. It provides consistent and shared terminology for assessors, vendors, and buyers to present and interpret information about livestock accurately.

The terminology has been developed in line with the industry language set by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and compiled by third-party industry expert Brett Littler to ensure accuracy, relevance, and consistency across all listings and assessments.

This language applies specifically to **Beef Cattle**—livestock bred and raised solely for meat production. This distinguishes them from Dairy Cattle, which are primarily managed for milk production.

Content developed by Brett Littler, 2025

Transport, Welfare & Chain of Responsibility

Transport and welfare considerations are essential aspects of responsible livestock management, ensuring that animals are treated humanely, safely, and in compliance with established guidelines and regulations. While it is not the primary responsibility of the assessor, it is crucial that they possess a thorough understanding and working knowledge of relevant state and federal legislation. This knowledge enables the assessor to provide sound, informed advice during the assessment and preparation of livestock for sale.

The following are important resource material on standards and guidelines for transport and welfare of cattle:

- Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines – Land Transport of Livestock (Click [here](#) to view)
- Is the animal fit to load Guide? MLA (Click [here](#) to view) or watch this [clip](#).
- Welfare scoring nutritionally deprived beef cattle, dairy cattle and their crosses, sheep and horses. (Click [here](#) to view)
- A National Guide to Describing and Managing Beef Cattle in Low Body Condition. (Click [here](#) to view)

State and territory specific legislation: Each state and territory have their own legislation governing animal welfare within its jurisdiction. The legislation in each state and territory is given below:

State/Territory	Animal Welfare Act	Animal Welfare Regulation	Department to Contact and Livestock Website
ACT	Animal Welfare Act 1992	Animal Welfare Regulation 2001	Transport Canberra and City Services
NSW	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2012	Department of Primary Industries
NT	Animal Protection Act 2018	Animal Protection Regulations 2022	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
QLD	Animal Care and Protection Act 2001	Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2012	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
SA	Animal Welfare Act 1985	Animal Welfare Regulations 2012	Department of Environment and Water
TAS	Animal Welfare Act 1993	Animal Welfare (General) Regulations 2013	Department of Natural Resources & Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas)
VIC	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019	Agriculture Victoria
WA	Animal Welfare Act 2002	Animal Welfare (General) Regulations 2003	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Table 1. State and Territory Legislation

Chain of Responsibility

The transport of livestock involves multiple parties, each of whom has a defined responsibility in ensuring the welfare of the animals. Assessors must understand who has responsibility at different stages of the management and care of the animals prior to sale, and then ultimately after they reach their new destination.

Consignor: Responsible for assembling, preparing, and assessing livestock as fit for transport. This includes providing adequate feed and water, ensuring appropriate holding periods before loading, and making the final assessment of fitness for the journey.

Transporter: Responsible for the safe and humane transport of livestock, including proper loading, ensuring adequate space and ventilation, conducting regular inspections, providing rest periods (spelling), and overseeing the safe unloading of animals.

Receiver: Responsible for ensuring that cattle are properly handled upon arrival, including immediate care and attention to any issues arising from the transport.

Further resources and information:

[Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines](#)

[Glovebox Guide](#) – Biosecurity emergency animal diseases and preparing livestock for transport

[NSW DPI Livestock Welfare](#)

[Saleyards Australia Chain of Responsibility](#)

[NHVR Chain of Responsibility](#)

Livestock Description

Production Systems

Beef – Cattle are raised for meat production. This includes the breeding, rearing, and finishing of cattle and can include dairy breeds and their crosses.

Dairy – Dairy cattle production systems where the purpose of the operation includes some or all of the breeding, rearing and management of cattle intended for production of milk.

Sex Definitions

Female – a female bovine

Dam – female parent of a calf or potential calf

Male – may refer to a male bovine not castrated (bull, yearling bull, or bull calf) or a male bovine castrated (steer, yearling steer or steer calf)

Sire – male parent of a calf or potential calf.

Mixed – Any combination of male or female bovine

Category & Sub Category

Heifer – Female bovine that has not yet calved and is under 30 months

Heifer with calf – Female bovine that is under 30 months and has first calf at foot

Cow – Female bovine which has calved or is over 30 months

Cow with calf – Female bovine which has a calf at foot and is over 30 months

Steer – a male bovine castrated (steer, yearling steer, or steer calf)

Bull – a male bovine not castrated (bull, yearling bull, or bull calf)

Weaner – Animal presented without mother or non-suckling

Weaned – A calf under 12 months that has been separated from its mother and is non-suckling for more than 14 days.

Unweaned – A calf under 12 months that remains with its mother and is suckling

Backgrounder – An intermediate stage in cattle production system. It occurs after weaning and before cattle end up in a finishing system like a feedlot. Influenced by weight and fat (more so than age)

Calf – A male or female bovine under 12 months and is still feeding on a cow

Yearling – Male bovine, castrated, or a female bovine greater than 12 months and not more than 24 months of age

Feeder – Male bovine, castrated, or a female bovine which are young and mature enough either to undergo backgrounding or to be fattened in preparation for slaughter

NSM (Non-Station Mated) – refers to when a cow or heifer has not been intentionally exposed to a bull

Joined – Female cattle have been running together with bulls or artificially inseminated

Not Detectably Pregnant (NDP) – Meaning that no pregnancy or pregnancy more than 5 weeks in calf can be detected by either manual palpation (animal has palpably normal reproductive tract), B-mode ultra-sound or blood test methods of pregnancy diagnosis

PTIC – Pregnancy Tested In Calf. Meaning that a pregnancy can be detected (foetus) by either manual palpation (rectal technique) or B-mode ultra-sound (rectal technique). The signing of a Statement of Pregnancy must adhere to the Regulations which apply in the State or Territory the cattle are located at the time of the diagnosis



Figure 1. Cow & Calf, Canva 2025

Breed Descriptors & Definition of Ownership/Traceability

Vendor bred – Owned the cattle since their birth and always in their management/control. Can be moved to and from different PIC's

Lifetime Traceable – The animals' movements between properties/land holdings is traceable since birth on the NLIS database.

Purchased cattle – The cattle have been purchased from another producer, property, or PIC. Broken into the following classifications as per NVD. Less than 2 months, 2-6 month, 6-12 months, more than 12 months. If purchased at different times, use the most recent purchase timeframe

Breed Description – Breed description is provided to describe a group of animals that have a specific characteristic or trait

In the following table is a list of breeds that StockLive has included for assessors. If the breed or the cross is not in the available table, then it can be described in 'Other'.

