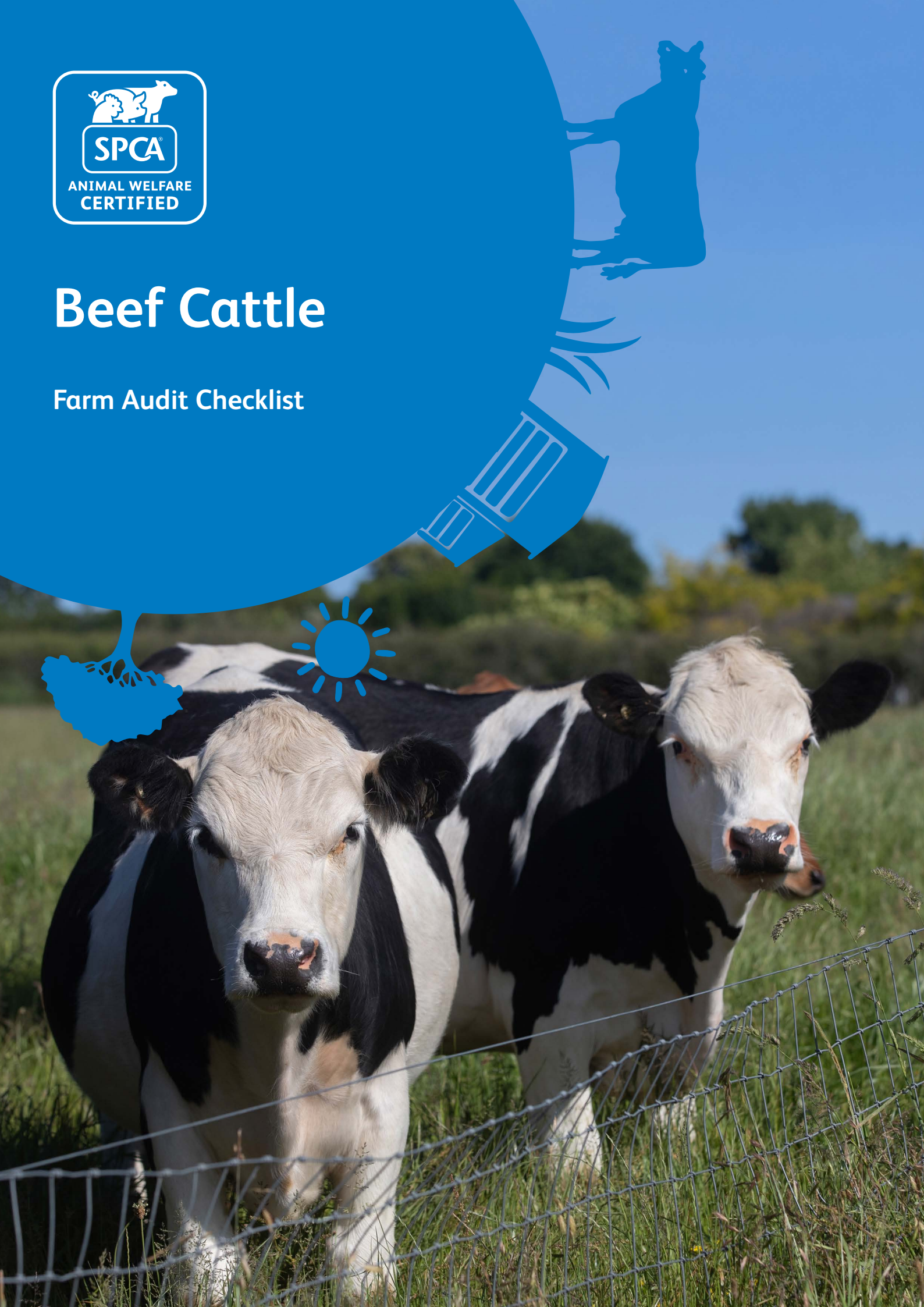




# Beef Cattle

Farm Audit Checklist



# Farm Audit Checklist for Beef Cattle

Version 2.0 – 2026



## Contact

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# Introduction

This Farm Audit Checklist for beef 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.

You do not have to send this document to SPCA Certified, it is provided purely for your own reference.

