

STOCKLIVE

Dairy Language



v1.5
August 2026

Contents

p3. Introduction

p4-5. Transport, Welfare & Chain of Responsibility

p6-7. Livestock Description

- Production Systems
- Sex Definitions
- Category & Sub Category

p8. Breed Descriptors & Ownership/Traceability

p9. Age

p10. Joining

p11. Treatments

p12. Animal Health

- Export Slaughter Interval & Withholding Periods

p13-14. Movement Control & Grazing

- Grazing Condition
- Movement Restrictions
- Tick Zone

p15. Certifications

p16-17. Assessments

- Curfew, Liveweight & Weight Ranges
- Liveweight Loss & Shrunk Weight

p18-32. Scores

Table of Figures

- Figure 1. Holstein Calf, Canva 2025
- Figure 2. Jersey Calf Suckling, Canva 2025
- Figure 3. Dairy, Canva 2025
- Figure 4. Tick Zone, MLA 2023
- Figure 5. Beef Carcasses, Canva 2025
- Figure 6. Fat Score Sites, Brett Littler 2025
- Figure 7. BCS Sites, Brett Littler 2025
- Figure 8. BCS Flow Chart, 312 Landlinks Press 2005
- Figure 9. Lameness Scores, Dairy Australia 2016
- Figure 10. Cows Eating, Canva 2025
- Figure 11. Quad Bike, Victorian Farmers Federation 2022

Table of Tables

- Table 1. State and Territory Legislation, StockLive 2025
- Table 2. SL Cattle Breeds - Beef, StockLive 2025
- Table 3. SL Cattle Breeds - Dairy, StockLive 2025
- Table 4. Liveweight Loss, Brett Littler 2025
- Table 5. Body Condition Scores, Brett Littler 2025
- Table 6. Body Condition Scores with Images, Dairy Australia 2023
- Table 7. Temperament Definitions, Brett Littler 2025

Introduction

This document outlines the standard language used across the StockLive platform when describing dairy 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 **Dairy Cattle** —which are primarily managed for milk production. This distinguishes them from Beef Cattle which are livestock bred and raised solely for meat 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 guide to Assessing dairy cattle body condition for transport or sale at a saleyard. (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

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

Term	Definition
Female	A female bovine
Dam	The 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	The male parent of a calf or potential calf
Mixed	Any combination of male or female bovine

Category & Sub Category

Term	Definition
Heifer	Female bovine that has not yet calved or is in 1st lactation 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)
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
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
NSM (Non-Station Mated)	Refers to when a cow or heifer has not been intentionally exposed to a bull
Joined	Refers to when female cattle have been running with bulls or artificially inseminated
1st lactation	the initial milk production period of a heifer following her first calf at approx. 2 years of age
2nd lactation	the subsequent milk production period after her second calving

Livestock Description Cont'd

Term	Definition
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
Pregnancy Tested in Calf (PTIC)	Pregnancy Tested In Calf. Meaning that a pregnancy can be detected (foetus) by any of the pregnancy diagnosis methods. 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. Holstein Calf, Canva 2025

Breed Descriptors & Ownership/Traceability

Term	Definition
Vendor Bred	Vendor has owned the cattle since birth. Can have moved between different properties and PICs under the control of the vendor (ownership or agistment)
Lifetime Traceable	The animals' movements between properties/ land holdings is traceable since birth on the NLIS database
Purchased	The cattle have been purchased from another producer, property, or PIC. Purchase timeframes on the NVD are grouped as follows: Less than 2 months; 2-6 month; 6-12 months; more than 12 months. If livestock were purchased at different times, the most recent purchase timeframe should be used.
Breed Description	Breed description is provided to describe animals with genetic characteristics or traits representative of a certain breed.
Bloodline	Bloodline refers to a lineage or family line within a breed that often shares further common genetic traits, such as, fertility, growth rates or disease resistance. A bloodline will generally be the seed stock breeders' stud name.

