

ANIMAL HEALTH CHECKS: BEEF CATTLE



Quality health checks are the first line of defense for protecting humans and animals from contagious diseases at fairs and other animal events. Use this checklist to confirm that animals participating in an agricultural fair or event are visibly healthy. Health checks should be completed inside the trailer or right outside; do not permit the animal to walk through the fairgrounds, barns or event before confirming its health status. Use gloves and other personal protective equipment (PPE) as appropriate. Disinfect footwear between assessments on animals not housed together. Change your clothes after completing the animal assessments. Wipe down any equipment like flashlights or radios between herds. Certain conditions and observations noted within this checklist may not pose a significant public or animal health risk. In such cases, decisions regarding an animal's eligibility for exhibition should be made in consultation with event leadership and/or the on-call veterinarian. Follow any additional policies provided by event leadership and your state's Department of Agriculture.

Identification

- ☐ Valid health certificate
- ☐ RFID tag

General Appearance

- ☐ Overall thriftiness, including an appropriate body condition for age, sex, and physiological state
- ☐ Bright, alert, and responsive
- ☐ No indication of broken bones or injuries
- ☐ No obvious wounds
- ☐ Normal gait and mental activity

Nose, Eyes, and Mouth

- ☐ No signs of respiratory distress or coughing
- ☐ No nasal discharge
- ☐ No excessive salivation
- ☐ Bright clear eyes without discharge, squinting, or signs of injury

Skin and Hair

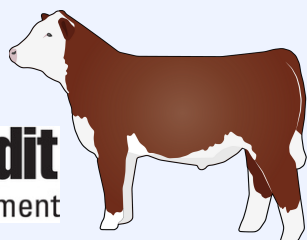
- ☐ No active lesions, wounds, or significant hair loss
- ☐ No active ringworm (must be healed: dry, flat and hair regrowth started)
- ☐ No visible warts
- ☐ No indications of external parasites (mites or lice)

Rear End

- ☐ Free of diarrhea (scours) or signs of recent scouring
- ☐ No prolapsed rectal or vaginal tissue
- ☐ Vulva clean with no abnormal discharge (clear/cloudy is normal)
- ☐ No presence of placenta or afterbirth
- ☐ No signs of injury or infection in udders, teats, and testes
- ☐ No signs of mastitis in nursing cows: warmth, swelling, hardness
- ☐ Avoid expressing milk during inspection
- ☐ No infection from castration
- ☐ No testicular swelling

Feet

- ☐ Well-maintained hooves (not overgrown)
- ☐ Standing and walking evenly on all four feet
- ☐ No signs of lameness or injury to hooves
- ☐ No swelling, odor, fluid, redness



Nose, Eyes, and Mouth:

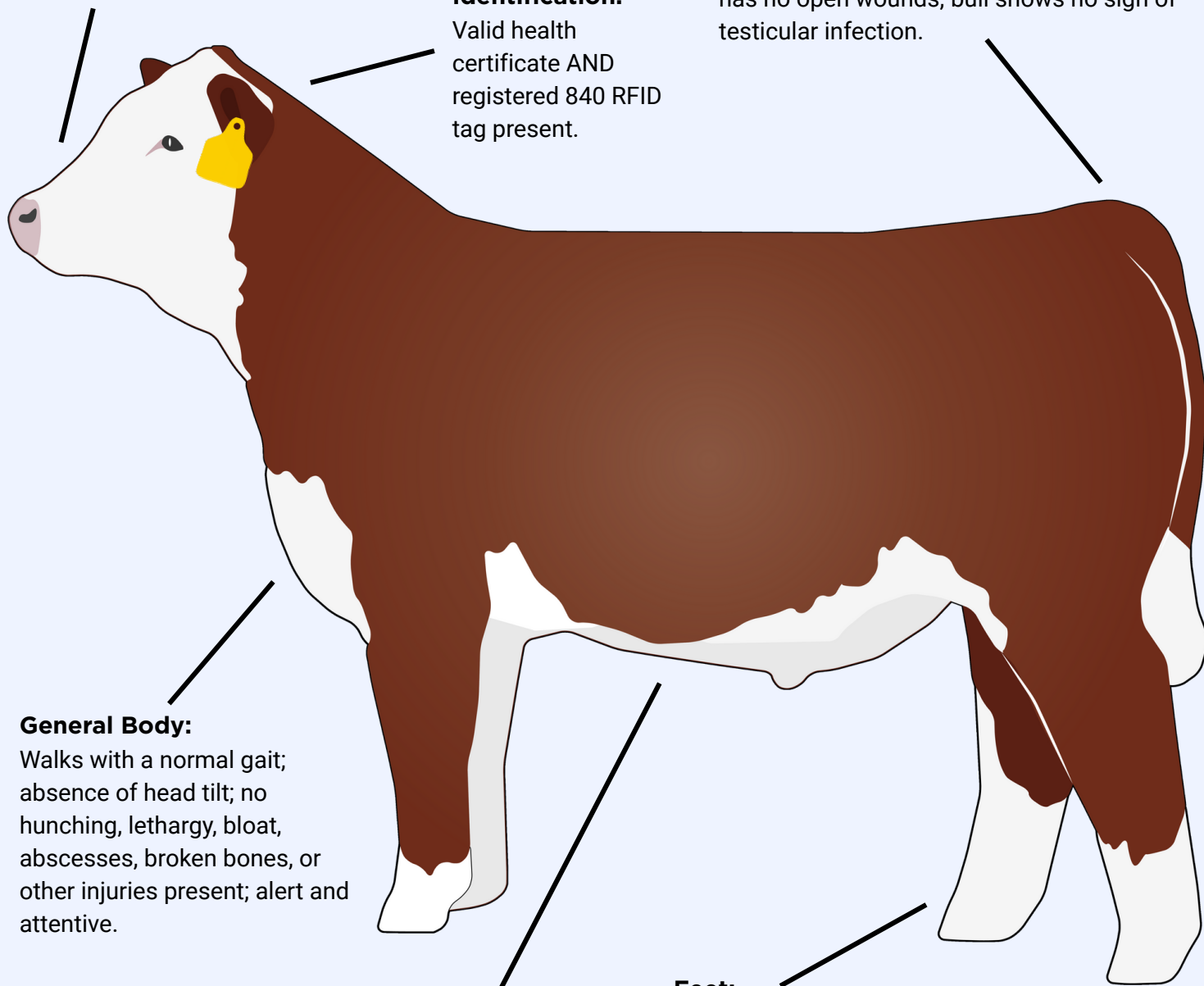
Bright, clear eyes; free of coughing, panting, thumping; absence of panting, tooth grinding, discolored discharge, and excessive salivation.

Rear:

No presence of scours/diarrhea; no signs of vaginal or rectal prolapse; no presence of placenta or afterbirth; lactating cow does not exhibit signs of mastitis; steer lacks testes and has no open wounds; bull shows no sign of testicular infection.

Identification:

Valid health certificate AND registered 840 RFID tag present.



General Body:

Walks with a normal gait; absence of head tilt; no hunching, lethargy, bloat, abscesses, broken bones, or other injuries present; alert and attentive.

Skin:

Clean and free from infections, parasites, wounds, warts, and active ringworm.

Feet:

Well maintained hooves, standing/walking on all four feet, no signs of lameness, abscesses, or footrot (swelling, odor, fluid, redness).

The BE SAFE Project and this fact sheet are supported by Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement. Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement supports programs, projects and events that are intended to strengthen Northeast agriculture, commercial fishing and forest products. This program is a combined effort of Farm Credit East and CoBank.

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