<b>Date of assessment:</b>		<b>Herd ages:</b>
<b>Overall comments:</b>		

<b>Working dogs</b>		<b>Check (Y/N)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Feed/Water/ Exercise</b>	Water available in kennels Body condition meets legal requirements Dogs look healthy and fit		
<b>Accommodation</b>	Clean, habitable, appropriate size, provides effective shade and shelter.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	<b>Good Nutrition</b>		
	<b>Feed</b>		
<b>N1-N4 N6</b>	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). Supplementary feeds are safe for the cattle.		
<b>N5</b>	A mineral supplementation programme is in place and monitoring is undertaken.		
<b>N6 &amp; 7</b>	Body Condition Score is regularly recorded at least four times a year and breeding cows are kept between BCS 5-7. Remedial action where adult animals drop below 5.		
	<b>Water</b>		
<b>N8-N11</b>	Clean and palatable drinking water is freely available and accessible for cattle of all ages.		
<b>N12 &amp; 13</b>	Troughs and areas around them are clean.		
<b>N15 &amp; N16</b>	Water quality is tested and recorded.		
<b>N17</b>	An alternative water supply is in place for emergencies.		

	<b>Calves</b>		
<b>N18</b>	Where relevant, an approved hand-rearing plan is in place and implemented for all unweaned calves younger than 8 weeks.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	<b>Good Physical Environment</b>		
	<b>Site plans</b>		
<b>E1</b>	A detailed site plan is in place.		
	<b>Fencing</b>		
<b>E2</b>	All fencing is safe, secure, and regularly inspected and maintained.		
<b>E3</b>	Barbed wire only used for boundary fences, electrified barbed wire is not used.		
	<b>Shade and shelter</b>		
<b>E4, E5 &amp; E8</b>	Suitable shelter and shade is provided and accessible for all cattle, especially those close to calving or with newborn calves, and animals are checked daily during weather warnings.		
<b>E5-E7</b>	Where signs of heat stress are observed remedial action is taken.  Yarding and moving cattle is minimised in hot weather.		

	<b>Preparation for transport</b>		
<b>E9-E15</b>	Cattle are assessed before transport and any unfit animals are not presented for transport, and treated/ euthanised as necessary.		
<b>E16-E22</b>	Cattle are kept in comfortable facilities with free access to hay and water and shade and shelter, without mixing unfamiliar animals. They are not kept off green feed for more than eight hours.		
<b>E23 &amp; E24</b>	All equipment and facilities are safe, fit for purpose and well maintained.		
<b>E25-E27</b>	Stress at loading is minimised, cattle are loaded at normal walking speed, and the person in charge is present at loading.		
<b>E28-E31</b>	Stockpersons request animals to be sent to closest slaughterhouse, and inform transporters of at-risk animals. Transport is no longer than 8 hours.		
<b>E33</b>	Detailed records of all animal transport are kept.		
<b>E34</b>	A copy of transport contingency plan has been requested and is available for viewing.		
	<b>Emergency preparedness</b>		
<b>E35-E37</b>	A detailed emergency preparedness plan is in place.		
<b>E38</b>	Keeping cattle off-paddock during emergencies is documented and reported to SPCA Certified.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	<b>Good Health</b>		
	<b>Animal health plan</b>		
<b>H1-H3</b>	An animal health plan is in place and regularly reviewed with a veterinarian. All records related to animal health and welfare are available for inspection.		
<b>H4</b>	Sick animals are appropriately treated and monitored.		
<b>H5</b>	All cases of death are recorded.		
	<b>Inspection of animals</b>		
<b>H6</b>	Animals are regularly inspected and any problems identified are recorded and treated in a timely manner.		
<b>H7, H10-H12</b>	Inspections are made more frequently (at least daily) during times of stress (e.g. near calving, after weaning, during bad weather).		
<b>H8 &amp; H9</b>	Calving happens close to cattle yards and if required, vet is contacted at earliest sign of birth complications.		
	<b>Animal identification</b>		
<b>H13-H16</b>	Identification procedures are done appropriately and with the right equipment.  Ear marking and branding are not permitted.		

