

Animal Care



Notice of Change

This Notice of Change provides official notice to farmers on changes being implemented to the proAction® requirements in the Animal Care module.

Animal Care Module Changes

Requirement: continuous improvement requirements for cattle assessments.

Reference: proAction Workbook and Reference Manual (Chapter 4 and Appendix II).

Effective date: March 2021

Description of changes:

Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), through the Animal Care Technical Committee and in consultation with provincial members, has reviewed aggregate data from the cattle assessments and re-evaluated the expectations for corrective action and continuous improvement for the cattle assessment requirement. This has resulted in the following changes:

- The peer report zones will be fixed rather than based on percentiles. The thresholds have been established based on the benchmark set by the first round of cattle assessments conducted across Canada.

The zones are outlined in Table 1 in the Appendix.

- A corrective action plan template will be available to guide the development of corrective action plans with dairy professionals. Farmers and dairy professionals can use their own formats but all of the elements in the template are required, unless specifically designated as optional.

The corrective action plan template is included in the Appendix

- Cattle scoring in the Monitor category for the gait scoring method of lameness will be more prominently shown on the cattle assessment report. The peer report will include a message that these animals are mildly to moderately lame to encourage farmers to identify the root cause of the problem and take corrective action to improve and prevent lameness in the future.
- Continuous improvement expectations and timelines are defined in Table 2, including a transition period to provide time for farmers and the industry to adjust:
 - A temporary Dark Red zone (herds scoring less than 60% acceptable in any category) is being implemented to focus first on farms that need to improve the most. Farms with results in the Dark Red zone will under-go more frequent cattle assessments with a larger sample size.
 - Farms with results in the Dark Red or Red zone must document and implement a corrective action plan in consultation with their veterinarian, nutritionist or other dairy specialist.
 - If a farm has one or more results in the Dark Red zone, the farm is due for the next cattle assessment in 12 months from its next validation anniversary date, instead of the standard 24 months, and the number of cattle assessed will increase (see Table 3 in the Appendix).

- Farms must demonstrate improvement out of the Dark Red zone according to the timelines outlined in Table 2.
- After two years, the increase in cattle assessment frequency, increase in sample size, and the expectation for improvement out of the zone after three consecutive results for the same measure will apply to the Red zone as well as the Dark Red zone, effectively combining the two zones, starting in spring 2023.

Rationale: preliminary data from the second round of cattle assessments indicates that herd scores are improving across Canada. While this is positive news, continuous improvement requirements are needed to clearly demonstrate every farms' commitment to excellent animal care.

The new requirements are designed to establish reasonable, achievable targets (the Green zone), while driving improvement where needed.

The corrective action plan template is designed to provide more guidance on how to structure the plans and ensure timely follow-up.

The increased frequency of cattle assessments for lower scores ensures timely follow-up and demonstrates to stakeholders that the industry is committed to action, while still providing farmers time to find solutions. The larger sample size for these cattle assessments helps the farmer and the dairy professional evaluate the effectiveness of the corrective actions in resolving the root cause of the problem(s).

Finally, the transition period provides time for the farmers, dairy professionals, and provincial staff to adjust, as needed, while ensuring action on farms with the lowest scores.

Requiring mandatory improvement out of the Red zone demonstrates to farmers' peers, customers, consumers and the public that animal care is a top priority and that meeting standards is expected and required.

Note: The above listed changes will be incorporated into the next version of the proAction Workbook and Reference Manual in 2021.

