

Canadian National Health Project

Dairy Cattle Health Definitions

Listed are the main dairy cattle diseases and health events and their corresponding definitions. Please record the incidence of these events in your herd records (software, DHI calendar, log book, etc.) and provide to your DHI staff on each test. The information will be used in genetic evaluations and for generating herd and cow health management reports. To ensure accurate and consistent diagnosis, please work with your herd veterinarian.

1) Mastitis

Abnormal milk (e.g., clots, flakes, or watery) from one or more quarters, as determined visually, by in-line analysis or testing of the milk. Other visible signs may include inflammation of the udder (e.g., heat, swelling, or discoloration) and/or systemic illness of the cow.

2) Lameness

Abnormal gait attributed to either the foot or leg.

Score	Description	Assessment Criteria
NON-LAME	1	Normal Walks rapidly and confidently making long strides with a level back
	2	Mildly lame Walks more slowly, making shorter strides with an arched back. Stands with a level back and does not appear to favour a limb.
LAME*	3	Moderately lame Walks slowly, making deliberate short steps with an arched back; may favor a limb. Stands with an arched back and frequently lifts affected foot. Cow discomfort when standing and long periods of resting. Visible signs of swelling and pain
	4	Severely lame Moves slowly, making frequent stops to rest affected limb. Only partially weight bearing. Stands and walks with a pronounced arched back.

*Indicate that an animal is lame only if she scores a 3 or 4

3) Cystic Ovarian Disease

In cows greater than 30 DIM not yet diagnosed pregnant, presence of one or more follicles greater than 25 mm in diameter on one or both ovaries in the absence of a corpus luteum and uterine tone.

4) Displaced Abomasum

Cow has decreased appetite with an audible, high pitched ping produced by tapping the left abdominal wall between the 9th and 12th ribs, for left displaced abomasum.

5) Ketosis

Depressed appetite with evidence of elevated milk, urine or breath ketones, after exclusion of other clinical disease.

6) Metritis

In a fresh cow up to and including 20 DIM, the presence of an abnormally enlarged uterus containing fetid watery red-brown fluid, signs of systemic illness and/or fever. In cows greater than 20 DIM, the presence of abnormal cervical or vaginal discharge not associated with heat.

7) Milk Fever

Cows, 72 hours before or after calving, showing one of the following milk fever stages:

- Stage 1
- Mild excrement or stiffness
 - Weakness or weight shifting
 - Increased rectal temperature (above 39°C)
- Stage 2
- Lies does not get up
 - Cold extremities
 - Decreased rectal temperature (less than 38°C)
- Stage 3
- Cow lies on side with legs stretched out
 - Pulse difficult to detect

8) Retained Placenta

Failure to eliminate afterbirth within 24 hours of calving.

Injury

This includes a number of conditions (fractures, lacerations, tears and any other accidents) that cause a loss of production.

Body	Udder	Other
Broken hip	Stepped on teat	Downer cow
Dislocated hip	Cut on udder or milk vein	
Ligament rupture	Blocked teat	
Cut to body	Udder ligament rupture	
Splay leg		

Heifer Diarrhea

Manure is runny and quickly spreads through bedding

Heifer Pneumonia

Calf has some or all of the following clinical signs: fever, nasal discharge, cough, increased respiratory rate, and decreased appetite.