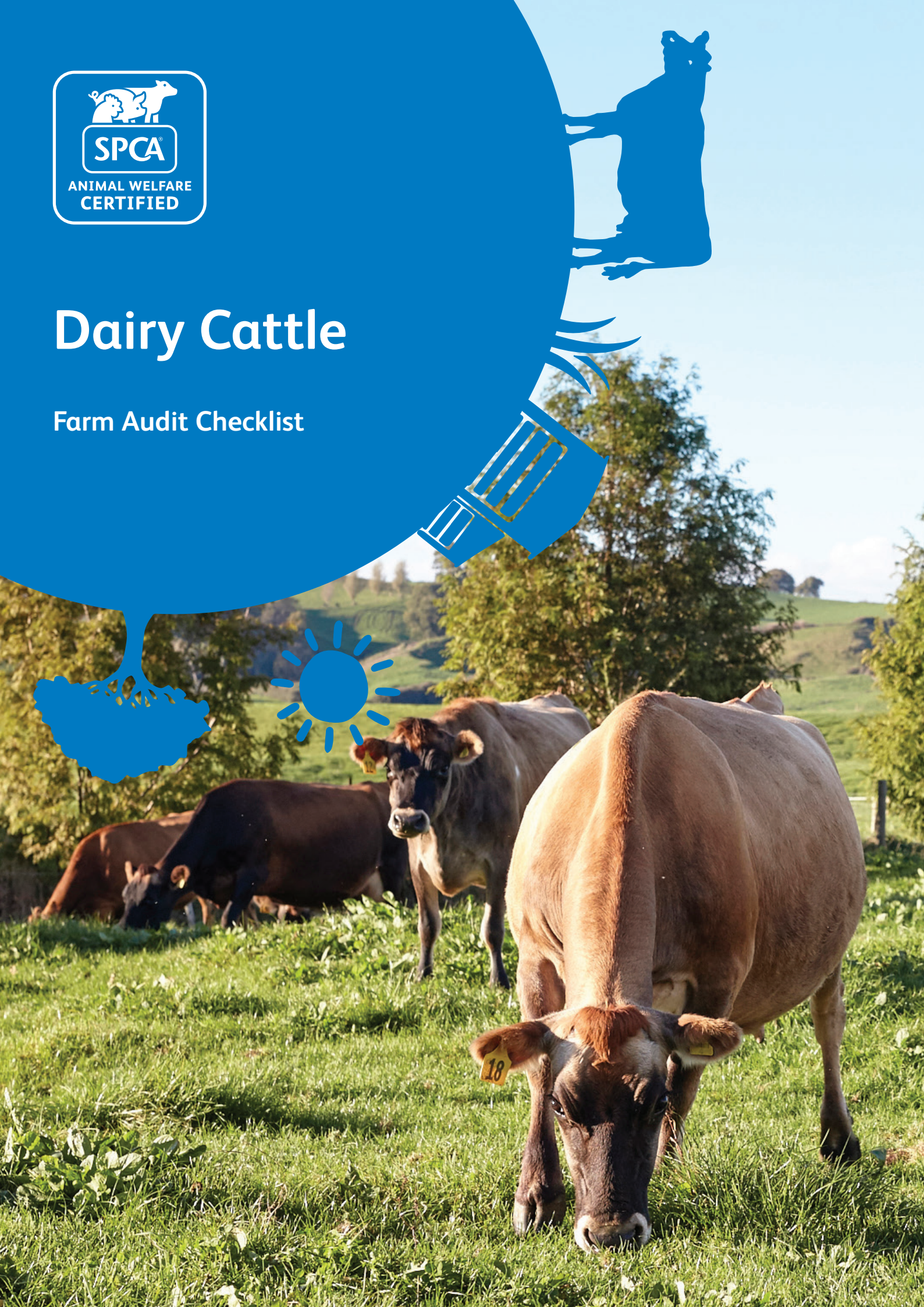




Dairy Cattle

Farm Audit Checklist



Farm Audit Checklist for Dairy Cattle

Version 1 – 2021



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Introduction

This Farm Audit Checklist for dairy cattle provides a summary of the relevant SPCA Certified standards and is intended to help members assess their farm and prepare for an audit.

It is not exhaustive and not intended as a replacement for the standards, which should be read and understood before this checklist is used.

In addition, while completing this checklist and addressing any problems it raises, will increase the likelihood of a successful audit, it is not a guarantee of success.

Please do not send this document to SPCA Certified. It is provided purely for your own reference.

Date of assessment:		Herd ages:	
Overall comments:			

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Nutrition		
	Feed		
N1, N2, N3 & N9	Cattle have unrestricted and non-competitive access to good quality feed of sufficient quantity. A written plan is provided for emergency situations, e.g. drought.		
N4 – N7	Additional feed/concentrate is introduced gradually and all feed is stored safely. PKE is not fed.		