StockLive Cattle List			
Angus	British White	Holstein-Friesian	Santa Gertrudis
Australian Illawarra Shorthorn	Brown Swiss	Jersey	Senepol
Australian Lowline	Charbray	Limousin	Shorthorn (& Poll & Beef & Durham)
Ayrshire	Charolais (& Poll)	Lincoln Red	Simbrah
Bazadais	Devon	Longhorn (Texas)	Simford
Beefmaster	Dexter	Maine-Anjou	Simmental (& Fleckvieh & Black & Poll)
Belgian Blue	Droughtmaster	Mandalong Special	South Devon
Belmont Red	Fleckvieh	Murray Grey	Speckle Park
Blonde d'Aquitaine	Galloway (& Belted)	Pinzgauer	Square Meater
Bonsmara	Gelbvieh	Poll Hereford	Ultrablack
Braford	Greyman	Red Angus	Wagyu
Brahman	Hereford	Red Poll	Composite*
Brangus	Highland	Salers	Other**

Table 2. SL Cattle Breeds

***Composite** – A breed formed by mating the progeny of two or more existing breeds for more than 1 generation.

****Other** – Breeds and crosses not found in the StockLive Cattle list

Age/Weaning

Known date of birth or known date range of birth.

Chronological age is described by one of the following criteria and expressed as DD/MM/YYYY:

- Known date of birth – DD/MM/YYYY – (This is intended for stud cattle only.)
- Known months or year of age – xx months or xx years. Eg. 10 months of age or 4 years of age. This is also able to be given as a range: xx – xx months or xx – xx years. Eg 8 – 10 months of age or 4 – 5 years of age. – currently in AE with a range in months or years
- By calving period – MM/YYYY to MM/YYYY

Yard weaned – Calves are separated from their mothers and weaned in the yards for 5-7 days. To be classified as a weaner, a bovine has been separated from its mother and is non-suckling.



Figure 2. Calf Suckling, Canva 2025

Joining

Joined – Female cattle have been running together with bulls or artificially inseminated.

Joining refers to the period of days or months the bulls and cows have run together or the date of Artificial insemination.

Natural – natural mating where bulls have been run with female cattle for a period of time

Artificial insemination (AI) – Depositing semen into the reproductive tract of the cow/heifer.

Sexed Semen – Semen ‘sorted’ to have X (male) or Y (female) chromosomes to produce progeny of the desired sex either male or female.

Joining – Known joining date of AI should be recorded as dd/mm/yyyy. Natural mating should be recorded as – Date sire in dd/mm/yyyy & Date sire out dd/mm/yyyy

Pregnancy Tested – Pregnancy Tested In Calf, meaning that a pregnancy can be detected (foetus) by any of the pregnancy diagnosis methods.

A signed statement of pregnancy should be made available for any terms of trade purpose and a date tested must be recorded as dd/mm/yyyy.

The following methods are approved options for assigning PTIC (Pregnancy Tested In Calf) status in StockLive Assessments:

Ultrasound – B – Mode ultrasound: The ultrasonographic method considered to be the most accurate for pregnancy diagnosis and foetal aging in bovines.

Manual Palpation – Rectal Palpation: using a gloved hand and arm to palpate the reproductive tract of the cow through the rectal wall to identifying the presence of the fetus.

Blood Testing – Blood tests for pregnancy in cattle detect pregnancy-specific proteins like Pregnancy-Associated Glycoproteins (PGAs) or Pregnancy-Specific Protein B (PSPB) in blood samples, confirming pregnancy as early as 28 days post-breeding.

Milk Testing – Testing individual milk samples to detect pregnancy-associated glycoproteins (PAGs), which are proteins produced during pregnancy.

These tests may be conducted by the following personnel:

Accredited Veterinarians – PREgCHECK® Pregnancy test service offered by Australian Cattle Veterinarians through accredited veterinarians.

Veterinarians – a person qualified to treat diseased or injured animals; a veterinary surgeon.

Independent Scanners – a person other than a veterinarian, accredited under legislation or otherwise, who offers cattle pregnancy testing services.

Self-Test – Self-testing and can be done with blood or milk testing

Treatments

Cattle treatments are not only veterinary drugs but may also include feed additives, Hormonal Growth Promotants (HGP's), mineral injections, licks, rumen modifiers, and manufactured pellets. Assessors must make note the possible treatments used on the cattle and these need to be recorded on declarations.

HGP's – Hormonal Growth Promotant. HGPs are a veterinary medicine product, registered in Australia to increase the growth or productivity of livestock through an oestrogenic, androgenic, gestagenic or thyrostatic effect. HGPs come in the form of implants placed under the skin on the back of the ear of cattle, continuously releasing low doses of hormones. For more information on HGP's is available [here](#). A list of HGP's is available [here](#).



Figure 3, Feedlot, Canva 2025

Animal Health

Antibiotic – a medicine (such as penicillin or its derivatives) that inhibits the growth of or destroys microorganisms

Anti-inflammatory – a substance or medication that reduces inflammation, pain, redness, and swelling in the body

Injectable supplement – a way to provide cattle with vitamins and minerals

Injectable drench – a chemical, or anthelmintic, that is injected into cattle to protect them from parasites

Oral Drench – a chemical, or anthelmintic, that is given orally to cattle to protect them from parasites

Pour-on – a chemical, or anthelmintic, that is poured onto cattle to protect them from parasites

Vaccine – Vaccines are proteins (antigens) that initiate a protective immune response within an animal

Fly control – Control of flies (including buffalo fly) by chemical control, including ear tags, sprays, pour-ons, back rubbers and dust bags

Other – This can include ionophores (eg. Rumensin, Bovatec, etc.) or other feed supplements and rumen modifiers

Understanding Export Slaughter Interval & Withholding Periods

Export Slaughter Interval (ESI) – the minimum time that must elapse between administration of a veterinary chemical to animals and their slaughter for export. ESIs manage differences between Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) allowed for chemicals in Australia and the MRLs of its trading partners. ESI advice is particularly important for quality assurance schemes, and especially for producers filling out the National Vendor Declaration (NVD) forms as part of the whole-of-chain management of exported product. ESIs have been agreed to by the cattle industry and the registrant of the veterinary chemical. More information on ESI for cattle can be found [here](#).

Withholding period (WHP) – the minimum period which must elapse between last administration or application of a veterinary chemical product, including treated feed, and the slaughter, collection, harvesting or use of the animal commodity for human consumption. WHPs are mandatory for domestic slaughter and are on the label of every registered product.

