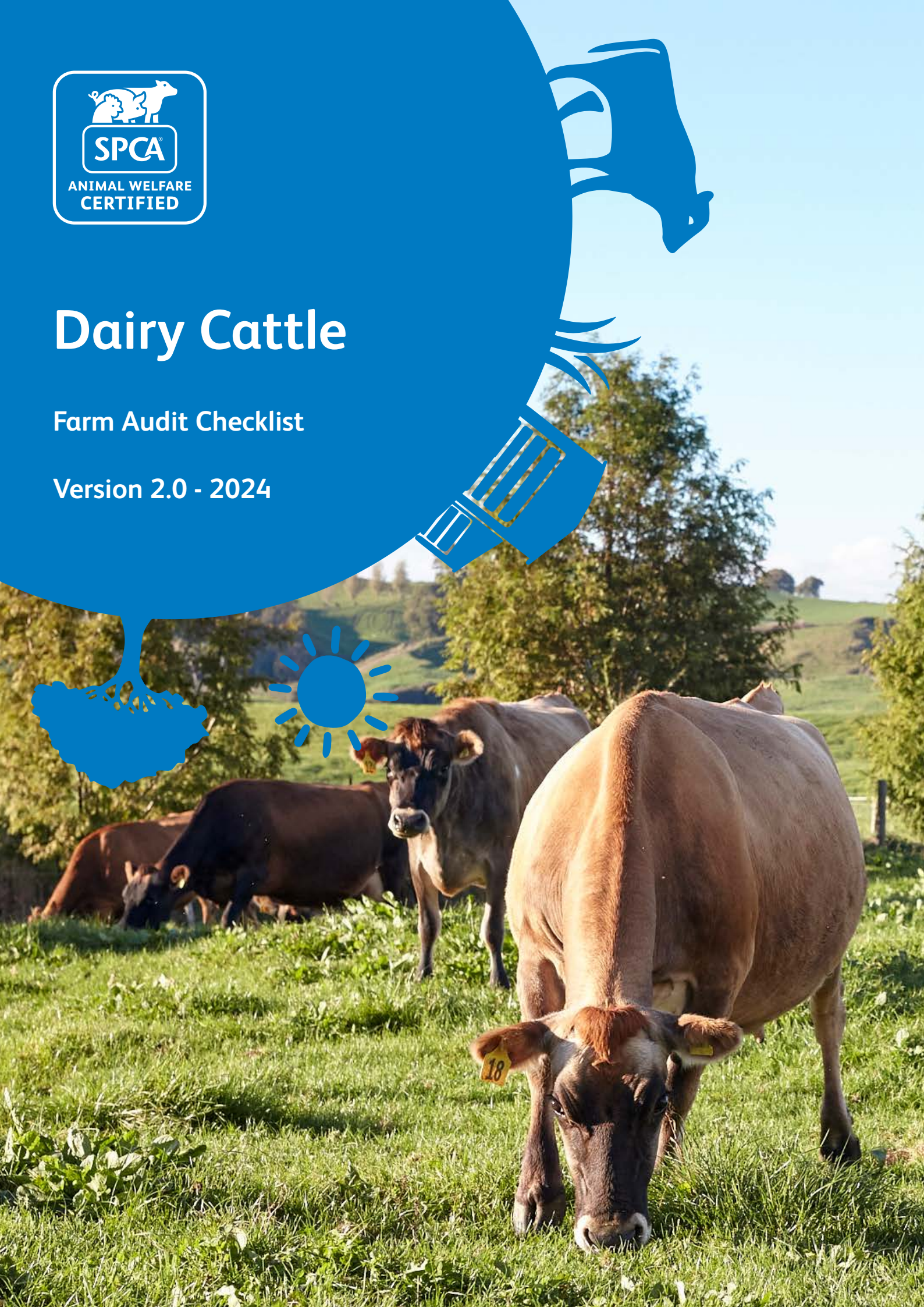




# Dairy Cattle

Farm Audit Checklist

Version 2.0 - 2024



# Farm Audit Checklist for Dairy Cattle

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## Contact

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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.

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

<b>Reference Standard</b>	<b>Summarised standard</b>	<b>Check (Y/N)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	<b>Good Nutrition</b>		
	<b>Feed</b>		
<b>N1-N4, N9</b>	Feed meets the nutritional and health needs of cattle, trace element supplementation where necessary, and a feeding plan for emergency situations is in place. Ensure feeding crops does not pose a risk to welfare.		
<b>N5-N8</b>	Additional feed is introduced gradually where required, all feed stored safely, and PKE and fodder beet are not fed.		
<b>N10, N11</b>	BCS is managed between 4 – 6 and checked at least four times each year for each cow.		
	<b>Water</b>		
<b>N11-N17</b>	Clean and palatable drinking water is freely available and accessible, troughs, drinkers and areas around them are clean.		