N8	A trace element supplementation programme is in place.		
N10 & N11	BCS is managed between 4 – 6 and is checked at least twice each year for the whole herd.		
	Water		
N12 – N15	Clean drinking water is freely available and accessible for cattle of all ages.		
N16 & N17	Troughs and drinkers and the areas around them are kept clean and dry. Faecal matter in troughs is removed immediately upon discovery and area surrounding troughs is managed.		
N18	All streams, ponds and dams must be fenced off to prevent cattle access.		
N19 & N20	Water quality records are kept. All new water sources are tested before use both at the trough and source.		
N21 & N22	An emergency water supply is in place.		

	Calving and weaning		
N23 & N24	Adequate colostrum/replacer fed to all calves as soon as possible after birth.		
N25, N26 & N28	Colostrum stored appropriately. All calves receive adequate colostrum, milk or replacer.		
N29	Selected calves are tested for failure of passive transfer of immunity.		
N27 & N30	Calves are not tube fed (outside of exceptional circumstances) or bucket fed.		
N31 & N32	Calves are given fibrous feed from birth and fed so that they achieve standard target live weights.		
N33 & N34	Equipment for feeding calves is cleaned and disinfected after each use.		
N35	Milk from treated cows is not fed to calves.		
N36 – N38	Calves are not weaned until at least 12 weeks of age. Calves are weaned gradually in an area that provides shade/shelter, food and water.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Physical Environment		
	Site plans		
E1	A detailed site plan is in place.		
	Fencing		
E2 – E5	Fencing is safe and regularly inspected. No barbed wire is used.		
	Shade and shelter		
E6 – E11	Suitable shelter and shade is provided and accessible for all cattle, especially those close to calving. Lying areas are comfortable and dry. Calves are given appropriate bedding, in addition to shade and shelter.		
	Feed pads and stand-off areas		
E12	Feed pads are not used for more than two hours per day, for supplementary feeding.		

E13 – E16	Stand-off areas are only used during extreme weather. SPCA Certified is notified when this happens and the stand-off event is recorded. Stand-off areas are comfortable, well drained, sheltered and large enough to allow all cattle to lie down at the same time. Bare concrete areas are not used to stand cattle off pasture.		
	Temporary housing		
E17	Cattle are not permanently housed and when housed temporarily, have free access to a comfortable outdoor area.		
E18 & E19	Housing is pre-approved by SPCA Certified and the duration and reason of its use is recorded		
E20 – E28 & E32	Housing is clean, well lit and maintained, ventilated without causing draughts and has comfortable, dry bedding for all animals to stretch out on. Cattle can be moved or released quickly in the event of an emergency.		
E29 & E30	Brushes are provided to enable cows to groom themselves, and any individual housing for sick cattle allows them to see and hear others.		
E31	Calves are not housed together in groups larger than 15 individuals.		

	Milking		
E33 & E34	Tracks are well maintained, encourage cow movement and walking distances are minimised.		
E35 – E37	Holding yards have safe flooring, shade and shelter, and are an appropriate size for cows to move comfortably.		
E38 & E39	Backing gates are not used to push cows. Electrified backing gates are not used.		
E40 & E41	The milking shed and surrounding area is kept clean and feeding equipment inside the shed is safely sited and free from contaminants.		
E42	The milking shed water supply is safe and fit for human consumption.		
E43	The hot water supply is never used directly on animals.		
E44 & E45	All chemicals are securely stored and an electrical safety check is conducted at least annually.		

E46	The milking machine is tested at least annually and vacuum pumps have enough capacity to provide a stable vacuum at all times.		
E47 & E48	Teat liners are fit for purpose, regularly inspected and replaced when needed. Cups are placed and removed with care.		
E49 – E51	Milking equipment is thoroughly cleaned after use and a routine cleaning plan is in place.		
E52 & E53	Heifers are familiarised with the milking shed before their first lactation. Training plans are in place for staff.		
E54	Oxytocin is not used for milk let down.		
E55	Sick or lame animals are recorded, marked, treated and kept separated from the main herd.		

	Transport		
E56 – E58	Cattle are assessed for fitness for transport and no unfit animals are transported.		
E59 – E61	Cattle are rested before moving and are kept in comfortable, low stress, holding/loading facilities.		
E62 & E63	Cattle have free access to water, and are kept off green feed for 4-6 hours before transport.		
E64 – E66	Shade and shelter are provided, unfamiliar animals are not mixed and stationary periods are minimised. Horned cattle are transported with particular care.		
E67 – E70	All loading and transport equipment is safe, fit for purpose and well maintained.		
E71 – E73	Ramps do not exceed 20 degrees, cattle are loaded at normal walking speed, and electric prodders are not used.		
E74 – E76	Transport does not exceed eight hours from start to finish, and transport during extreme weather is avoided. A reason is given when the nearest slaughterhouse is not used.		

E77 – E79	Accurate transport records are kept and transport operators have a detailed contingency plan in place.		
	Emergency preparedness		
E80 & E81	An emergency preparedness plan is in place and regularly reviewed.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Health		
	Animal health plan		
H1 – H5	An animal health plan is in place and regularly reviewed.		
H6	A euthanasia plan is in place.		
H7	Compromised animals are monitored at least twice each day.		