Movement Control & Grazing

Grazing Condition

Improved pasture – a pasture that has been developed by sowing a mixture of introduced grasses and legumes. It can also include native and naturalized pastures that have been fertilised and had legumes introduced

Grain assist – Grain is supplemented as part of the cattle's diet while it is grazing pasture or a forage

Grain fed – Cattle which have been fed on grain in a feedlot. Typically, 50% or more of the diet Grainfed beef must meet the requirements of the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS). Used in Raising Claims and processor specifications

Native pasture – Grasses that occurred in Australia before European settlement and has limited legume content or fertilizer history

Winter forage – Crops grown specifically to be grazed by livestock during winter to fill winter feed gaps. They include traditional crops like oats, wheat, rye grass, legumes, and brassicas

Summer forage – Crops grown specifically to be grazed by livestock during summer to take advantage of summer rain and storm events as well as to fill potential summer feed gaps. Some examples are forage sorghum, millet, lablab, cowpeas, and soybeans

Supplementary – Supplementary fed cattle which aims to make better use of available pasture by supplying those nutrients that the pasture is deficient in. Typically, this is done with an energy, protein or phosphorus supplement and can be delivered in multiple of ways or forms

Movement Restrictions

Extended Residue Program (ERP)

Cotton Trash

JBAS

Blue Tongue

Live Animals

Tick Zone

Movement requirements do change and if you are planning to relocate cattle across the tick line, into the tick-free zone, you must follow State and Territory regulatory treatment requirements. Information on regulatory requirements can be found [here](#).

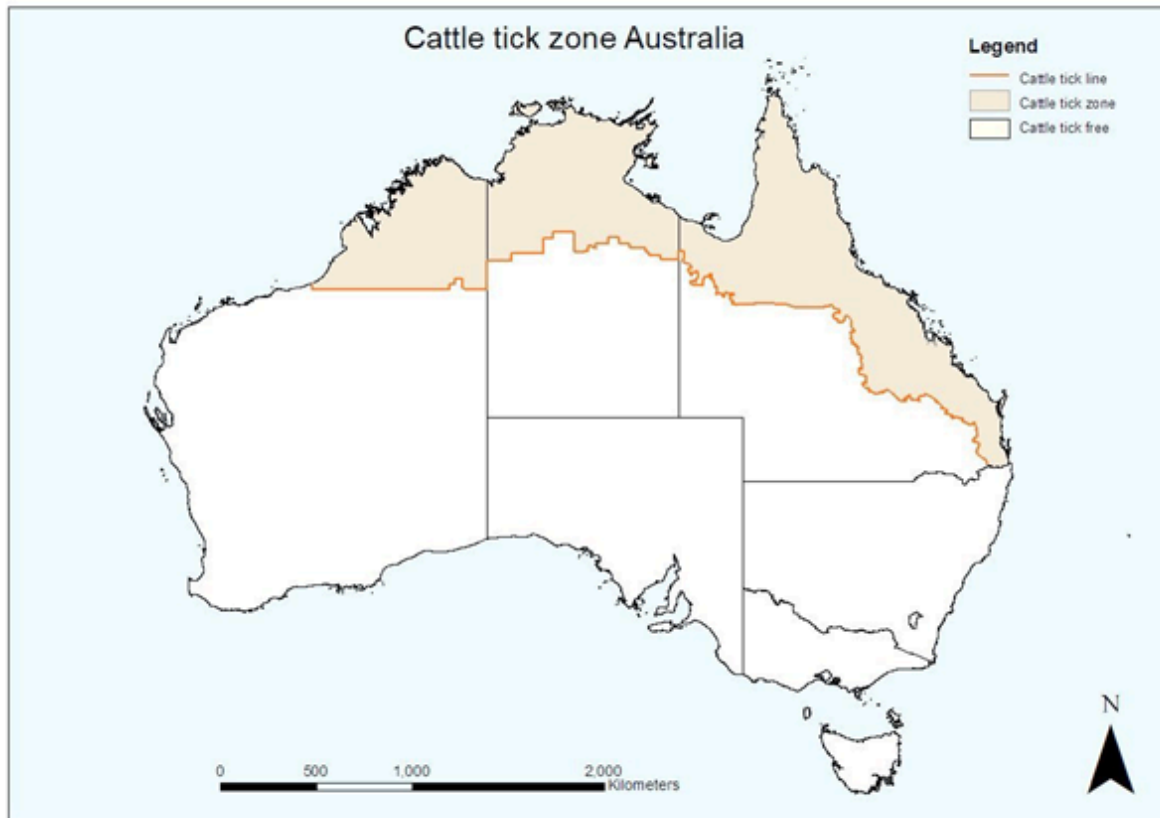


Figure 4. Tick Zone, MLA 2023

Certifications

Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) – The on-farm assurance program that underpins market access for Australian red meat. LPA National Vendor Declarations (NVDs) provide evidence of livestock history and on-farm practices when transferring livestock through the value chain. [Livestock Production Assurance \(LPA\)](#) | [Integrity Systems](#)

Meat Standards Australia (MSA) – Eating Quality carcass grading used within the Australian red meat industry. Managed by Meat & Livestock Australia. [Meat Standards Australia](#) | [Meat & Livestock Australia](#)

European Union Cattle Accreditation Scheme (EUCAS) – A national animal production scheme that guarantees full traceability of all animals through the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS). EUCAS allows Australia to meet the European Union (EU) market requirements for beef by segregating cattle that have never been treated with Hormonal Growth Promotants (HGP) at any time. Administered by the Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment. [EUCAS Scheme](#) | [DAFF](#)

National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) – The National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) is an independently audited quality assurance program for the Australian lotfeeding industry that was initiated by the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) and is managed by AUS-MEAT through the Feedlot Industry Accreditation Committee (FLIAC). [NFAS Scheme](#)

Organic Certified – Certified organic means a product has been independently audited by an approved certifying body to the National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce (and aligned private standards). This covers how food is grown, handled, and processed – without synthetic chemicals or GMOs, with strong requirements for animal welfare, soil health, biodiversity, and full traceability. [Organic Certified](#) | [Aust Organic](#)

USDA Organic Certified – In the United States, “USDA Organic” means a product has been independently inspected and certified under the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) standards. This covers how food is grown, handled, and processed – without synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, or GMOs, with strong requirements for soil and water quality, animal welfare, biodiversity, and full traceability. For Australian producers, USDA Organic certification is often pursued when exporting to, or selling into, the U.S. market, as it provides direct access and consumer recognition under the U.S. system. [USDA Organic Certified](#) | [ACO](#)

GAP Certified – is a meaningful animal welfare labeling program, verified by audits conducted on farms. It is defined by three overlapping animal welfare components that together with good management and genetics contribute to good farm animal welfare. Health & Productivity, Natural Living & Emotional well being. [GAP Certification](#) | [Global Animal Partnership](#)

Greenhams – Never Ever beef program [Greenhams NEE](#) | [Greenhams Dairy Beef](#)

JBS Farm Assurance – [JBS Farm Assurance](#)

Teys – Grasslands, Teys Certified Angus [Certified Angus](#) | [Teys](#)

Other accreditations – These may include sustainability, carbon farming claims, bio-dynamic and the like.