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 Breed List – Dairy	
Angus	Guernsey
Aussie Red	Holstein-Friesian
Ayrshire	Illawarra
Brown Swiss	Jersey
Devon	Shorthorn (& Poll & Beef & Durham)

Table 3. SL Cattle Breeds – Dairy

***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

Date of Birth

Age can be described using one of the following formats:

Terminology	Description	Example/Notes
Known date of birth	DD/MM/YYYY	This is intended for stud cattle only
Known months or year of age	XX months of age or XX years of age OR XX-XX months of age or XX-XX years of age	10 months of age or 4 years of age OR 8 - 10 months of age or 4 - 5 years of age
Calving period	MMM/YY to MMM/YY	JUL-25 to SEP-25



Figure 2. Jersey Calf Suckling, Canva 2025

Joining

Terminology	Description
Joining	The period of days or months the bulls and cows have run together or the date of Artificial insemination.
Natural Joining	Natural mating where bulls have been run with female cattle for a period of days, weeks or months
Artificial Insemination (AI)	Depositing semen into the reproductive tract of the cow or 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 Date	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	Cow or heifer has had one of the pregnancy test methods below applied in order to establish her status as Pregnancy Tested In Calf (PTIC) or Empty

Pregnancy Test Method

The following methods are approved options for establishing pregnancy status in StockLive Assessments:

Pregnancy Test Method	Description
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.

Pregnancy Test Personnel

These tests may be conducted by the following personnel:

Pregnancy Test Personnel	Description
Accredited Veterinarians	PREgCHECK® Pregnancy test service offered by Australian Cattle Veterinarians through accredited veterinarians.
Veterinarians	Persons qualified to treat diseased or injured animals; a veterinary surgeon.
Independent Scanners	Persons 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

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.

Animal Health

Animal Health Treatments

Always follow the safety and use directions on the product label. Rules around the use of some chemicals can differ from state to state, for more information go to <https://www.apvma.gov.au/about/use-agvet-chemicals-australia>

Cattle treatments are not only veterinary drugs but may also include feed additives, 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.

Parasites

Internal parasites are organisms living inside the animal's body, typically in the gastrointestinal tract, lungs, or liver, and cause damage by feeding on blood, tissues, or nutrients. External parasites live on the outside of the animal's body, causing skin irritation and blood loss. Common symptoms of excessive parasite burdens include general ill-thrift, loss of appetite and body condition and scouring. For further information, visit <https://wormboss.com.au>.



Figure 3, Dairy, Canva 2025

Animal Health

Treatment Types	Description
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 lonophores (eg. Rumensin, Bovatec, etc.) or other feed supplements and rumen modifiers

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

Term	Definition
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
Native Pasture	Grasses that occurred in Australia before European settlement and have limited legume content or fertiliser history
Supplementary	The practice of providing additional fodder (grain, pellet or hay) or nutritional supplement (commonly energy, protein or phosphorus) to complement the pasture or forage when insufficient quality and quantity is present in the paddock. It can be fed in self-feeders or trail fed
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
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
Total Mixed Ration (TMR)	Refers to a specific feeding method where all the necessary feed ingredients for dairy cows are combined into a single, uniform mixture. TMR involves mixing forages (like hay and silage), grains, protein sources, vitamins, and minerals into one feed mix.

Movement Restrictions

Movement control regulations prevent the spread of infectious livestock diseases between properties, regions, and states. When cattle are sold, transported, or agisted, vendors and buyers must provide accountability and traceability through the completion of a [National Vendor Declaration \(NVD\)](#), and comply with national and state-level biosecurity requirements, including the accurate completion of the [National Cattle Health Declaration \(NCHD\)](#).

Assessors play a key role in verifying the status of consignments prior to listing for sale. This includes identifying any restricted diseases—such as —and recording available documentation and declarations.

Understanding disease-specific movement restrictions helps maintain animal welfare, safeguard market access, and protect the reputation of Australia's cattle industry. Please refer to the industry links in each section below to ensure you understand the regulatory requirements of the states and territories you operate in.

Tick Zone

Movement requirements do change 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](#).

