



# Animal Care : Upcoming Cattle Assessments

Dairy Farmers of Canada's *proAction*® Initiative is an on-farm quality assurance program that fosters excellent farm practices and a culture of continuous improvement.

Canadian dairy farmers have a great sustainability story to tell. It is increasingly important to be able to measure and demonstrate our world-class standards in producing high quality milk and meat in a sustainable way, in line with Canadian values. The *proAction* Initiative provides credible metrics and independent validation of each farm to prove to customers and consumers that farmers do things right.

## ANIMAL CARE

The Animal Care module of *proAction* was published in fall 2015, giving two years for farmers to get familiarized with the program, start implementing its requirements, and prepare for their validations. In September 2017, the Animal Care requirements will be added to the validation process along with the existing Food Safety program requirements (formerly CQM). In some provinces, such as British Columbia and Manitoba, Animal Care requirements have already been incorporated into the validation process.

Similar to the Food Safety program, farmers need to maintain standard operating procedures (SOPs) and records for Animal Care, as well as implement various best management practices. One key requirement is that farmers must have an independent animal-based assessment conducted every two years. To this end, DFC has contracted Holstein Canada as the qualified independent party to conduct cattle assessments on farms and benchmark herds over a two-year period (October 2016 to September 2018).

### ASSESSORS



**Independent assessors** evaluate animal-based measures and provide reports to have on file for validation.



**Holstein Canada classifiers** were selected to assess and benchmark these **animal-based measures** on dairy farms in Canada in 2016-18.

- Body condition score
- Injuries
- Lameness

### VALIDATORS



**Validators** verify that good practices and procedures are in place at the anniversary date.

### ON-FARM PROCEDURES BASED ON THE CODE OF PRACTICE



**Use pain control** in health procedures



**Calf feeding & colostrum management**



**Shipping & euthanasia**



**Train** those involved to respect quiet cattle handling practices



**Keep records!**

## NOTE

### THE SAMPLE SIZE of animals to be assessed according to herd size.

Herd Size	Minimum # of cattle for assessment	Assess every ___ animal
50	23	2 <sup>nd</sup>
100	30	3 <sup>rd</sup>
250	37	7 <sup>th</sup>
550	40	14 <sup>th</sup>

\*Sample sizes are calculated on the basis of 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 15.

\* The Animal Care Workbook & Manual provides full table. Find it on [dairyfarmers.ca/proAction](http://dairyfarmers.ca/proAction)

### ANIMAL CLASSIFIERS KNOW DAIRY COWS!

264,000  
COWS  
CLASSIFIED

ON 2/3  
OF FARMS



# CATTLE ASSESSMENTS

The cattle assessment includes evaluation of body condition score, injuries (hock, knee and neck), and lameness scoring for a random sample of animals in the herd.



Consult the **Animal Care Workbook & Manual** for precise information on measurements of body condition scoring, injuries, and gait/stall lameness scoring.

## BODY CONDITION SCORE (BCS)

Animals will be scored for BCS on a range from 1 (emaciated) to 5 (fat) and assessed *Acceptable* or *Requires corrective action*. This table specifies the point between *Acceptable* and *Requires corrective action*.

SCORE 'A' <i>Acceptable</i> Scores $\geq 2.25$	SCORE 'R' <i>Requires corrective action</i> Scores $\leq 2$
Description of BCS 2.25 No fat pad evident on pins. Corrugations on the top of the short ribs extend from tips of the short ribs, <b>half</b> way to spine.	Description of BCS 2 No fat pad evident on pins. Corrugations on the top of the short ribs extend from tips of short ribs to <b>three quarters</b> to spine.

## INJURIES

Hock and knee will be assessed on a four-point scale, while necks will be assessed on a three-point scale. The presence of scabs and/or lesions will be an automatic score of 'R' *Requires corrective action* if assessed on any of the three areas.

	SCORE 'A' <i>Acceptable</i> Score 0 to 1	SCORE 'R' <i>Requires corrective action</i> Score 2 to 3
HOCK	No/minor swelling (< 1 cm) Possible bald area	Medium to major swelling (> 1 cm) and/or scab/lesion
KNEE/ NECK	No swelling (< 1 cm) Possible bald area	Any swelling and/or scab/lesion

## LAMENESS

Lameness will be assessed using one of two methods: gait scoring or stall lameness scoring.

FREE-STALL ENVIRONMENTS	
As a general rule, assessors will gait score cattle in <b>free-stall</b> environments (loose-housing) while they walk, and score them on a 5-point system, divided into 3 categories:	
CATEGORY	SCORE
'A' <i>Acceptable</i> for no limp present	▶ Scores 1 and 2
'M' <i>Monitor</i> for mild or moderate limp present	▶ Score 3
'R' <i>Requires corrective action</i> for an obvious or severe limp present	▶ Scores 4 and 5

TIE-STALL ENVIRONMENTS	
As a general rule, assessors will evaluate cattle in <b>tie-stall</b> environments for behavioural indicators of lameness summarized in the table below. Animals will be scored as either 'A' <i>Acceptable</i> or 'R' <i>Requires corrective action</i> . According to scientific research, an animal that presents <b>two or more</b> behavioural indicators is considered lame.	
BEHAVIOUR CATEGORY	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATOR
Standing posture (voluntary movements)	▶ Standing on edge of stall
	▶ Weight shifting
	▶ Uneven weight
Moving from side to side	▶ Uneven movement