

University of California, Davis

Cow-Calf Health and Handling Assessment

COMPLETE ASSESSMENT

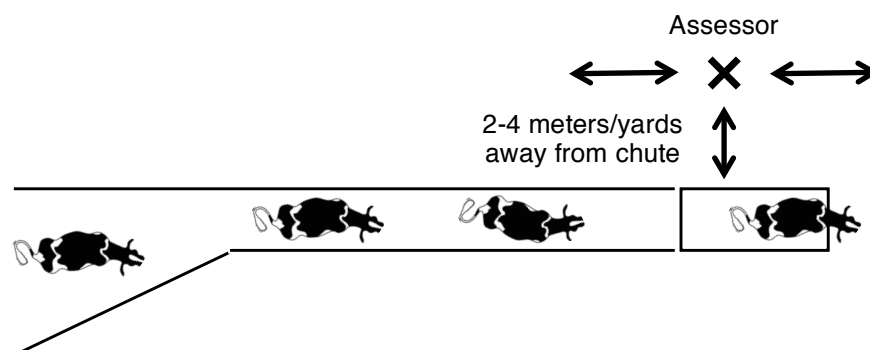
The assessment can be completed by either 1 or 2 assessors, standing near the chute and evaluating cattle in the alleyway and restraint. Every animal is assessed for each measure.

Where To Stand

Stand 2-4 meters/yards away from the chute

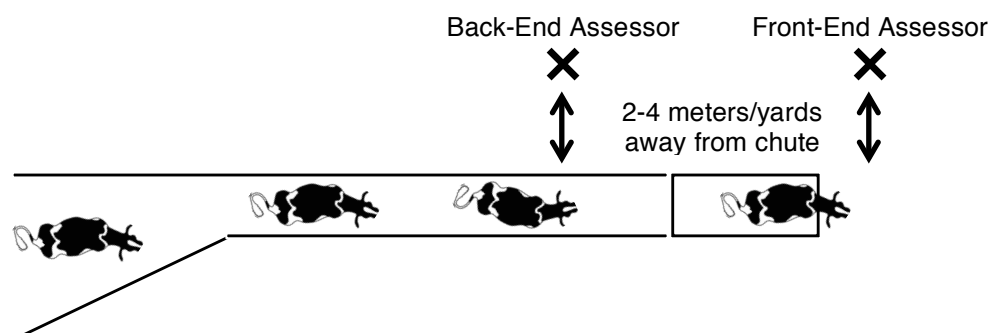
1 assessor

- Move between the tail gate, evaluating cattle while they are in the alleyway and restraint, and the head gate, evaluating cattle while they are in the restraint and as they exit



2 assessors

- Back-End Assessor: stand near the tail gate and evaluate cattle while they are in the alleyway and restraint
- Front-End Assessor: stand near the head gate and evaluate cattle while they are in the restraint and as they exit



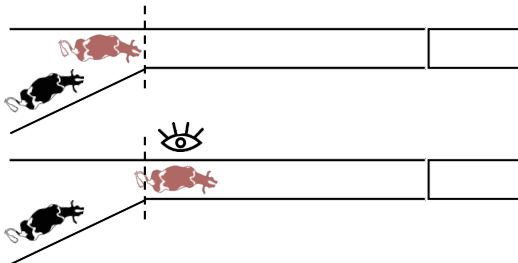
When To Look

The Observation Period

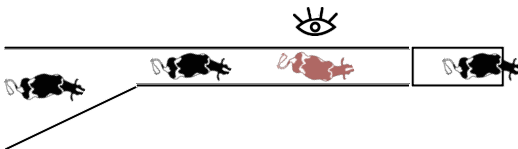
Use for all handling measures unless explicitly stated otherwise

Begin

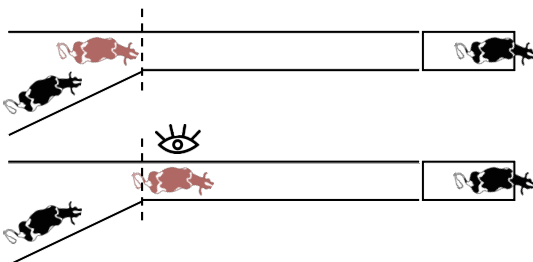
If the animal you are observing is first in line, begin observing her once all 4 hooves enter the single-file alleyway



In most situations, you will begin once the preceding animal is fully caught in the head gate



If the animal you are observing is not yet in the alleyway when the preceding animal is caught, begin observing her once all 4 hooves enter the single-file alleyway