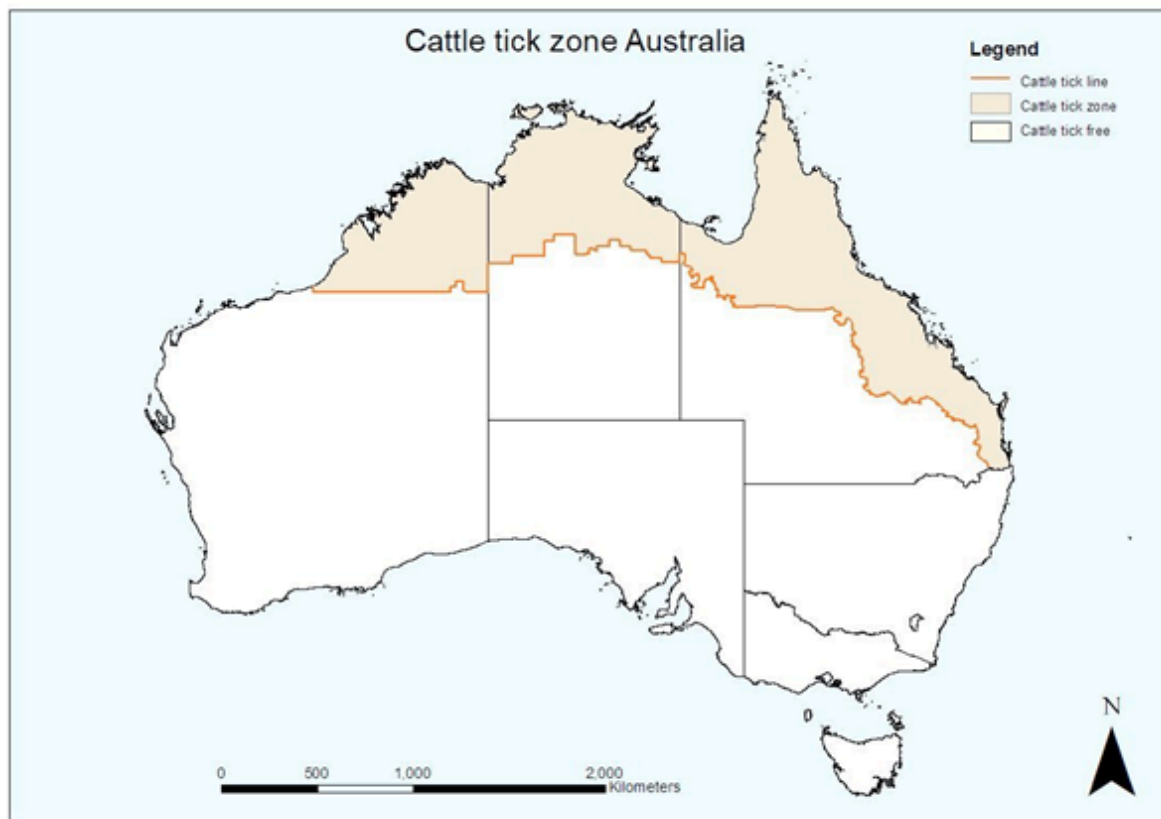


Figure 4. Tick Zone, MLA 2023

[Extended Residue Program \(ERP\)](#)

[Cotton Trash](#)

[Johne's Disease Dairy Score \(JDDS\)](#)

[Blue Tongue](#)

[Live Animals](#)

Certifications

Certification	Website	Description
Organic Certified	Organic Certified Aust Organic	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.
GAP Certified	GAP Certification Global Animal Partnership	GAP Certification 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 and emotional wellbeing.
USDA Organic Certified	USDA Organic Certified ACO	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.
Greenham	Greenham Dairy Beef	The NEVER EVER Beef Program is an on-farm grassfed assurance standard, outlining stringent animal welfare and quality management practices for accredited cattle producers. With endorsement from Certified Humane®, the program underpins some of Greenham’s most renowned premium beef brands, including Cape Grim and Bass Strait, showcasing the rigorous welfare and sustainability practices of accredited producers.
Other accreditations		These may include sustainability, carbon farming claims, bio-dynamic and the like.