Assessments

Liveweight, Curfew & Dressing Percentage

Liveweight – Measured on metric scales only and in one kilogram increments for individual animal weights

Time off feed – Commences with the start time for mustering and concludes at a time mid-way through the actual weighing activity

Time off water – Commences with the start time for mustering and concludes with a time mid-way through the actual weighing activity

Weight ranges – < 200kg, 200-280kg, 281-330kg, 331-400kg, 401-500kg, 501-600kg, > 600kg

Dressing percentage – Dressing percentage simply states the relationship between the carcass weight and the estimated or known live weight. Dressing percentage is not a measure of carcass merit or carcass yield. (More information on Dressing percentage can be found [here](#).) The term 'yield' is often used instead of dressing percentage. This should not be confused with the retail yield of meat from a carcass. The calculation for Dressing Percentage is: (hot standard carcass weight ÷ live weight) × 100

The live weight may be a 'full' live weight or an 'empty' live weight

Lean Meat Yield (LMY) – Often referred to as 'Yield,' is the proportion of lean meat in a carcass relative to its total weight. It is typically expressed as a percentage (LMY%). LMY is primarily influenced by several factors, with the most significant being muscularity and fatness. As muscularity (muscle score) increases, LMY also increases. Conversely, as fatness (fat score) increases, LMY decreases. Other factors influencing LMY include breed genetics, age at slaughter, and sex.

Weighed – Weighed on unregistered scales (unless otherwise stated) within the acceptable time from listing, time off feed prior to weighing to be noted.

Not Weighed – No weight available.



Figure 5. Beef Carcasses, Canva 2025

Understanding Curfew Weight, Liveweight Loss & Shrink in Cattle

Curfew weight, or curfewing is the generic term used in livestock industries for the practice of enforced food and water deprivation prior to transport, sale or slaughter (Fisher et al. 2006). It is believed to help standardise cattle liveweight.

Liveweight loss, often referred to as shrink, is the reduction in an animal's body weight due to factors such as transport, handling, stress, and feed/water deprivation. Liveweight loss starts to occur once stock are removed from feed and water. Cattle lose liveweight quickly in the first 12–16 hours off feed and water, then the rate of loss gradually decreases. This liveweight loss will not greatly affect the carcass weight unless the animal is off feed for more than 48 hours.

There are numerous factors that affect liveweight loss:

- Reduction of gut and bladder content – In grown cattle, gut fill and bladder fullness accounts for 12–22% of an animal's liveweight. Once stock are removed from feed and water reduction in liveweight will occur. The rate of decline is dependent on the rate of passage of the feed (digestibility %), the moisture content of the feed and if it is a grain concentrate (Feedlot cattle)
- Stress will also have an influence on the degree of liveweight loss. Handling, particularly poor handling, and novelty stress all increase the severity of liveweight loss
- Transport: The length of the journey and the nature of the route (hilly and curvy roads are believed to increase shrinkage/liveweight loss)

Guide for liveweight loss:

Time Off Feed & Water	Percentage Liveweight Loss	Increased Dressing Percentage
1 hour	1.5%	0.75%
2 hours	2.5%	1.25%
4 hours	4%	2%
12 hours	7%	3.5%
16 hours	8%	4+%

Table 3. Liveweight Loss

Scores

Fat Score

Fat score is an independent assessment of subcutaneous fat without any assessment for muscle. Fat score in conjunction with muscle score provides an accurate overall description of the live animal.

Fat score is scored using a definitive 6-point classification system, with a welfare score (0) to describe nutritionally deprived or diseased cattle.

Sites to assess fat score:

