



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



WANTED: Wisconsin Cow-Calf Farms to Assist in Beef Quality Assurance Research Project

The University of Wisconsin-Division of Extension and Wisconsin Beef Council are collaborating in an effort to identify Wisconsin cow-calf farms interested in participating in a national observational research project. The premise of this project is to investigate the thresholds set for cattle handling observations in the current Beef Quality Assurance Cow-Calf Assessment. The objective of the research is to determine if the current thresholds in the assessment are reflective of on farm results ahead of updating the materials. In order to do so, the researchers must visit cow-calf operations and observe beef cow behavior while being handling through the chute. With many farms planning chute work ahead of spring calving or spring turnout, the team is planning to begin conducting the research soon. The Beef Quality Assurance team is composed of NCBA staff, researchers from Colorado State University and University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

This observation of cattle handling behavior is not based on individual farm facilities or handling procedures, but is solely related to observing the behavior of the cattle during handling. The resulting aggregated data will appear in a final report with **cooperating producers remaining anonymous**. The report will determine if the current thresholds in the BQA materials are appropriate or will require adjustment. For example, in the current assessment manual, vocalization has a threshold of 5%. This research will determine if 5% is acceptable, or if it should be raised/lowered. The current Cow-Calf Assessment Guide has been included with this document.

One or two researchers will visit each enrolled farm to collect the data. The researchers will observe a maximum of 100 head of cattle. If the farm has less than 100 head, all of the available cows are observed while being handled through the chute. From WI, it would be helpful for the researchers to observe farms in the 10-49, 50-99, and 100-199 head ranges. The researchers are only recording observational data on brood cows being worked through the chute and will not be recording data on calves. The team will be visiting a total of 85 – 90 operations across the country.

For farmers who express willingness to participate, please share the following information with your local contact. The information will be passed onto the research team at University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Colorado State University to begin planning the trip. To minimize travel costs, the planning process will identify the most popular timeframe for chute work within the state as reported by willing farm participants. Your farm will be notified once the final farm participant selection has been completed.

Information required to participate:

- Farmer contact information – including address, phone, e-mail
- When you plan to work cattle – date and time
- Number of brood cows being handled during the chute trip

For more information, please contact one of the following individuals:

Josh Kamps, Agriculture Educator,
Extension-Lafayette County
Cell: 608-732-6717
Email: joshua.kamps@wisc.edu

Amanda L. Cauffman, Grant County
Agricultural Educator, UW-Madison
Division of Extension,
Office: 608-723-2125
Email: amanda.cauffman@wisc.edu

Gene Schriefer, Ag Educator,
Extension UW-Madison
Office: 608-930-9850
Email: gene.schriefer@wisc.edu

Carolyn Ihde, Agriculture Educator,
Crawford & Richland Counties
UW Madison - Division of Extension
Office: 608-326-0223 (Crawford) or
608-647-6148 (Richland)
Email: cihde@wisc.edu

Tammy Vaassen, Executive Director,
Wisconsin Beef Council
Phone: 608-833-9940
Email: tvassen@beeftips.com

Category/ Point	Measure "Needs Improvement" items require a description to be placed in the "Comments" field (Comments are optional for "Acceptable" markings.)			
Animal Handling Scoring - Driving Aides	Use* of electric prods should be minimized. Record the number of cattle on which an electric prod is used. Calculate the percentage that are prodded and record the percentage. Number of cattle prodded ÷ Total cattle observed x 100 = ____% prodded <i>*Use is defined as discharging electric current while in contact with the animal.</i> If 10% or more of the cattle are prodded, mark Unacceptable/No and complete the comments section.	Acceptable/ Yes	Needs Improvement*	Not Applicable
	Is an electric prod used on < 10% of cattle? ____% (Acceptable is <10.0%)			
	Comments:			
Animal Handling Scoring - Chutes/Re- straints - Falling	Cattle should not fall* upon release from the chute. Record the number of cattle that fall. Calculate the percentage that fall and record the percentage. Number of cattle that fall ÷ Total cattle observed x 100 = ____% falling <i>*Falling is defined by the animal's torso/belly touching the ground.</i> If 2% or more of the cattle fall, mark Unacceptable/No and complete the comments section.	Acceptable/ Yes	Needs Improvement*	Not Applicable
	Falling ____% (Acceptable is <2.0%)			
	Comments:			
Animal Handling Scoring - Chutes/Restrains - Stumbling / Tripping	Cattle should not stumble/trip* upon release from the chute. Record the number of cattle that stumble following release from the chute. Calculate the percentage that stumble/trip and record the percentage. Number of cattle that stumble ÷ Total cattle observed x 100 = ____% stumbling/tripping <i>*Stumbling/tripping is defined as an animal contacting the ground with a knee.</i> If 10% more of the cattle stumble/trip, mark Unacceptable/No and complete the comments section.	Acceptable/ Yes	Needs Improvement*	Not Applicable
	Stumbling/Tripping ____% (Acceptable is <10.0%)			
	Comments:			
Animal Handling Scoring - Chutes/Re- straints - Vocalizing	Most cattle will not vocalize when in the chute, following restraint but prior to occurrence of a procedure. Record the number of cattle that vocalize following improper restraint but prior to occurrence of a procedure. Calculate the percentage that vocalize and record the percentage. Number of cattle that vocalize ÷ Total cattle observed x 100 = ____% vocalizing If 5% or more of the cattle vocalize following restraint, associated with improper restraint, but prior to occurrence of a procedure mark Unacceptable/No and complete the comments section.	Acceptable/ Yes	Needs Improvement*	Not Applicable
	Vocalizing ____% (Acceptable is <5.0%)			
	Comments:			

Category/ Point	Measure "Needs Improvement" items require a description to be placed in the "Comments" field (Comments are optional for "Acceptable" markings.)			
Animal Handling Scoring - Chutes/Restrains - Running / Jumping	Most cattle will not jump or run* out of the chute following release. Record the number of cattle that jump or run upon release. Calculate the percentage that jump or run and record the percentage. Number of cattle that jump or run ÷ Total cattle observed x 100 = ____% jumping or running <i>*Do not count a trotting/loping as running.</i> If 25% or more of the cattle jump or run upon release from the chute, mark Unacceptable/No and complete the comments section.	Acceptable/ Yes	Needs Improvement*	Not Applicable
	Running/Jumping ____% (Acceptable is <25.0%)			
	Comments:			
Animal Handling Scoring - Chutes/Re- straints - Miscaught	Chutes should be operated such that the position of the animal is readjusted if it is improperly caught*. Record the number of cattle that are miscaught. Calculate the percentage that are miscaught and record the percentage. Number of cattle that are miscaught ÷ Total cattle observed x 100 = ____% miscaught <i>*Miscaught is defined as the animal being in any position other than with its head fully outside of the chute and the balance of the body within the chute, or if an animal is caught in the tail/back gate and not released.</i> If any cattle are miscaught and not readjusted, mark Unacceptable/No and complete the comments section.	Acceptable/ Yes	Needs Improvement*	Not Applicable
	Miscaught ____% (Acceptable is <0.0%)			
	Comments:			