Assessments

Curfew, Live Weights & Weight Ranges

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 live weight.

Term	Definition
Time Off Feed	The length of time in hours since the cattle last had access to a food source (pasture, grain, hay, pellets). Commences with the start time for mustering and concludes at a time mid-way through the actual weighing activity.
Time Off Water	The length of time in hours since the cattle last had access to water. Commences with the start time for mustering and concludes at a time mid-way through the actual weighing activity.
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	Consignment was not weighed as part of the Assessment and no weight is available.
Live Weight	Measured on metric scales only and in one kilogram increments for individual animal weights. The live weight may be a 'full' live weight or an 'empty' live weight.
Average Live Weight	The average (mean) live body weight of the consigned animals.
Lightest Live Weight	The body weight of the lightest animal in the consignment.
Heaviest Live Weight	The body weight of the heaviest animal in the consignment.
Total Live Weight	The total (sum) of all the body weights in the consignment.
Weight Ranges	The classification or grouping of animals based on their live weights within specified intervals (as shown in the table below).

Live Weight Ranges

<200kg	200– 280kg	281 – 330kg	331 – 400kg	401–500kg	501–600kg	>600kg
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Live Weight Loss & Shrunk Weight

Live weight loss, or **shrink**, occurs in animals due to transport, handling, stress, and feed/water deprivation. Cattle will lose live weight rapidly in the first 12–16 hours off feed and water, before the rate of loss gradually decreases. This live weight loss will not greatly affect carcase weight unless the animal is off feed for more than 48 hours.

There are numerous factors that affect live weight loss:

- Reduction of gut and bladder content, which accounts for 12–22% of an animal's live weight. The rate of decline is dependent on food digestibility (%), moisture content and if it is a grain concentrate (largely in feedlot cattle)
- Stress will also influence the rate of live weight loss, commonly exacerbated by novelty stress and poor handling.
- Transport length and route conditions such as hilly or windy roads can enhance weight 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 4. Liveweight Loss, Brett Littler 2025

StockLive's **Shrunk Weight** calculation represents the estimated weight at the time of sale, accounting for the live weight loss occurring as a function of mustering, yarding, assessment and environmental factors as well as live weight gained between assessment and sale close. The calculation uses the values defined in the table below to establish the Estimated Shrunk Weight Average in kilograms. **Please note:** this calculation does not account for any change in live weight incurred through post-sale curfew or transport arrangements.

Term	Explanation
Assessment Average Weight (KG)	The average (mean) live weight of the consignment at the time of assessment.
Days between Assessment and Sale Close	The number of days between when the Assessment took place and the Sale Close (which is 24 hours after Sale Opening)
Estimated Current Average Daily Gain (KG)	The estimated average live weight in kilograms the cattle are gaining each day at the time of assessment
Estimated Shrink Percentage (%)	The estimated percentage of live weight loss or shrink that is likely to occur as a result of the sale process, including pre-assessment curfew and environmental factors
Estimated Shrunk Weight Average (KG)	The estimated average weight in kilograms of the cattle at the time of sale, accounting for the live weight gained between assessment and sale as well as live weight loss occurring from mustering, yarding, assessment and environmental factors.

Estimated Shrunk Weight Average (KG) =

[Assessment Ave. Weight (KG)] + ([No. Days between Assessment and Sale Close] x [Estimated Current ADG (KG)]) - [Estimated Shrink Percentage %]

Scores

Body Condition Scoring (BCS)

Body Condition Scoring (BCS) is a management tool widely used in the Australian dairy industry to assess the fat and muscle reserves of dairy cattle. The visual assessment uses a BCS scale of 1 to 8, where 1 represents extremely poor (emaciated) condition and 8 represents overfat or obese cattle. The system is based on condition management principles, focusing on how body condition impacts milk production, reproduction, and overall cow health throughout their production cycle.

It's important to note that body size does not affect the score itself. For example, Australia's two major dairy breeds – Holstein Friesian and Jersey cows – are significantly different in body size and weight.

