

# ANIMAL HEALTH CHECKS: DAIRY 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 840 tag

## General Appearance

- ☐ Overall thriftiness, including an appropriate body condition for its 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

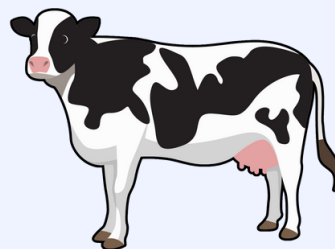
- ☐ No active lesions, wounds, or significant hair loss
- ☐ No active ringworm (must be healed: dry, flat and hair regrowth started)
- ☐ No visible warts
- ☐ No indications of external parasites (mites or lice)

## Rear End and Udder

- ☐ 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

## Hooves

- ☐ 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



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### Identification:

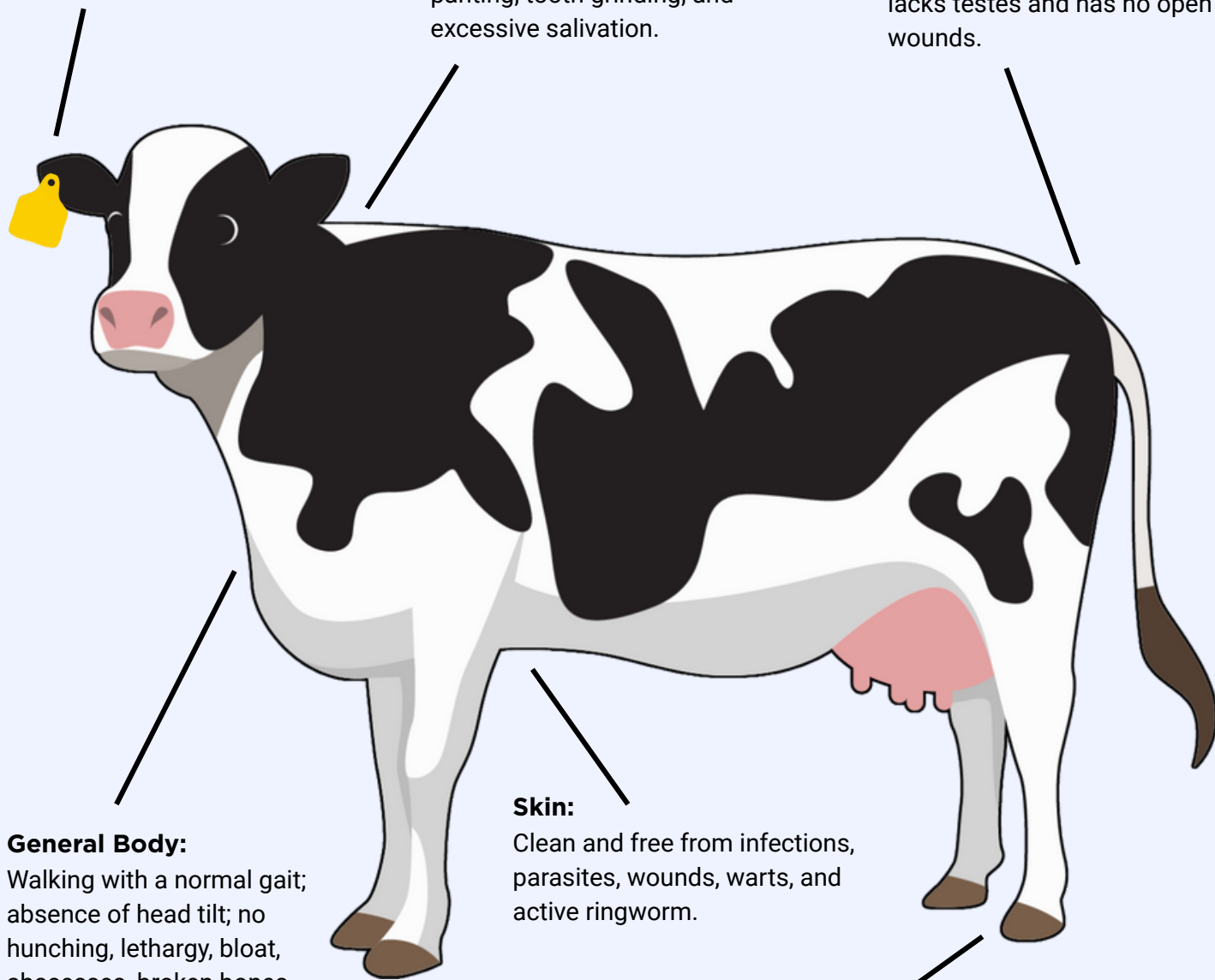
Valid health certificate  
AND registered RFID tag  
tattoo present.

### Nose, Eyes, and Mouth:

Free of respiratory infection (no breathing irregularities, coughing, nasal discharge); absence of panting, tooth grinding, and excessive salivation.

### Rear:

No presence of scours/diarrhea; no signs of vaginal or rectal prolapse; lactating cow does not exhibit signs of mastitis; castrated animal lacks testes and has no open wounds.



### General Body:

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

### 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 or abscesses (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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