Animal Care Module Changes Appendix

Table 1: Zone thresholds for cattle assessments

Measure	Zones			
	Green Meets excellent target	Yellow Corrective action plan recommended	Red Corrective action plan required	Dark Red Corrective action plan and increased cattle assessments required**
Body Condition Score	≥95%*	80% to <95%	60% to <80%	<60%
Hocks	≥90%	75% to <90%	60% to <75%	<60%
Knees	≥90%	75% to <90%	60% to <75%	<60%
Neck	≥90%	75% to <90%	60% to <75%	<60%
Lameness	≥90%	75% to <90%	60% to <75%	<60%

*Percentage of cattle in the sample scoring Acceptable

**Next cattle assessment is due in 12 months with a larger sample size

Table 2: Requirements related to Cattle Assessment Results

Parameter	Result, next step or requirement			
Results	All results in Green zone	One or more results in Yellow zone, and the rest are in the Green zone	One or more results in Red zone	One or more results in Dark Red zone
Due date of next cattle assessment	Due in 24 months with standard sample size	Due in 24 months with standard sample size	<p>For cattle assessments conducted between March 2021 and March 2023: Due in 24 months with standard sample size.</p> <p>For cattle assessments conducted after March 2023: Due in 12 months with larger sample size.</p>	Due in 12 months with larger sample size
Corrective action plan	N/A	Recommended for any result in the Yellow zone	Required	Required
Continuous improvement timelines	N/A	Recommended to strive for improvement to Green zone	<p>Starting in March 2023: After three consecutive Red zone results for the same animal-based measure, farms must demonstrate improvement out of the zone to continue to meet proAction requirements (i.e. a major nonconformance will be assigned in the validation report and will not be closed until the farm shows a cattle assessment with results in the yellow or green zones. As a result, the validation will not be approved and the farm will not achieve / maintain registration).</p>	After three consecutive Dark Red zone results for the same animal-based measure, farms must demonstrate improvement out of the zone to continue to meet proAction requirements (i.e. a major nonconformance will be assigned in the validation report and will not be closed until the farm shows a cattle assessment with results in the yellow or green zones. As a result, the validation will not be approved and the farm will not achieve / maintain registration).

Table 3: Sample size calculator for cattle assessments

Average number of cattle in milking herd (lactating cattle)	Sample Size for 24-month Frequency		Sample Size for 12-month Frequency	
	Sample size: minimum number of cattle for assessment	Approximately every _____ animal	Sample size: minimum number of cattle for assessment	Approximately every _____ animal
≤ 20	14	All to every 2 nd	19	Almost every animal
30	18	2 nd	28	All to every 2 nd
40	21	2 nd	36	All to every 2 nd
50	23	2 nd	44	All to every 2 nd
70	27	3 rd	59	All to every 2 nd
90	29	3 rd	73	All to every 2 nd
100	30	3 rd	80	All to every 2 nd
150	33	5 th	108	All to every 2 nd
250	37	7 th	152	2 nd
350	38	9 th	183	2 nd
450	39	12 th	207	2 nd
550	40	14 th	226	2 nd to 3 rd
700	40	18 th	248	3 rd
1,000	5%	20 th	278	4 th
2,000	5%	20 th	322	6 th
3,000	5%	20 th	341	9 th
4,000	5%	20 th	351	11 th
5,000	5%	20 th	357	14 th

***Note:** sample sizes for the 24-month frequency are calculated on the basis of 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 15, except for herd sizes over 1,000 cattle. Sample sizes for the 12-month frequency are calculated on the basis of 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5 for all herd sizes.

RECORD 7B: CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN:

Farm Name		
Owner's Name and Signature	Name	Signature
Dairy Professional's Name and Signature (e.g. veterinarian, nutritionist, dairy specialist)	Name	Signature
Date of agreement on corrective action plan		
Corrective Action Plan Details		
Cattle assessment results in the red or dark red zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Body Condition Score <input type="checkbox"/> Hocks <input type="checkbox"/> Knees <input type="checkbox"/> Necks <input type="checkbox"/> Lameness	
Description of root cause(s) of the issue(s)		
Description of corrective actions planned to resolve the root cause(s) and improve the issue(s)		
Target date for implementation of correction actions		
Timeframe when improvements should be noticeable (i.e. timeframe to start assessing if corrective actions are effective)		
Methods to assess if corrective actions are effective (i.e. what to look for or measure)		
Optional Section: Verification by dairy professional of effective implementation of corrective action plan	Comments	Date
	Name	Signature