	Bull management		
H8 & H9	Bulls are in good condition, checked on arrival and monitored daily during mating.		
	Breeding		
H10 & H11	A welfare orientated breeding programme that benchmarks assisted calving is in place.		
H12	Only natural breeding or AI are used for mating.		
H13 & H14	Caesarian sections are not used routinely and only manual aids are used to assist difficult calvings.		
H15	Use of the Blocky test or any capacity test for bulls which uses restrained heifers or cows is not used.		
	Pharmaceutical use		
H16	Inductions are not used routinely and all use is recorded.		

H17 - 23	Staff are trained, antibiotics are used only on veterinary advice and up to date records are kept. Off-label use is accompanied by a veterinary declaration.		
	Surgical husbandry procedures		
H24	Animals are given pre- and post-operative pain relief, regardless of their age.		
H25 & H26	Procedures are done by trained personnel, who can recognise signs of pain and distress in cattle.		
H27	Procedures are not performed on animals less than 24 hours old.		
H28 & H29	Animals are humanely restrained/sedated, equipment is suitable for the task and pain relief is given regardless of animal age.		
H30 & H31	Detailed records are kept and animals are inspected four times during the 24 hours post-surgery.		
	Tail docking and claw amputation		
H32 - H34	Tail docking and claw amputation are only done on veterinary advice, by a vet, using pain relief and all instances are recorded.		
H35 & H36	A tail audit is conducted once each year, and results recorded.		

	Disbudding and dehorning		
H37 – H39	Disbudding is only done using thermal cautery, no later than six weeks of age, using sedation and appropriate pain relief and follow up daily monitoring.		
H40 – H43	Polled cattle are preferred. Dehorning is a last resort and is done by a veterinarian, using appropriate pain relief.		
	Castration		
H44 & H45	Castration is done within the first month of life, using appropriate pain relief.		
	Mastitis		
H46 & H47	Testing records are kept for three years and animals with clinical mastitis are immediately treated.		
H48	Udders are regularly inspected for dirt and teat damage.		
H49 & H50	Teats are sprayed after milking and staff follow good hygiene practices during the milking process.		

H51 & H52	Somatic Cell Counts are monitored regularly and do not exceed 400,000 cells/mL for Daily Bulk Milk Somatic Cell Counts (BMSCC) and 150,000 for seasonal herd average.		
H53 – H56	A detailed drying-off plan is in place.		
	Recumbent animals		
H57 - H60	Recumbent cattle are handled gently, using appropriate equipment to suspend the animal and a veterinarian is consulted if necessary.		
H61 – H63	Recumbent animals are provided with soft bedding, regularly inspected and humanely euthanased if their condition does not improve.		
	Inspection of animals		
H64 – H66	Cattle are inspected daily by trained and competent staff, who record any problems and action taken in the Animal Health Plan.		
H67 – H69	Pre-calving inspections are done every 6 hours in the four days before calving and all calving problems are recorded if they occur.		

H70	Inspections are done twice daily during periods of extreme weather or where welfare concerns are noted.		
	Animal identification		
H71, H72 & H74	Animal identification is done by trained and competent individuals using appropriate methods.		
H73	Ear marking and notching/splitting are not done, nor is branding of any type and a maximum of two tags are placed in each ear.		
	Euthanasia and mortality		
H75 & H76	All deaths and euthanasia are recorded in the animal health plan.		
H77	Veterinary advice is sought where there are questions about euthanasia.		
H78 – H81	Euthanasia is done by competent people, using appropriate equipment and in a way that does not cause additional pain or distress.		
H82 – H87	Cattle must be rendered insensible, using an appropriate method and staff must stay with the animal until death is confirmed.		

H88	Dead animals are disposed of in accordance with Council regulations.		
	Biosecurity		
H89 & H90	A biosecurity plan is in place and all cattle coming onto the farm are quarantined.		
H91	The use of lethal pest control is reviewed at least annually.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Appropriate Behavioural Interactions		
	Low stress handling of cattle		
B1 & B2	Facilities for handling/moving cattle are safe and low stress handling methods are used.		
B3	Electric prodders are not used (unless there is a definite risk to human/animal life) and tails are not twisted.		

B4	Cattle are moved at a pace that allows them to see where they are placing their feet.		
B5	Dogs are kept under control at all times.		
B6	Calves are never handled roughly or dragged/ pulled by any part of their bodies.		
	Social environment		
B7	Cattle are not sourced from or sold at saleyards.		
B8 & B9	Cattle are kept in stable groups with others of a similar age/size/stage of production, (with the exception of calves kept with their mothers).		
	Behavioural enrichment		
B10	Cattle have access to grooming/scratching structures in all paddocks.		
B11 – B13	Calves are provided with a dry teat, enough space to allow for play and if not in a paddock, given hay in racks, as well as bedding material.		

	Managers, stock-keepers and other staff		
B14 – B16	All staff comply with the SPCA standards and policies are in place to report concerns and manage animal welfare breaches.		
B17 & B18	All staff are offered animal welfare/husbandry training. Staff are not allowed to perform tasks unsupervised until they are properly trained and competent.		
B19	There are enough staff to look after the animals humanely.		

END OF ASSESSMENT



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