<b>N17, N18</b>	Water clarity and quality records are kept. All new water sources are tested before use.		
<b>N19</b>	An emergency water supply is in place.		
	<b>Calf rearing and weaning</b>		
<b>N21-N23</b>	Adequate good quality colostrum is fed to all newborn calves as soon as possible after birth. Colostrum is stored appropriately.		
<b>N24, N25</b>	Calves are fed sufficient warm liquid feed in multiple feeds until weaning. Action is taken where calves have digestive problems.		
<b>N26, N28</b>	Calves are not tube-fed or bucket fed.		
<b>N27</b>	Selected calves tested for failure of passive transfer of immunity.		
<b>N29</b>	Calves given fibrous feed from birth.		
<b>N30</b>	Calf feeding equipment is cleaned after each use.		
<b>N31</b>	Milk from treated cows (waste milk) is not fed to calves.		
<b>N32-N34</b>	Calves are not weaned until at least 8 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
	<b>Good Environment</b>		
	<b>Site plans</b>		
<b>E1</b>	A detailed site plan is in place.		
	<b>Fencing</b>		
<b>E2-E4</b>	Fencing is safe and regularly inspected. No barbed wire is used.		
	<b>Shade and shelter</b>		
<b>E5-E9</b>	Suitable shelter and shade are provided and accessible for all cattle. Lying areas are comfortable and dry.		
	<b>Feed-pads and stand-off areas</b>		
<b>E10</b>	Feed pads are not used for more than two hours per day.		
<b>E11-E13</b>	Stand-off areas are only used during extreme weather, are comfortable, well drained, sheltered, and allow 3.5m <sup>2</sup> /cow.		
	<b>Housing (with unrestricted access to pasture)</b>		
<b>E14, E15</b>	When housed, cattle have unrestricted access to pasture, and housing provides at least 8m <sup>2</sup> /cow.		

<b>E16-E24</b>	Housing is clean, well-lit, ventilated without causing draughts, and has comfortable, dry bedding for all animals.		
<b>E25, E26</b>	Brushes are provided for grooming, sick cattle are housed so they can see and hear others.		
<b>E27</b>	Calves are housed in groups with at least 2.5m <sup>2</sup> /calf.		
	<b>Milking</b>		
<b>E28, E29</b>	Tracks are well maintained, encourage cow movement, and walking distances are minimised.		
<b>E30-E32</b>	Holding yards have safe flooring and provide shade and shelter.		
<b>E33, E34</b>	Backing gates are not used to push cows. Electrified top and backing gates are not used.		
<b>E35-E37</b>	The milking shed, surrounding area and any feeding equipment are clean and safe. All chemicals are secured.		
<b>E38, E39</b>	Electrical equipment within the milking shed is tested annually.		
<b>E40</b>	Teat liners are fit for purpose, regularly inspected and replaced.		
<b>E41</b>	Training of staff to ensure consistent milking routines.		
<b>E42</b>	Heifers are familiarised with the milking shed before their first lactation.		

<b>E43</b>	Oxytocin is not used for milk let-down.		
<b>E44</b>	Sick or lame animals are recorded, marked, treated, and kept separated from the main herd.		
	<b>Preparation for Transport</b>		
<b>E45-E48</b>	Cattle are assessed for fitness for transport and unfit animals are not transported.		
<b>E49-E54</b>	Cattle are rested before loading and kept in comfortable facilities with free access to hay and water and shade and shelter, without mixing unfamiliar animals.		
<b>E55</b>	All loading and transport equipment is safe, fit for purpose and well maintained.		
<b>E56, E57</b>	Cattle are loaded at normal walking speed, and person in charge is present at loading.		
<b>E58</b>	Stockpersons request animals to be sent to closest slaughterhouse, and inform transporters of at-risk animals.		
<b>E59, E60</b>	Accurate transport records are kept, copy of transport operator contingency plan requested.		
	<b>On-farm and between-farm transport</b>		
<b>E61</b>	Trailers for picking up calves are comfortable and clean.		
<b>E62, E64</b>	Transport between farms does not exceed 2 hours and transport is managed to avoid heat/cold stress.		



<b>E63</b>	Cows are not transported for at least 7 days after birth.		
	<b>Emergency preparedness</b>		
<b>E65, E66</b>	An emergency preparedness plan is in place.		
<b>E67, E68</b>	Temporary housing is documented and reported, housing allows for quick release in emergency.		

<b>Reference Standard</b>	<b>Summarised standard</b>	<b>Check (Y/N)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	<b>Good Health</b>		
	<b>Animal health plan</b>		
<b>H1 – H5</b>	An animal health plan is in place, with treatment and monitoring plans for sick/injured animals.		
	<b>Inspection of animals</b>		
<b>H6, H7</b>	Cattle are inspected daily by trained and competent staff.		
<b>H8-H10</b>	Pre-calving inspections are done regularly before and after calving and all calving problems are recorded.		
<b>H11</b>	Inspections are done twice daily during periods of extreme weather or where welfare concerns are noted.		
<b>H12</b>	Tail audits are done once a year for the entire herd.		

