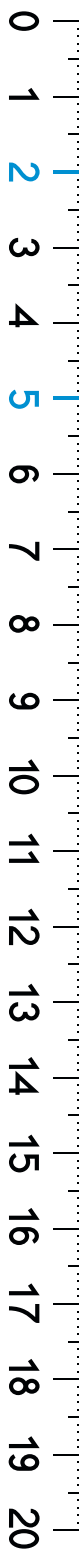


Scoring swellings

Score	No swelling	Head and neck	Front leg	Hind leg and hock	Rest of body
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No swelling, or a swelling smaller than 2cm 				
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mild swelling larger than 2cm such that the normal anatomy of the area is enlarged, poorly defined or obscured Lack of definition of joints, 2–5cm swelling on other parts of the body 				
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abnormal enlargement larger than 5cm which is a prominent/pronounced extension away from the body May be at least 5cm long, rather than round 				
Factors which may result in swellings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injection sites Incorrect neck rail height – cubicles and feed barrier Protruding items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cubicle comfort Amount and type of bedding Protruding items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cubicle comfort Amount and type of bedding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broken cubicle fittings Protruding/low hanging items in housing or cow flow area



Why score swellings?

Swellings demonstrate some form of damage to the skin and, in some cases, the underlying tissue.

Occasional small areas of swelling may be inevitable among a herd of cattle but swellings larger than 2cm should give reason for concern.

Swellings are caused by cows lying down on hard surfaces, uncomfortable cubicles and injection sites; there may also be signs of abscesses or cysts.

Hind leg, hock and front leg swellings are strong indicators that the lying area is not comfortable.

Neck swellings tend to indicate an inadequate feed barrier or incorrect cubicle neck rail height.

Presence of swellings on other body parts may indicate there are areas in the cow's environment that are causing injuries.

How to score your herd

1. Scoring the entire herd is best practice. However, the table below gives guidance on the minimum number of cows you should score to get an accurate picture of your herd. For example, if you have a herd size of 125 cows, you need to score 65 cows.

Herd size	Minimum sample size
Up to 50	30 (or all cows if < 30 in herd)
50–100	50
101–200	65
201+	73

2. Visually assess the entire cow according to the following areas:
 - Head and neck
 - Front leg
 - Hind leg and hock
 - Rest of body
3. Choose a time and place that will allow you to observe cows, for example, legs and hocks can easily be observed in the milking parlour. Alternatively, observe cows when doing routine management procedures such as hoof trimming, AI, PD checks, routine vaccinations, etc.
4. Tally the scores for each body part.

Using the information

- Investigate the causes of swellings (scores 1 and 2) in the cow's environment
- Manage necessary changes to assist with reducing scores 1 and 2
- Regularly score the herd and monitor the number of swellings to determine whether changes have had the desired effect

Key benefits of scoring

- Use as a troubleshooting tool to find possible causes of injury in the cow's environment
- Motivates farm staff to improve the cow's comfort in its environment and, therefore, overall herd health and performance
- Use to meet the recommendations or requirements of assurance schemes

Further information

Information and a short film to help understand the score system can be viewed on the AHDB Dairy website at dairy.ahdb.org.uk/swellings

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