Continue

While she is processed in the restraint



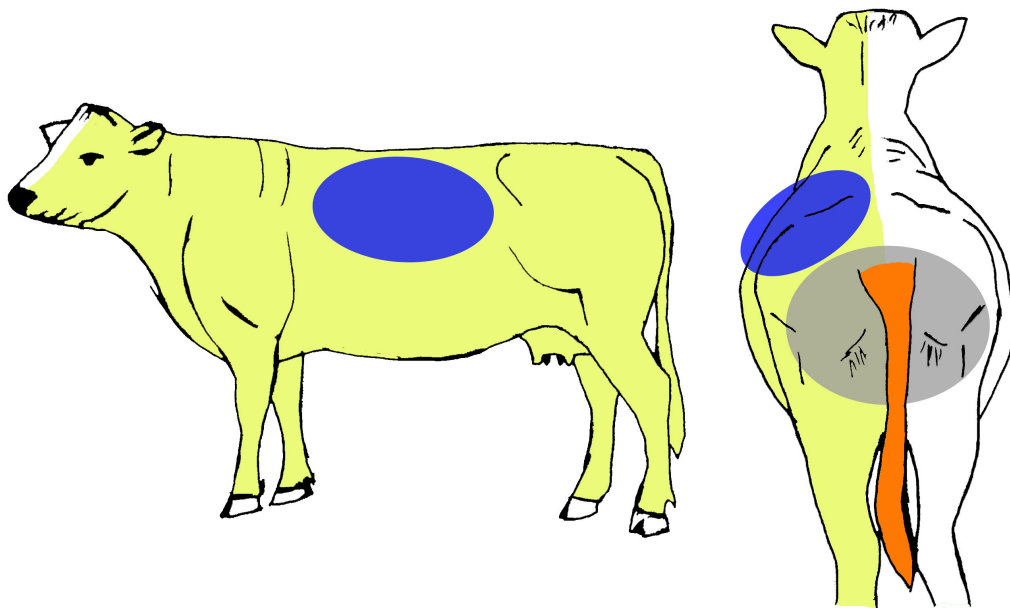
End

Once she has taken 3 - 6 strides after exiting the restraint



Where To Look

- **Diarrhea:** both sides of the rump
- **Bloated rumen:** between the animal's left hip bone and ribs
- **Broken tail:** the entire tail
- **All other health measures:** viewing from either the animal's left or right, evaluate the head, neck, body, and rump, the outer-facing side of the closest legs and the inner-facing side of the furthest legs



Health Measures

Abrasion

- An open wound or scab
- With a length greater than or equal to:
 - 2 centimeters,
 - 3/4 inch, or
 - the diameter of a nickel
- Open brand wounds are not included

Blind eye

- A cloudy, discolored, or inflamed area on the lens as distinct from the white of the eye
- May be accompanied by squinting, ocular discharge, or both
- Tested by opening and closing a hand in front of the affected eye, without creating an air current. No response after several tries indicates blindness.
- A missing eye is also included

Bloated Rumen

- A distinct bulge between the ribs and hipbone on the animal's left side

Broken Tail

- Tail appears abnormally shaped or asymmetrical
- Vertebrae may be misaligned

Diarrhea (loose stool)

- Wet or crusty manure on the rump symmetrically below the tail head
- At least the size of a hand in total
- Dirt on the haunches/legs is not included

Dirty

- Plaques (3-dimensional layer of mud or feces) on the side of the body or legs, anywhere above the hock or knee
- At least 2 hands in total
- Fresh manure and diarrhea are not included

Hairless patch

- Hair is missing on an area of the body
- With a least one dimension greater than or equal to:
 - 2 centimeters,
 - 3/4 inch, or
 - the diameter of a nickel
- Hairless patch may not be round in shape
- Hair loss from brand marks not included
- Hairless warts and polyps not included

Lameness

- The animal displays one or both of the following conditions:
 1. Reluctant to apply pressure on 1 or more limbs while standing
 2. Ranges from slight limp while walking to barely able or unable to place weight on 1 or more limbs
- None or some combination of the following conditions may also be displayed:
 - Strides are shorted
 - Walks slowly and makes frequent stops
 - Head bobs while walking

Nasal discharge

- Thick, cloudy mucus in or around the nostril
- Translucent, white, or yellow-green, in color
- Can be wet or dry

Obese

- No distinct bone structure
- Protruding fat deposits on tail head and pin bones
- Brisket is distended
- Animal appears full and blocky

Ocular discharge

- Evidence of current or previous fluid draining from the eye
- Can be wet or dry
- With a length greater than or equal to:
 - 2 centimeters,
 - 3/4 inch, or
 - the diameter of a nickel

Swelling

- Inflammation under the skin causing it to appear inflated, bulbous, and tight
- With a diameter greater than or equal to:
 - 2 centimeters,
 - 3/4 inch, or
 - the diameter of a nickel

Thin

- Tail head and backbone are sharp and prominent
- Brisket is tight
- Little muscling is apparent in hindquarters
- Often, 3 or more ribs are visible

Note: an injury can be comprised of an abrasion, hairless patch, and/or swelling on its own, or in some combination.

Handling Measures

Balk

- The route is clear in front of or behind the animal
- The animal refuses to move forwards or backwards within 4 seconds of first being touched by a moving aid or electric prod

Electric prod use

- An electric prod with an activated charge touches the animal

Fall

- The animal's torso contacts the ground

Mis-catch

- An animal is considered to be mis-caught if one of the following occur:
 - A. The animal is improperly restrained on the first attempt
 - B. The head gate is not closed behind the ears and in front of the shoulders
 - C. At least one hoof is not touching the floor inside the chute after restraint
 - D. More than one animal is in the chute, including any part of the subsequent animal that is caught in the tailgate

Run

- Once all 4 hooves touch the ground outside of the restraint upon exiting, the animal takes at least 2 strides at a gait faster than a trot

Stumble

- The animal's knee(s) or hock(s) contact the ground

Tail twist

- Stockperson grasps the animal's tail in their hand and turns it to either side

Vocalize

- The animal enunciates an audible tone
- After restraint, but before the procedure begins