	<b>Bull management</b>		
<b>H18 &amp; H19</b>	New bulls are quarantined on arrival, monitored for injury and disease, and treated the same as other animals on the farm.		
	<b>Breeding</b>		
<b>H20-H22 H24</b>	A welfare orientated breeding programme is in place that avoids the use of high pedigree cattle and heifers that are too young/small.		
<b>H23 &amp; H28</b>	Assisted calvings are recorded and minimised. Obstetric lube used and cow treated with NSAIDs.		
<b>H25</b>	Only natural breeding or AI are used for mating.		
<b>H27 &amp; H29</b>	Caesarian sections are not used routinely, only manual aids are used to assist difficult calvings.		
<b>H30 &amp; H31</b>	Use of the Blockey test, or any serving capacity test, and electroejaculation of bulls are not permitted.		
	<b>Pharmaceutical use</b>		
<b>H34</b>	Inductions are not used routinely and all use is recorded.		
<b>H32, H33 &amp; H35</b>	Pharmaceuticals are secured, used only on veterinary advice, are within date, and off-label use is accompanied by a veterinary declaration.		
<b>H36</b>	Up-to-date records are kept.		

	<b>Painful husbandry procedures</b>		
<b>H37 &amp; H39</b>	Animals are given pain relief, regardless of their age. No procedures on animals less than 24hrs old.		
<b>H40-H43</b>	Cattle are humanely restrained, using suitable equipment, and monitored after the procedure. Records are kept.		
	<b>Disbudding</b>		
<b>H44-H47</b>	Disbudding only done using thermal cautery, before six weeks of age, using sedation and pre/post-operative pain relief.		
	<b>Dehorning</b>		
<b>H48 &amp; H49</b>	Dehorning is only conducted by a veterinarian and only as a last resort, if there is a welfare risk to the animal itself, using pre/post-operative pain relief and sedation. Horn tipping only if cutting into sensitive tissue can be prevented.		
	<b>Castration</b>		
<b>H50-H53</b>	Castration is done using rubber rings prior to 3 months using pre/post-operative pain relief and only on animals staying on the farm past sexual maturity. Surgical castration by vet allowed using sedation and pre/post-operative pain relief.		

	<b>Euthanasia</b>		
<b>H54-H62</b>	Animals are euthanised using appropriate methods and equipment, and in a way that renders animals insensible immediately. Staff stay with the animal until death is confirmed. Blunt force trauma is not used to euthanise calves.		
<b>H63</b>	All cases of euthanasia are documented.		
	<b>Biosecurity</b>		
<b>H64</b>	All cattle coming onto the farm are quarantined for at least 14 days.		
<b>H65</b>	A biosecurity plan is in place and implemented.		
<b>H66</b>	A pest management plan is in place. Traps and poisons only used as a last resort and use reviewed yearly.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	<b>Appropriate Behavioural Interactions</b>		
	<b>Low-stress handling of cattle</b>		
<b>B1-B7</b>	Facilities for handling/moving cattle are safe and low stress handling methods are used. Electric prodders and goads are not used on farm.		

<b>B8</b>	Dogs are well-trained and under control at all times.		
	<b>Social environment</b>		
<b>B9</b>	Cattle are not sourced or sold via saleyards.		
<b>B10 &amp; B11</b>	Cattle are kept in stable social groups. If movement is necessary it is done in pairs or small groups.		
<b>B12</b>	Isolated cattle have at least one companion or are within sight, etc of other cattle.		
	<b>Weaning</b>		
<b>B13 &amp; B14</b>	Calves not weaned before 6 months, weaned into familiar area, with shade and shelter and familiar feed.		
<b>B15</b>	Nose flaps for gradual weaning are not used.		
	<b>Physical environment</b>		
<b>B16 &amp; B17</b>	Cattle have enough space and a comfortable lying surface.		
	<b>Behavioural enrichment</b>		
<b>B18</b>	There are fixtures (natural and/or artificial) in all pastures, which cattle can use to scratch/groom themselves.		
	<b>Managers, stockpersons, other staff</b>		
<b>B19 &amp; B20</b>	All staff meet the cattle's needs and comply with the law and SPCA standards.		

<b>B22 &amp; B23</b>	Staff must be trained and competent when dealing with cattle. All staff are offered animal welfare training and can demonstrate a good working knowledge of cattle husbandry.		
<b>B21 &amp; B24</b>	Staff do not carry out tasks they are not trained or competent in. All staff are supervised until competent.		
<b>B25</b>	Training records are kept and available for inspection.		
<b>B26 &amp; B27</b>	Written animal welfare complaints policy is in place or staff contracts contain relevant info. Complaints are investigated.		
<b>B28</b>	Those working with animals do not have a conviction for animal welfare offences.		

**END OF DOCUMENT**



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