



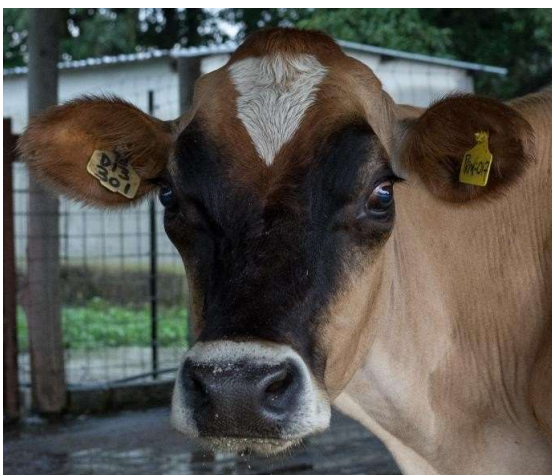
ARE YOUR CATTLE HEALTHY?

AIM: TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO FARMERS ON SIGNS OF HEALTHY CATTLE

- ❖ You can tell a lot about the health of a cow by its **behaviour**;
- ❖ Get to know your animals (what they like to eat, where they like to stand / rest; and what they do during the day);
- ❖ If an animal is **behaving differently from usual**, that may indicate it is not feeling well, e.g. stands by itself away from other animals; is not interested in food and / or water;

REMEMBER: Cows may behave differently during their production cycle, e.g. before calving, 'on heat'. **KEEP RECORDS** (e.g. dates of heat, service, etc) so you know how each cow should behave.

- ❖ Below are some signs of normal cattle:



HEAD AREA

- ✓ **Alert** and **aware** of its surroundings;
- ✓ **Eyes** bright, with no discharge;
- ✓ **Ears** move around to pick up sounds and flick flies away;
- ✓ **Nose** clean with no discharge; often licks its nose;
- ✓ **Muzzle** is moist;
- ✓ No dribbling;

Feeding, defaecating and urinating

- ✓ Cows spend 12 - 14 hours **lying down** and 3 - 4 hours **eating**;
- ✓ Cows **ruminates** / chew their cud for 6-10 hours per day;
- ✓ Cows can drink up to 50 litres of **water** per day;
- ✓ Cow **body condition** can vary during stages of production, but they should not be too fat or too thin. *See separate fact sheet*;
- ✓ A healthy cow's **dung** should be a soft pat. Colour can depend on what the cow is eating, but there should be no blood;
- ✓ Cows should not strain when urinating. **Urine** should be a clear colour.



ARE YOUR CATTLE HEALTHY?



FEET, LEGS AND MOVEMENT

- ✓ **Walks** easily and readily;
- ✓ **Stands** evenly on all 4 legs;
- ✓ **Hooves** are not overgrown;
- ✓ Able to get up easily if lying down and is disturbed.

UDDER

- ✓ **Teats** should be flexible and a natural colour (i.e. not red, or swollen);
- ✓ **Udder** not hard or swollen;
- ✓ No pain when you touch the udder.



Cow vital signs

	Normal	Notes
Temperature	38.5 °C (101.5°F)	Lift the tail and put the thermometer in the rectum, against the body wall. Make sure you don't put it in a piece of dung. A temperature over 39.5°C (103°F) may indicate infection.
Respiration rate	26 -50 breaths per minute	Watch the nostrils, or ribs. If the animal is breathing normally, it can be difficult to count the breaths. Respiration varies with outside temperature, or stress of the animal.
Pulse rate	48 – 84 beats per minute	Feel the pulse in the tail vein, underneath the tail.

- If you have any concerns about your animal's health, contact your local veterinary officer.

ZDTP is focused on supporting dairy farmers to improve their productivity, milk quality and linkages to urban markets. The views expressed in this publication are those of the implementers of the programme and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Government. For further information, please contact ZDTP on zdtpinfo@primeconsultants.net. Follow us on www.zambiadairy.com, Facebook (facebook.com/zambiadairy/) and Twitter (@DairyZambia).