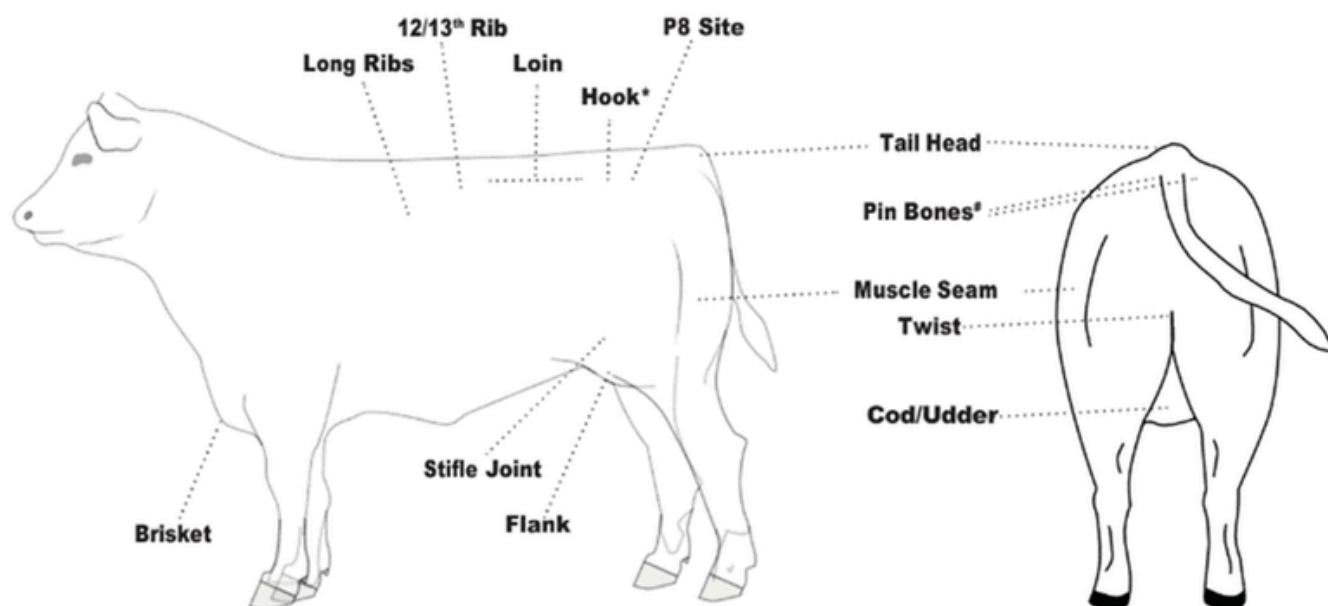


Figure 6. Fat Score Sites, Brett Littler 2025

*Cranial end pelvic bone. Hook may also be referred to as hip bone

Fat Score Table

FAT SCORES	12-13TH RIB	P8 FAT DEPTH	VISUAL ASSESSMENT	MANUAL ASSESSMENT
0	0	0	Welfare score Refer to Section 14 - Animal Welfare for further detail	Welfare score
1	1 to 2mm	1 to 2mm	• There is no fat around the tailhead • Hook, tailhead and ribs are prominent • No filling in the brisket • Cut up in the twist and flank • Individual muscle seams easily seen and distinguished	• Ribs are sharp • There is no fat felt between the hide and bone at point of the hook and along the spinous processes of the back line
2	2 to 3mm	3 to 6 mm	• Hooks, pin bones and ribs still obvious • No fat beside tailhead • Ribs are no longer visually obvious • Flank is still cut up • Little filling is evident in brisket and twist • Muscle seam in hindquarter is still evident • Other muscle seams are no longer as visible	• Hook bone and ribs are hard with no softness • Long ribs are easily distinguished when felt • Spinous processes feel rounded rather than sharp
3	4 to 7mm	7 to 12mm	• Filling is now evident around the tail head, twist and brisket • The flank is starting to let down • Hooks and pin bones are now having a moderately rounded appearance • The muscle seam in the hindquarter is no longer visible	• The ribs are easily felt under firm pressure to distinguish between them • Fat that is easily felt covers either side of the tailhead and there is a softness over the pin, hook and backline
4	8 to 12mm	13 to 22mm	• There is filling around the tailhead and small mounds of fat are starting to become present • There is fat cover now evident over the hook and is taking on a rounded appearance • There is filling in the brisket and twist and taking a rounded appearance • The flank is now let down/filled with fat and is in line with stifle joint • Muscle seam on hindquarter is raised by fat and is now visible	• There is some fat cover around the hook bone • Small mounds of fat which are soft to touch are present around the tailhead • Ribs are hard to feel/distinguish • There is now fat that is easily depressed over the hook and backline. This can be depressed by approximately 10mm

5	13 to 18mm	23 – 32mm	• Heavy fat covering, fat is starting to mound over pin bones and hooks • The brisket is taking on very rounded appearance • The tailhead is now enveloped in fat • Ribs appear wavy/ropey due to fat folds • The animal is now squaring off in the flank and twist area	• Ribs cannot be felt • Pin bones, backline and hook bones are not easily felt and when depressed will give up to 20mm
6	Over 18mm	Over 32mm	• The animal now takes on a block/square appearance • Tailhead and hooks are completely buried by large rounds of fat • Ribs are wavy/ropey due to fat folds • The brisket and udder are heavy and let down	

Table 4. Fat Scores

Further information:

[YouTube](#)

[DPI Live Cattle Assessment](#)

Muscle Score (Optional)

Muscle score measures the degree of muscularity of an animal and describes the shape of cattle independent of the influence of fatness. Muscling is the degree of thickness or convexity of an animal relative to its frame size, after adjustments have been made for subcutaneous fat. The degree of muscling positively influences dressing percentage and meat yield, therefore indicating the greater value of more heavily muscled animals.

There are five muscle scores ranging from A (extremely well-muscled) through to E (lightly muscled).

Sight/areas of reference for muscle assessment:

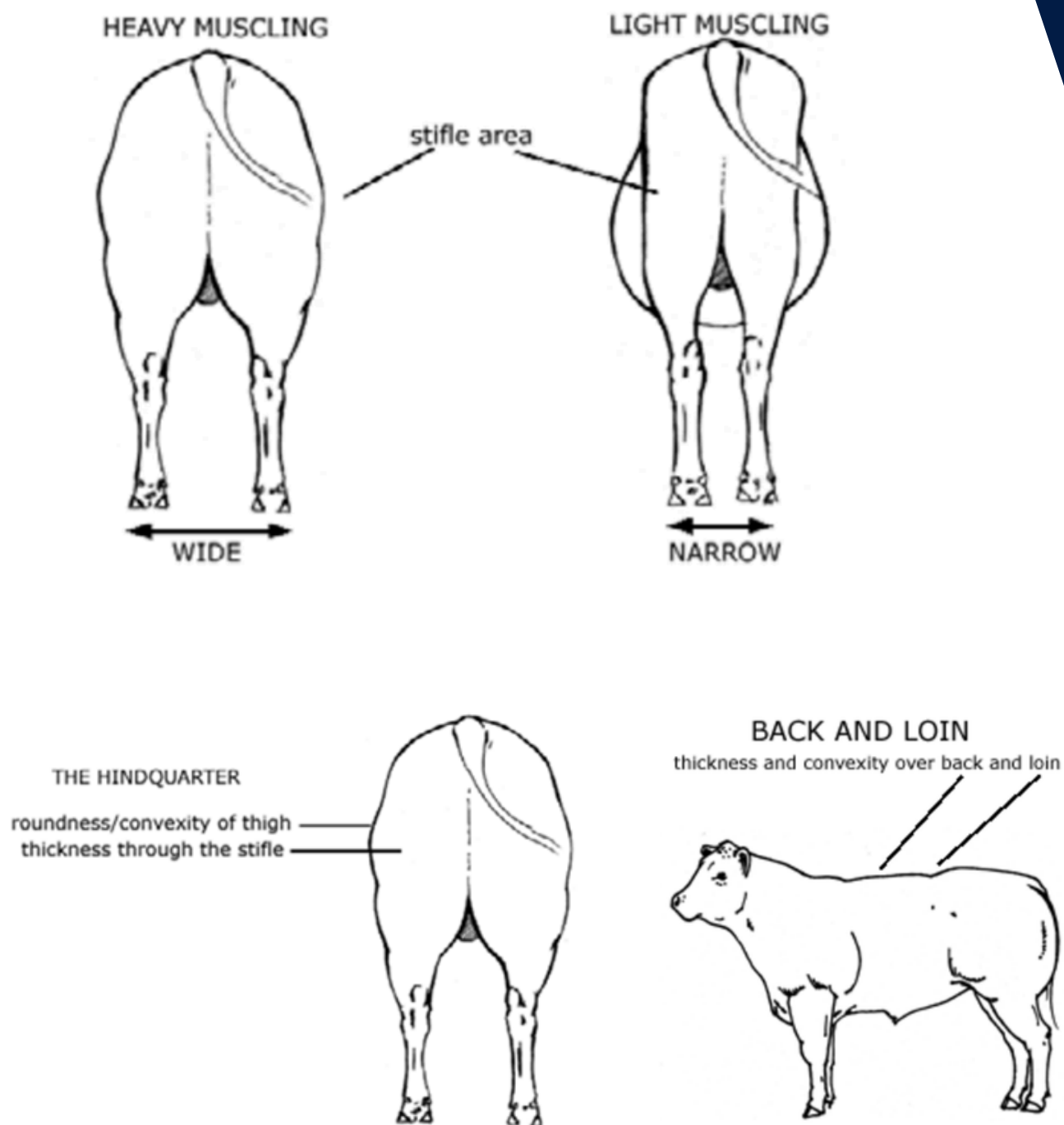
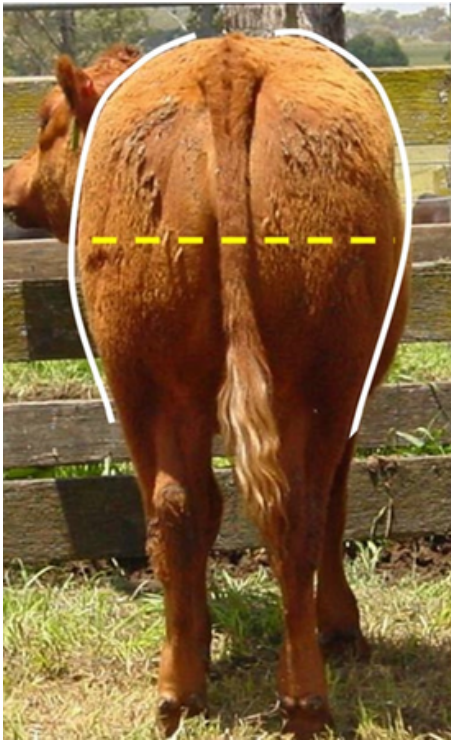
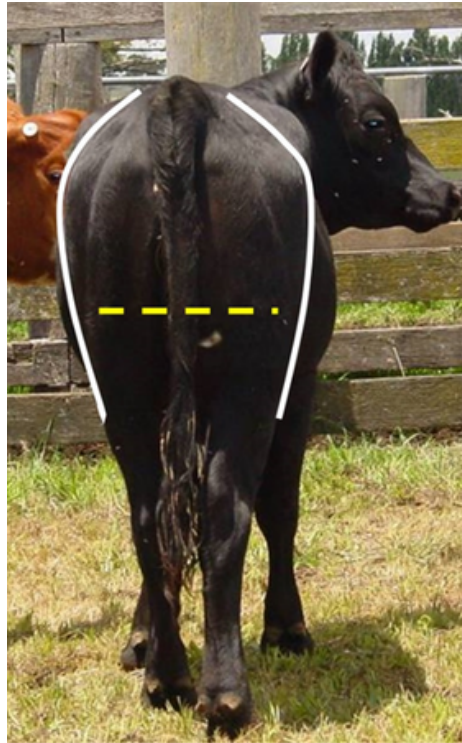