A Holstein Friesian cow in mid-lactation typically weighs around 600kg, where as a Jersey cow in mid-lactation typically weighs around 400kg.

When improving body condition, the amount of weight gain required to increase by one full body condition score differs between breeds:

Holstein Friesian – ~42 kg per body condition score increase.

Jersey – ~26 kg per body condition score increase.

Holstein Friesian/Jersey Cross – ~34 kg per body condition score increase.

How to Assess Body Condition Score (BCS) in Dairy Cattle

This system employs a visual assessment, focusing on five specific areas of the cow's anatomy to determine fat and at lower scores muscle coverage/utilisation. The scoring ranges from 1 (emaciated) to 8 (very fat), with scores between 3 and 6 being most relevant for dairy management.

1. Area Between the Tail Head and Pin Bones (This region indicates fat deposition)

- Deeply sunken: Indicates low fat reserves.
- Sunken: Moderate fat reserves.
- Slightly sunken: Adequate fat reserves.
- Filled in: High fat reserves.

2. Inside of the Pin Bones (Assess the hollowness inside the pin bones)

- Hollow: Suggests lower body condition.
- Not hollow: Indicates better body condition.

3. Backbone (Evaluate the prominence of the backbone)

- Bumpy ridge: Visible and palpable backbone, indicating lower fat cover.
- Not a bumpy ridge: Smoother appearance, suggesting higher fat cover.

4. Hips (Examine the visibility and sharpness of the hip bones)

- Prominent: Sharp and easily visible, indicating low body condition.
- Rounded: Less defined, suggesting better body condition and higher fat level.

5. Depression Between the Hips and Pin Bones (Look at the shape of the depression in this area)

- U-shaped: Deep depression, indicating lower body condition.
- Shallow: Moderate depression, suggesting adequate condition.
- Flat: Minimal depression, indicating higher body condition.

