Quick Guide to Stall Lameness Scoring

Two methods can be used for scoring lameness in dairy cattle: Gait Scoring or Stall Lameness Scoring. Please see the Quick Guide to Gait Scoring for a description of that protocol.

Stall Lameness 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.

Method:

1. Encourage all cattle to be assessed to stand. All cattle must be standing for at least 3 minutes before their assessment begins (allows for urination/defecation).

2. Observe the animal for lameness. Do not score if the animal urinates or defecates during the assessment. The assessment consists of two parts:
   a) Assessment of foot placement – Standing Pose
      - Observe the foot position and leg placement of the animal for a full 10 seconds in each of the following three positions:
        ▪ Behind (about 2 to 3 feet behind the stall)
        ▪ Left side (side-view of both legs)
        ▪ Right side
      - Record the presence of standing on the:
        ▪ EDGE,
        ▪ WEIGHT SHIFT, and
        ▪ REST (UNEVEN WEIGHT) indicators for each position (see Table 1)
   b) Shifting of the animal from side to side
      - Stand behind the animal with a view of both front and hind feet.
      - Shift the animal from side to side, by walking from one side to the other behind the animal and then back; or by tapping her hipbone with your hand to encourage her to move over.
      - Observe if the UNEVEN MOVEMENT indicator is present (see Table 1). Observe the foot position and placement, and if the EDGE, WEIGHT SHIFT and REST (UNEVEN WEIGHT) indicators are present after movement.

3. An animal will be scored as requires corrective action (obviously/severely lame) if 2 or more indicators are recorded. Record either ‘A’ for acceptable or ‘R’ for requires corrective action.
Table 1: Behavioural indicators of lameness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standing Post (voluntary movements)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDGE</td>
<td>Placement of one or more hooves on the edge of the stall while standing stationary.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEIGHT SHIFT</td>
<td>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).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The hoof must be lifted and returned to the same location and does not include stepping forward or backward.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REST (UNEVEN WEIGHT)</td>
<td>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 (Figure 2).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cow moved from side to side</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEVEN MOVEMENT</td>
<td>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.</td>
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Figure 1: Example of EDGE

Figure 2: Example of REST