Figure 7. Muscle Score Sites, Brett Littler 2025



Well Muscled



Poor Muscled

Muscle Scores & Descriptions

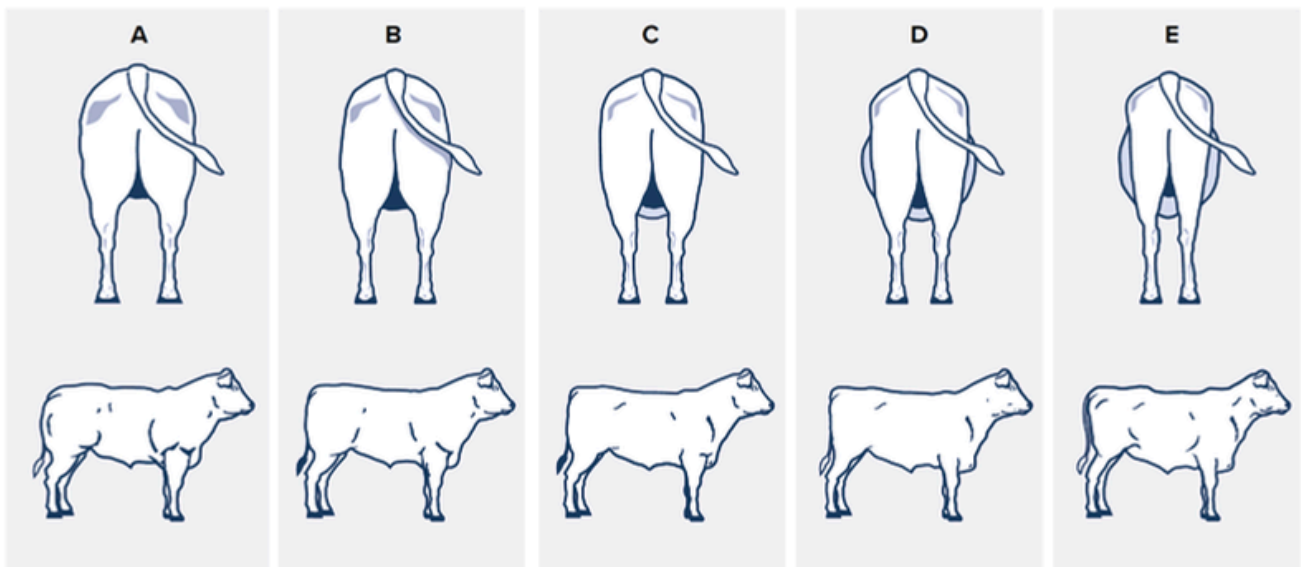


Figure 8. Muscle Score Descriptions, Brett Littler 2025

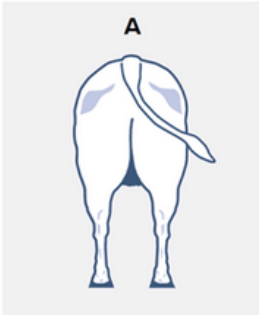
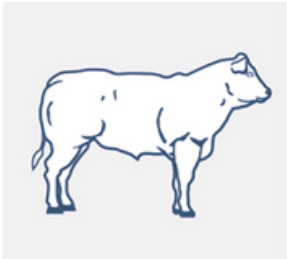
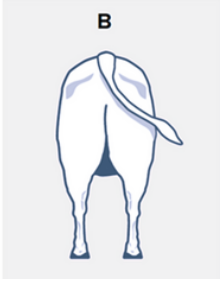
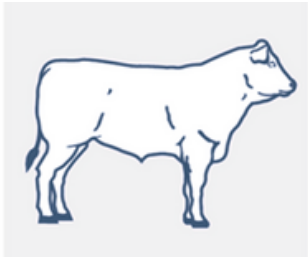
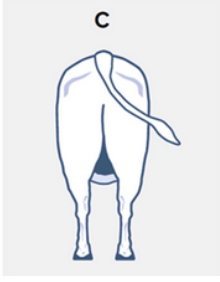
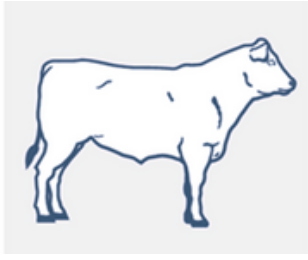
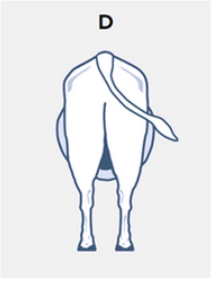
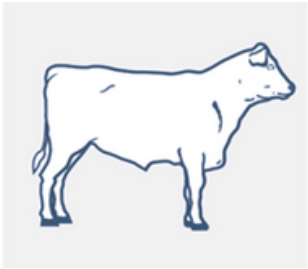
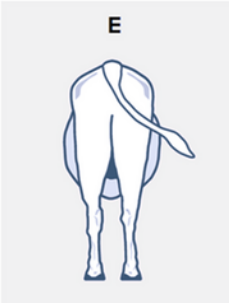
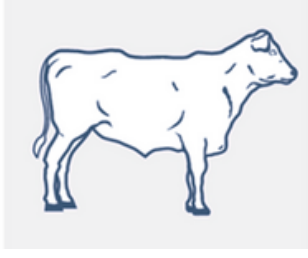
 	A. Very heavy muscling • Extremely thick through stifle area • Muscle seams or grooves between muscles are evident if not sufficient fat cover (over 7mm) • 'Apple bummed' – when viewed from the side, hindquarters bulge like an apple • Butterfly top line – loin muscles along the top of the animal are actually higher than the backbone
 	B. Heavy muscling • Thick stifle • Rounded thigh viewed from behind • Some convexity in hindquarter from side view • Flat and wide over top line – muscle is at the same height as backbone
 	C. Medium muscling • Flat down thigh when viewed from behind • Flat, tending to angular over top line
 	D. Moderate muscling • Narrow stance • Flat to convex down the thigh • Thin through stifle • Sharp, angular over the top line (except when very fat)
 	E. Light muscling • Dairy type – very angular • Sharp 'tent topped' over top line • Virtually no thickness through stifle at all • Stands with feet together; concave thigh