	<b>Animal identification</b>		
<b>H13-H15</b>	Ear marking, notching/splitting and branding are prohibited and a maximum of two tags in each ear.		
	<b>Bull management</b>		
<b>H16, H17</b>	Bulls are in good condition, checked on arrival and monitored daily during mating.		
	<b>Breeding</b>		
<b>H18, H19</b>	A welfare orientated breeding programme that benchmarks assisted calving is in place.		
<b>H20</b>	Only natural breeding or AI are used for mating.		
<b>H21, H22</b>	Caesarian sections are not used routinely, only manual aids are used to assist difficult calvings.		
<b>H23</b>	Use of the Blockey test or any capacity test and electroejaculation of bulls are not used.		
	<b>Pharmaceutical use</b>		
<b>H25</b>	Inductions are not used routinely and all use is recorded.		
<b>H24, H26- H28</b>	Staff are trained, antibiotics are used only on veterinary advice at therapeutic levels, off-label use is accompanied by a veterinary declaration, an antimicrobial stewardship plan is in place.		
<b>H29</b>	Up-to-date records are kept.		

	<b>Painful husbandry procedures</b>		
<b>H30, H32</b>	Animals are given pain relief, regardless of their age. No procedures on animals less than 24hrs old.		
<b>H31-H35</b>	Procedures are done by trained personnel, while animals are humanely restrained, using suitable equipment. Records are kept.		
	<b>Tail docking and claw amputation</b>		
<b>H36, H37</b>	Tail docking and claw amputation are only done by a vet, using pain relief.		
	<b>Disbudding and dehorning</b>		
<b>H38-H40</b>	Disbudding only done using thermal cautery, preferably before six weeks of age, using sedation with pain relief.		
<b>H41, H42</b>	Polled cattle are preferred. Horn tipping and dehorning in exceptional circumstances by vet with pain relief.		
	<b>Castration</b>		
<b>H43, H44</b>	Castration is done within the first month of life with pain relief.		
	<b>Mastitis</b>		
<b>H45, H46</b>	Udders are regularly inspected. Affected animals are treated.		
<b>H47, H48</b>	Teats are sprayed or dipped, and staff follow good hygiene practices during the milking process.		

<b>H49, H50</b>	Somatic Cell Counts are monitored regularly and do not exceed limits. A herd test is done at least twice a year.		
<b>H51-H54</b>	A detailed drying-off plan is in place.		
	<b>Lameness</b>		
<b>H55-H58</b>	Lameness scoring is done 4 times a year. Lamé cows are treated and remedial action taken. Lameness management plan is in place.		
	<b>Recumbent animals</b>		
<b>H59-62</b>	Recumbent animals are provided with soft bedding and appropriate care, are regularly inspected, handled gently, and provided with pain relief.		
<b>H63, H64</b>	Lifting equipment is appropriate and used under supervision, only used when the cow can support her own weight. Hip clamps are padded and used with a breast strap.		
<b>H65</b>	Recumbent animals receive veterinary treatment or are humanely euthanised if not improving.		
	<b>Euthanasia and mortality</b>		
<b>H67</b>	A euthanasia plan is in place, veterinary advice is sought where necessary.		

<b>H68-H74</b>	Euthanasia is done by competent people, using appropriate equipment and restraint, rendering animals insensible. Staff stay with the animal until death is confirmed.		
<b>H75, H76</b>	All deaths and euthanasia are recorded.		
	<b>Biosecurity</b>		
<b>H77, H78</b>	A biosecurity plan is in place and all cattle coming onto the farm are quarantined.		
<b>H79</b>	Pest management plan is in place.		

<b>Reference Standard</b>	<b>Summarised standard</b>	<b>Check (Y/N)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	<b>Appropriate Behavioural Interactions</b>		
	<b>Low stress handling of cattle</b>		
<b>B1-B8</b>	Facilities for handling/moving cattle are safe and low stress handling methods are used.		
	<b>Social environment</b>		
<b>B9</b>	Cattle are not sourced from or sold to saleyards.		
<b>B10, B11</b>	Cattle are kept in stable groups with others of a similar age/size/stage of production.		

	<b>Physical environment</b>		
<b>B12</b>	Cattle have access to comfortable dry areas to lie and rest.		
<b>B13</b>	Calves have enough space to exhibit play behaviour.		
	<b>Behavioural enrichment</b>		
<b>B14-B17</b>	Cattle have access to grooming/scratching structures in all paddocks. Calves have access to enrichment in pens.		
	<b>Managers, stock-keepers and other staff</b>		
<b>B18-B19</b>	All staff meet the cattle's needs and comply with the law and SPCA standards.		
<b>B20, B21</b>	All staff are offered animal welfare/husbandry training and are supervised until competent.		
<b>B22</b>	An animal welfare complaints policy is in place.		

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