

Housed cow cleanliness score card

Regular cleanliness scoring can help monitor your herd's health.
Assess the cleanliness of your herd using this scoring method.






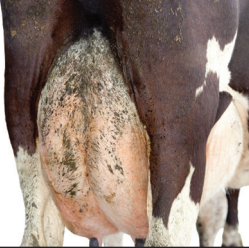



How many cows should be scored?

Ideally, score the entire herd. At minimum, score:

- Herd is less than 200 cows: score 80 cows
- Herd is 200-500 cows: score 90 cows
- Herd is more than 500 cows: score 100 cows

How to score your herd

- Choose a time when cows are standing, such as an hour after feeding or during milking, to observe their cleanliness.
- Move through the herd and score each cow based on the dirtiest body part (flank, tail, lower hind leg, or udder).
- Mark the appropriate score box for each cow.

Score	Body Part		
	Flank and tail	Lower hind leg	Udder
<p>0</p> <p>No dirt or less than 10% (a hand-size) is splashed with fresh or dry material.</p>			
<p>Total number of cows with a score of 0 =</p>			
<p>1</p> <p>There is at least a hand-sized area of dirt, but less than 50% of the area is dirty.</p>			
<p>Total number of cows with a score of 1 =</p>	Dirty body part tally:		
<p>2</p> <p>More than 50% of the area is dirty and hair is hard to see. Tail may have significant dagging.</p>			
<p>Total number of cows with a score of 2 =</p>	Dirty body part tally:		

Once the cows have been scored, add up the number of cows that have scored a 2. Divide this number by the total number of cows scored to work out your percentage. **This is the herd score.**

My herd cleanliness score

Results

My cows all scored 0 – Excellent

Your cows are clean. Monitor the cleanliness of your herd regularly to pick up any changes.

My score is less than 20% – Fair

Continue to score your herd to monitor changes that may result in cows getting dirtier. You can score cows before and after any changes in diet, production stage or every month throughout the housed period.

My score is more than 20% – Improvement needed

Assess the environment, feed practices and cleaning protocols to improve your cleanliness score.

How to improve your cleanliness score

1. Assess the environment and cows

Inspect the housing conditions to ensure your facility is clean and dry. Wet and dirty conditions can lead to dirt accumulation on cows.

Check the quality and quantity of bedding. Is it too wet? Is it draining well? Replace or add fresh bedding regularly to maintain cleanliness. For woodchip bedding, scratch the surface with a rototiller or similar equipment at least once a day, and twice a day during heavy use. Check troughs are not leaking near the loafing area. Test the bedding by kneeling on the bedding for 10 seconds after the cows have been in for a few hours. If your knees are dry, you're managing the bedding layer well. Ensure good ventilation to reduce humidity and moisture, which can soak into bedding materials.

Are there too many cows in the facility? Cows need enough suitable loafing areas to rest. Overstocking can lead to more dung and urine per square metre, making it difficult for bedding to dry out. Ensure there's enough room for cows to move around without rubbing against each other. Identify areas where cow flow could be improved. Dirty alleyways with high levels of effluent can cause cows to kick up effluent onto their legs.

Are your cows lying incorrectly in stalls or in unsuitable areas (e.g. alleyways)? If the bedding is wet, they may seek alternative areas to lie down. If a stall isn't available for each cow, some may lie down in alleyways and cross-overs.

Incorrect stall dimensions can cause cows to lie incorrectly, leading to effluent accumulation on their flanks or tails. Dirty stall beds mean cows will lie directly in wet dung.

Be vigilant for signs of infections or skin conditions that could contribute to dirtiness. Cows with nutritional or health related scours may produce watery dung that affects cleanliness and bedding absorption, regardless of usual management practices.

2. Monitor feeding and cleaning practices

Has the diet been adjusted? A change in diet can cause extra effluent accumulation, a change in faecal consistency and can be transferred from cow to cow by swishing tails.

Keep feeding alleys clean to prevent cows from getting dirty while eating. Is there enough space for each cow at the feed face? Are they having to walk through dirty alleyways? Do the alleyways need more regular cleaning to avoid splashes while cows are walking? Think about the best time for floodwashing. Establish a routine cleaning schedule for stalls, alleyways, and feeding areas to prevent dirt and effluent build-up.