Table 5. Muscle Scores

Further information:

[DPI Muscle Scoring](#)

[YouTube](#)

[Muscle Scoring Beef Cattle](#)

[DPI Shape & Muscle](#)

Dentition

Dentition is the measure of the eruption of permanent incisor teeth. The method of assessing incisor teeth as per the AUS-MEAT Language may be used to determine the physical state/soundness of incisor teeth for the purpose of management.

A permanent incisor is defined as: “**A new incisor that has broken (erupted) through the gum surface**”. Permanent incisors are used to determine age in animals.

Dentition score are:

- **Zero (0) Teeth (Milktooth)** – No permanent incisors
- **2 tooth** – Animals with 1-2 permanent incisors are recorded as 2 tooth
- **4 tooth** – Animals with 3-4 permanent incisors are recorded as 4 tooth.
- **6 tooth** – Animals with 5-6 permanent incisors are recorded as 6 tooth.
- **8 tooth** – Animals with 7-8 permanent incisors are recorded as 8 tooth.
- **Broken Mouth** – Meaning the incisor teeth of the bottom jaw are loose, partly missing or worn down are recorded as broken.

Examples:



Zero (0) Teeth (Milktooth)

- Has no eruption of permanent incisor teeth



2 Tooth

- One or two permanent teeth erupting or obvious



4 Tooth

- Three or four permanent teeth erupting or obvious



6 Tooth

·Five or six permanent teeth erupting or obvious



8 Tooth

·Seven or eight permanent teeth erupting or obvious



Broken Mouth

·Meaning the incisor teeth of the bottom jaw are loose, partly missing or worn down.
Used to assess cows to determine the risk to them from reduced pasture intake, and for culling assessment.

Temperament

The term 'Temperament' is used to describe the behaviour of all cattle in response to an environment, stimuli or situation. The temperament of an individual animal is a result of both its inherent temperament and its environment, including handling and training.

Temperament for StockLive is assessed and ranked into 1 of the 5 different temperament categories. The 5 categories are:

- Docile
- Restless
- Nervous
- Flighty
- Aggressive

These can be assessed at 3 different stages - Paddock, Yard and Crush.

Paddock assessment: This can be done in the paddock which the stock are coming from or being returned to, a holding paddock or when cattle are being moved into the yard.

Yard assessment: Ideally this is to be done after cattle are moved into the yard and allowed 30 minutes to settle down. This can be done when cattle are moved through different pens in the yard including the pound and force.

Crush assessment: This is done as cattle are individually processed through the weigh crate/crush area. Ideally this should take place in the crush for about 30 seconds without the animal being caught in the head bail.

Temperament assessment:

Docile: General comment

- Mild/settled disposition, gentle and easily handled with a limited flight zone (somewhat dull disposition).
- Cattle stand and move slowly during handling and if left undisturbed will settle quickly, displaying signs of normal behaviour like cud chewing.
- Does not pull on crush when caught and exits crush calmly when released.

Paddock

- Gentle and easily handled
- Moves slowly when in a mob
- Needs encouragement to move away from handler.
- If separated from the mob can be held and will walk to return to mob when allowed

Yard

- Easily handled individually
- Turns slowly and walks away when handler enters flight zone.
- Easily drafted out and able to be held individually away from mob
- Calm disposition and minimal quick movement (Running)

Crush	· Able to be stopped from pushing onto the crush easily · Enters crush quietly · Will stand in the crush with minimal movement · When caught in head bail will stand. · When released from the crush will not pull back hitting the back of the crush · Exits the crush calmly
-------	---

Restless: General comment

- Quieter than average but slightly restless with some movement on approach and during handling
- Still displaying a quiet/calm disposition, with a limited flight zone and may be stubborn during handling
- Cattle easily handled individually and in mob. Handler in control at all times.
- Exits crush promptly, may try to back out of crush, pull on head bail and some flicking of tail when in the crush.
- No nervous defecation/urination or vocalisation

Paddock	· Quieter than average but slightly restless with some movement on approach and during handling · Moves slowly to a quick walk when in a mob and has a flight zone that is still limited but does not require encouragement to move away from handler or get a response · If separated from the mob is still able to be held but with some effort and will run to return to mob.
Yard	· Starting to resist being handled individually · Still displaying a quiet/calm disposition, with a limited flight zone and may be stubborn during handling · Some effort required to be drafted out and held individually away from mob but simply achieved. · Slightly restless and with some quicker movements (eg. running)
Crush	· Will follow in quickly into a crush but able to be stopped · Enters crush with haste but will not crash into head bail. · Will stand in the crush with some movement · Exits crush promptly, may try to back out of crush, pull on head bail and some flicking of tail when in the crush. · No nervous defecation, urination or vocalisation

Nervous: General comment

- Typical temperament is manageable, but nervous, impatient and moves quickly.
- Flight zone has increased with limited pressure to get a response.
- Handling individually increases nervous behaviour and exhibits clear signs (rapid movement and trying to push past handlers) of eagerness to return to mob.
- Handler in control when handled in a mob.
- A moderate amount of struggling, movement, and tail flicking when in crush.
- Repeated pushing and pulling on head bail.
- Minimal nervous defecation, urination or vocalisation
- Exits crush briskly.
- Inexperienced or poor handlers may cause these cattle to display some flighty behaviours

Paddock	· Temperament is manageable, but nervous, impatient moves quickly in the mob. · Flight zone is increased with limited pressure required to get a response/reaction. · May try to lead away or break away from handlers. · Handler in control when handled in a mob. · If separated from the mob an animal will require a substantial effort to be kept away and will very quickly return to mob when allowed.
Yard	· Handling individually increases nervous behaviour and exhibits clear signs of eagerness to return to mob. · Handler in control when handled in a mob. · Effort required to be drafted out and held individually away from mob. · Restless when in the yard, aware of handlers/movements and react quickly with minimal pressure.
Crush	· Will follow in quickly into a crush if allowed but will balk and hesitate if not allowed to flow. · Enters crush with haste but sometimes will crash into head bail. · A moderate amount of struggling, movement, and tail flicking. · Repeated pushing and pulling on head bail. · Minimal nervous defecation, urination or vocalisation · Exits crush briskly.

