



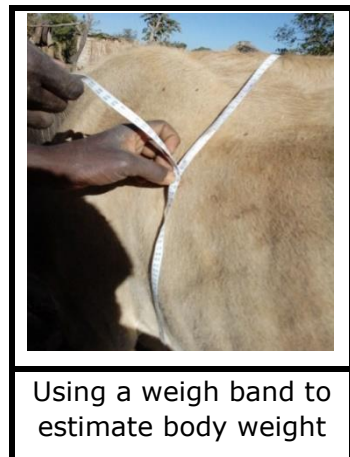
## ESTIMATING THE WEIGHT OF A COW

**AIM: TO SUPPORT FARMERS TO ESTIMATE THE WEIGHT OF DAIRY CATTLE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE CORRECT AMOUNTS OF FEED AND MEDICINES.**

### 1. Why do we need to know the weight of a cow?

- **Calculating the correct dose of a drug / medicine** (e.g. dewormer; tick treatment);
- **Balancing a feed ration** to make sure the animal gets the correct amount of energy and protein.
- **Monitoring growth rate.** This can help you to know if an animal:
  - Is growing as expected and is the recommended weight for its age;
  - May be underweight or overweight;
  - Might be ready for mating.

HEIFER BODY WEIGHT ESTIMATION		
AGE (Months)	BODY WEIGHT (Kg)	WEIGH BAND (Cm)
3 - 4	60 - 100	-
4 - 6	100 - 150	100
6 - 9	150 - 200	115
9 - 12	200 - 250	125
12 - 15	250 - 300	140
15 - 18	300 - 350*	150
18 - 21	350 - 400**	165

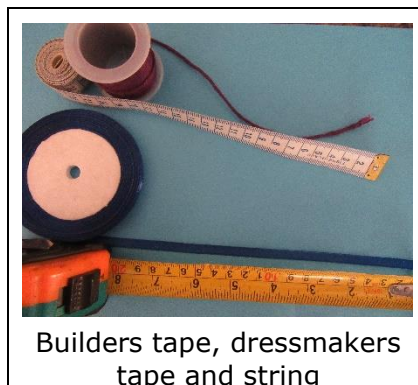


\*Ovarian activity starts around a body weight of 250-300 Kg

\*\* Mating at heat – AI or bull service

### 2. What to use to estimate the weight

- You can estimate the weight using:
  - ✓ Weigh band;
  - ✓ Measuring tape;
  - ✓ String.
- Ensure what you use is **not elasticated**.





### 3. How to estimate the weight



1. Make sure the animal`s head is up, because the chest expands when the head is down.
2. Measure the heart girth region just behind the shoulders.
3. Be sure the tape is in contact with the animal`s body surface all the way around;

#### NOTE:

- ✓ Pulling the tape too tight will cause an underestimation of weight.
- ✓ Leaving it too loose will cause an overestimation of weight.
- ✓ See separate table for conversions for adult cattle.

For further information or support, contact your local **extension officer**.

The 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 Country Manager Tania Thomson on [tania@primeconsultants.net](mailto:tania@primeconsultants.net) or +260 96 456 4206



## WEIGHT / HEART GIRTH CONVERSION FOR ADULT CATTLE

Centimetres on weigh tape	Estimated weight (kilograms)
133 cm	202 kg
137 cm	220 kg
141 cm	240 kg
148 cm	257 kg
152 cm	280 kg
155 cm	303 kg
158 cm	320 kg
162 cm	340 kg
165 cm	364 kg
168 cm	384 kg
170 cm	400 kg
173 cm	420 kg
176 cm	438 kg
179 cm	466 kg
181 cm	480 kg
183 cm	496 kg
186 cm	520 kg
188 cm	540 kg
190 cm	560 kg
192 cm	578 kg
194 cm	599 kg
197 cm	621 kg
199 cm	640 kg
201 cm	658 kg
203 cm	680 kg
205 cm	702 kg
207 cm	721 kg
209 cm	742 kg
211 cm	759 kg
213 cm	779 kg
215 cm	800 kg
217 cm	821 kg
219 cm	842 kg
221 cm	861 kg