

Animal Care



Quick Guide to Mobility Scoring - In-stall Scoring

Use only with tie-stall systems where walking and observation of cattle is not practical, and where cattle are tied in and used to the stalls that they are in.

1. Encourage the animal to be assessed to stand.
 - Each animal must be standing undisturbed for at least 3 minutes before their assessment begins (allows for urination/defecation).
 - If the sample size means that you need to score adjacent animals, do not score them immediately after each other, as the scoring of the first animal may affect the second one. Move to the next animal to be scored and then return to the skipped animal once she has had at least 3 minutes of standing undisturbed.
 - Encourage the animal to stand up by standing behind her while saying ‘up up’. If she does not respond to this, a gentle tap on the spine may be required. If she does not respond, tap her on the flank to encourage her. If she still does not respond, move on to the next few animals and then return to the original animal to try again or ask the farmer or farm worker to help.
2. Observe the animal. If the animal urinates or defecates during the assessment, stop scoring and return to assess her later, or ignore the behaviours just before and during urination or defecation, and continue scoring once the animal has returned to normal resting posture.

The assessment consists of two parts:

- a) Animal standing in stall
 - Stand about one meter behind the animal slightly to one side for a good view of both front and hind feet.
 - Observe the animal’s feet for a full 60 seconds.
 - Record the presence of EDGE, WEIGHT SHIFT, and REST (UNEVEN WEIGHT) indicators for each position (see Table 1) for all four feet, except for EDGE which can only be assessed on the hind feet.
- b) Animal moved from side to side
 - Stand behind the animal with a view of both hind feet.
 - Shift the animal from side to side by walking from one side to the other behind the animal and then back. If she does not respond, gently tap her hipbone with your hand to encourage her to move over.

Note: if an animal refuses to move because she obviously does not want to bear weight on one foot or limb, do not force her to move and double-tick this element and score her as ‘R’ for Requires corrective action.

 - Observe how the animal shifts weight from hind foot to hind foot. Observe if the UNEVEN MOVEMENT indicator is present (see Table 1).
 - Record presence of UNEVEN MOVEMENT indicator.

3. Score an animal ‘A’ for acceptable if less than 2 indicators are recorded, and score an animal as ‘R’ for Requires corrective action if 2 or more indicators are recorded (i.e. obviously / severely lame).

Table 1: Behavioural indicators of lameness

Behaviour Indicator	Description
Animal standing in stall (voluntary movements)	
EDGE	Placement of one or more hooves on the edge of the stall while standing stationary. Standing on the edge of a step when stationary, typically to relieve pressure on one part of the claw (Figure 1). This does not refer to when both hind hooves are in the gutter or when cow briefly places her hoof on the edge during a movement/step.
WEIGHT SHIFT	Regular, repeated shifting of weight from one hoof to another. Repeated shifting is defined as lifting each hind hoof at least twice off the ground (L-R-L-R or vice versa). The hoof must be lifted and returned to the same location and does not include stepping forward or backward
REST (UNEVEN WEIGHT)	Repeated resting of one foot more than the other as indicated by the cow raising a part or the entire hoof off the ground. This does NOT include raising of the hoof to lick or during kicking.
Animal moved from side to side	
UNEVEN MOVEMENT	Uneven weight bearing between hooves when the cow was encouraged to move from side to side. This is demonstrated by greater rapid movement of one hoof relative to the other, or by an evident reluctance to bear weight on a particular foot.



Figure 1: Example of EDGE