Flighty: General comment

- Large/long flight distance with minimal pressure causing large responses like running/rushing of individuals and mob.
- Runs fence line and may jump when penned individually.
- Very agitated and looking for means of escape and looking for space.
- Considered scared of human interaction rather than aggressive.
- Has erratic movements, tail flicking, ground pawing, turning sideways, pinned-back ears, and snorting in yards.
- Will move to the back/centre of a mob and will raise its head and maintain eye contact with the handler/handler's
- May vocalise and froth at the mouth when in the crush.
- Will display continuous tail flicking when in a pound, force, race or crush.
- Defecates and urinates during handling in the yards and processing area.
- Never settles in the crush and exits wildly.

Paddock	· Large/long flight distance with minimal pressure causing large responses like running/rushing of individuals and mob. · Runs fence line and may jump when penned individually or separated. · When handled in a mob will tend to move at a quick pace or run · Experienced handlers required when handled in a mob. · Large response from too much pressure when handled.
Yard	· Difficult to handle individually with increase nervous/erratic behaviour. · Will move to the back/centre of a mob and will raise its head and maintain eye contact with the handler/handler's · Has erratic movements, tail flicking, ground pawing, turning sideways, pinned-back ears, and snorting in yards. · Sometimes reckless when in the yard. Will rush gates and not easily stopped when drafting. · Very aware of handlers/movements and react quickly with minimal pressure.
Crush	· Will follow in quickly into a crush. · When enter crush pushing forwards - leaning on front gates or head bale. · Jumpy and out of control, quivers and struggles violently when in a crush. · May vocalise and froth at the mouth when in the head bail. · Will display continuous tail flicking when in a pound, force, race or crush. · Defecates and urinates during handling in the yards and processing area. · Never settles in the crush and exits wildly.

Aggressive: General comment

- Very similar to "Flighty", but with added aggressive behaviour, fearfulness, extreme agitation, and continuous movement.
- Continuous movement when handled in a mob.
- Disrupts handling of other cattle in mob.
- Very agitated and looking for means of escape.
- Highly reactive to any stimulus
- Likely to exhibit attack behaviour when handled alone or when confined in a small yard, pound, force or race.
- Erratic movements, tail flicking, ground pawing, turning sideways, pinned-back ears, and snorting.
- Will jump and bellow while in head bail/crush.
- Nervous defecation, urination or vocalisation
- Exits the crush frantically.

Paddock	· Very similar to "Flighty", but with added aggressive behaviour, fearfulness, extreme agitation, and continuous movement. · Continuous movement when handled in a mob. · Disrupts handling of other cattle in mob. · Very agitated and looking for means of escape. · Highly reactive to any stimulus
Yard	· Continuous movement when handled in a mob. · Disrupts handling of other cattle in mob. · Very agitated and looking for means of escape and space. · Highly reactive to any stimulus · Likely to exhibit attack behaviour when handled alone or when confined in a small yard, pound, force or race. · Erratic movements, tail flicking, ground pawing, turning sideways, pinned-back ears, and snorting.
Crush	· Will drive and burrow into a crush. · Enters crush with a haste and will continually move and crashing into crush/head bail. · Erratic movement in the crush and will not settle · Will jump and bellow while in head bail/crush. · Nervous defecation, urination or vocalisation particularly when caught in the head bail · Exits the crush frantically – sometimes kicks out as leaving crush and scramble looking for space/escape.

Table 6. Temperament Definitions

Further information:

Breedplan Docility Scoring

Handling – handled with. Handling refers to the methods, devices, techniques, and equipment used to move or interact with animals for routine management and mustering.

(Note: Understanding the ways and means of handling stock can help explain why cattle sometimes behave differently when handled. Cattle are naturally neophobic (fearful of new experiences), and unfamiliar handling methods or equipment can trigger a fear response, affecting their behaviour and welfare.)

Bike/Buggy, Dogs, Horses, On Foot and Other.

Other can refer to helicopters, drones, and planes)

Horn Status

Horn status refers to the number of head in the lot that have been visually assessed into 1 of 5 groups.

There are:

- **Polled** – There is no evidence of horn growth as a genetic attribute
- **Scurs or Scurred** – Incomplete, undeveloped horn-like structures generally only attached to the skin
- **Tipped** – The tip of the horn has been removed
- **Dehorned** – Where the horn has been removed leaving no protrusion from the skull
- **Horned** – No portion of the horn has been removed

Notable Physical Traits

Eye scarring:

Blue or white eye – This is as a result of damage and injury to the eye (usually as a result of pinkeye). As a result of the recovery process from pinkeye, the eye becomes a cloudy blue colour, then begins to clear usually over 3–5 weeks after the initial infection. In more severely affected eyes, scarring results in a small bluish-white spot remaining in the centre of the cornea.

If their eye is a cloudy blue colour or has a small bluish-white spot at the time of assessment it is considered eye scarring and should be recorded.

Note: StockLive strongly advises against listing animals with active pinkeye.

Pinkeye in cattle is a bacterial infection of the eye that causes inflammation and, in severe cases, temporary or permanent blindness. There are 3 stages of pink eye (Information can be found [here](#)). The first sign usually noticed is profuse tear secretions running down the face, with cattle blinking frequently or holding the eye partly closed due to increased light sensitivity. There is also reddening of the membranes of the eye and in the margins of the eye itself. A white spot in addition to the above descriptions is suggestive of pinkeye.

Ringworm:

Ringworm is a skin lesion, usually circular and hairless, caused by a fungal infection of the hair follicle and outer layer of skin. *Trichophyton verrucosum* is the principal agent affecting cattle.

There is a scoring system for Ringworms but for the purposes of assessment it is whether any skin lesions are present. (More information can be found at page 51 of the National Bovine Livestock Language Guidelines or [here](#).)

Warts:

Warts are caused by a papilloma virus. Warts are a raised hairless lesion and can vary in size from 1mm up to about 50mm in size. Warts have a hard surface, may be smooth and rounded, have finger-like projections, or have a rough cauliflower appearance. They may have a dry or crusty surface.

There is no current scoring system for warts and for the purpose of assessment all visible warts need to be recorded. More information on warts can be found [here](#).

Other:

The following are examples of things that should be recorded as other:

- Lice
- Lumps or lesions
- Dog bites
- Birth marks
- 'Capped hips'
- Long toes
- 'Bottle' teats
- Poor attached udders
- Buffalo fly lesions
- Mud and dag contamination
- Cracked hooves
- Udders with defects
- Vaccine lumps
- Grass or Burr seed contamination

admin@stocklive.com.au
www.stocklive.com.au
1300 259 742