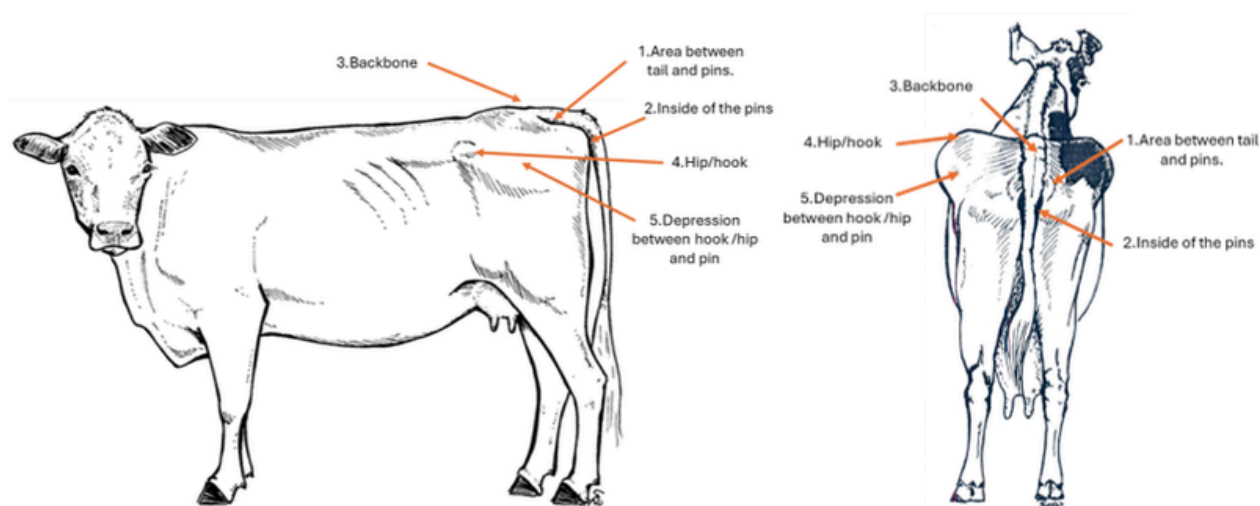


Figure 7. BCS Sites, Brett Littler 2025

Body Condition Score Table

BODY CONDITION SCORES	VISUAL ASSESSMENT
1	Welfare score and not fit for sale or transport. • The animal is emaciated. • The spines of the backbone are individually identifiable – pointed to the touch (skin cover only). • The hips, pins, tailhead, long ribs and short ribs are individually identifiable (skin cover only). • Tail bones can be easily seen. • Inside of pins is sunken to the bone (extremely hollow). • Wasting in the leg muscles has occurred to the extent that stifle joint is identifiable. • Deeply concaved rump muscle between ‘hooks’(hip) and pins. • Skin is tight over the skeleton. • Udder has shrunk. • Dewlap is a skinfold and the sternum identifiable.
2	• Muscle depletion is evident at the back and loin, and the hind leg muscles. • The rump muscle is concave. • Spines of the backbone are identifiable. • Short ribs all prominent and very sharp to touch. • Tail bones just identifiable. • Long ribs, pin bones and tailhead prominent. • The inside of the pins are hollow.
3	• Backbone is easily seen but individual spines not prominent. • Short ribs are identifiable and fairly sharp to the touch. • Tailhead is prominent with no fat around it. • Area inside of pins is slightly hollow. • Hip bones and long ribs are obvious and prominent. • Area between tail and pin bones is concave and sunken. • Rump muscle is slightly concave and leg muscle beginning to waste. • Tail bones not identifiable. • Skin is pliable. • Dewlap has no fat.
4	• Area between tail and pins is sunken. • Backbone is a bumpy, sharp ridge. • Hooks/hips and pin bones are now having a slightly rounded appearance. • The muscle seam in the hindquarter is still visible.

5	• Slightly sunken area between the tail and pins. • U-shaped depression between the hip and pins. • Rounded backbone. • Hook/hip and pin bones are rounded and smooth.
6	• Filled in area between the tale and pins. • Flat depression between the hip and pin. • Rounded backbone.
7	• Individual short ribs are distinguishable only by firm palpation. • Short ribs appear flat or rounded, with no overhanging shelf effect. • Ridge formed by backbone in chine region is rounded and smooth. • Loin and rump regions appear flat. • Hooks are rounded and the span between them is flat. • Area of tail head and pin bones is rounded, with evidence of fat deposit.
8	• Bony structures of backbone, short ribs, and hook and pin bones are not apparent; subcutaneous fat deposit very evident. • Tail head appears to be buried in fatty tissue.

Table 5. Body Condition Scores, Brett Littler 2025

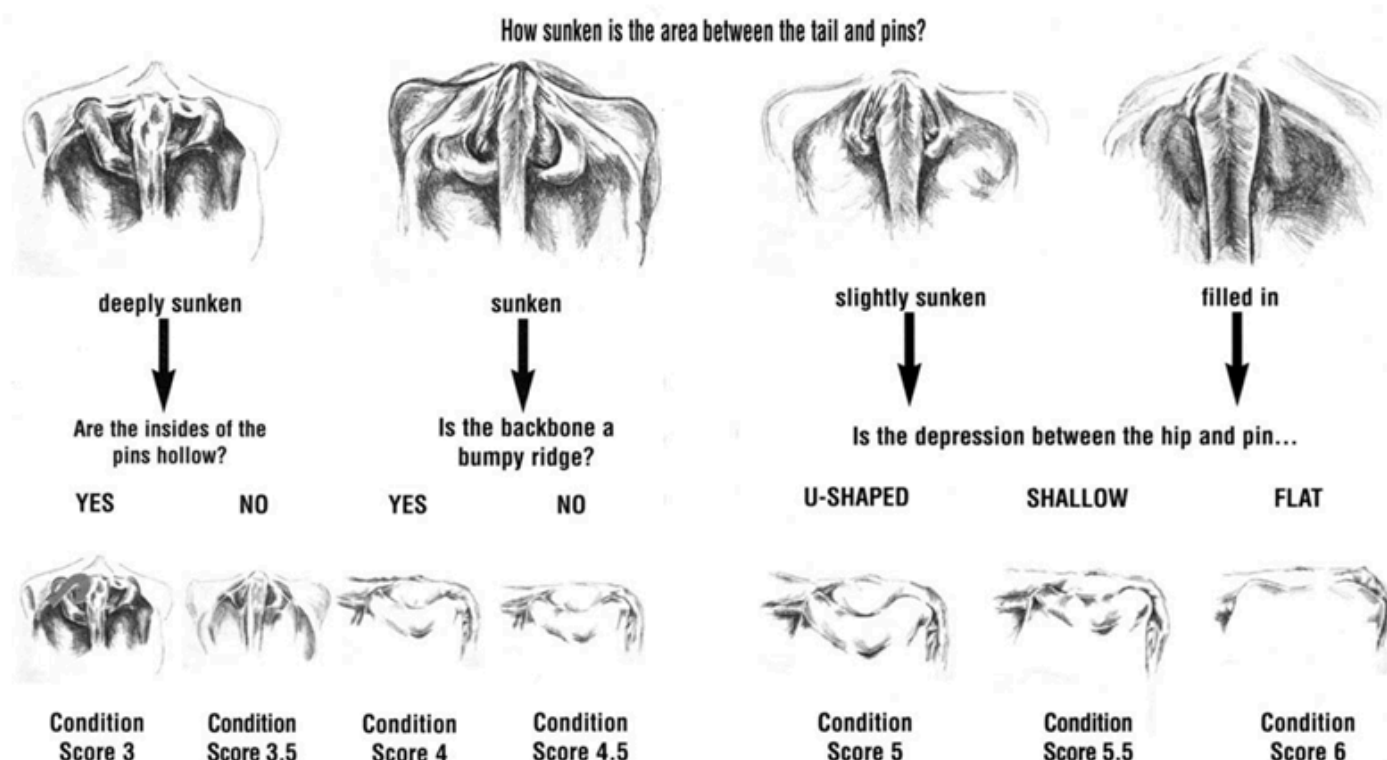


Figure 8. BCS Flow Chart, 312 Landlinks Press, 2005

BCS	VISUAL	
3		
3.5		
4		
4.5		

5		
5.5		
6		

Table 6. Body Condition Scores with Images, Dairy Australia 2023

Additional Resources

[Dairy Australia | Body Condition Scoring](#)

[CSIRO | Body Condition Scoring](#)

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 is assessed and ranked into 1 of the 5 different temperament categories:

Temperament	General Description
Docile	- 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.
Restless	- 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
Nervous	- 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.
Flighty	- 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.
Aggressive	- 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.

These can be assessed at 2 different stages – Paddock and Yard.

Assessment Type	Description
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.

Temperament Assessments

Paddock	
Docile	• 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
Restless	• 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.
Nervous	• 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.
Flighty	• 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.
Aggressive	• 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	
Docile	• 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).
Restless	• 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 (e.g. running).
Nervous	• 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.
Flighty	• 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.
Aggressive	• 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.

Table 6. Temperament Definitions, Brett Littler 2025

Further information: [Breedplan Docility Scoring](#)

Handling

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

Understanding the handling history of livestock can help explain why cattle may 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.

Handled with: Bike/Buggy; Dogs; Horses; On Foot; and Other (helicopters, drones, and planes).

Horn Status

Horn status refers to the classification of each animal in the consignment into one of five categories documenting the presence, absence or condition of horns.

Horn Status	Description
Polled	There is no evidence of horn growth as a genetic attribute
Debudded	The removal of horn buds from livestock, specifically calves, to prevent horn growth.
Horned	No portion of the horn has been removed

Notable Physical Traits

These are features of note which have not been documented in other Assessment sections, and would be evident if the potential buyer was able to conduct a physical inspection prior to sale.

Physical Trait	Description
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.
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	Lice Lumps or Lesions Dog bites Birthmarks Capped hips Long toes 'Bottle' teats 3-titter Buffalo fly lesions Vaccine lumps Cracked hooves Photosensitivity Udders with defects Grass or burr contamination Mud & dag contamination Poorly attached udders

***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.



Figure 10. Cows Eating, Canva 2025

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