

Docility Scores

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Docility scores (formerly called temperament scores) are used to effectively describe the manageability of cattle in the Salers breed. The docility scores are written in a more detailed description than previous temperament scores so that breeders can make a concentrated effort to accurately collect and report docility scores. Breeders are encouraged to collect docility score measurements on calves at weaning and yearling time when processing them through the chutes and handling them in corrals. The scores should be collected at this time and reported on the ROE-1 Registration Application or the ROE-3 Weaning Worksheet for measurements collected at weaning time. Measurements collected at yearling time should be reported on the ROE-5 Yearling Worksheet.

The docility scores are numeric scores ranging from 1 through 5. The following are descriptions of the modified scoring system.

1 – Animal is exceptionally calm. When being processed through chute, offers no resistance to head gate. Upon release from the chute, exists at a slow pace, may require assistance to exit. In a confined situation, remains calm and does not attempt to flee your presence. When isolated individually, does not appear anxious or concerned.

2 – Animal is calm. When processed, animal will resist head gate initially, but will relax after initial resistance. Animal required no assistance when exiting the chute. Animal is calm when confined and isolated.

3 – Animal is calm in most situations. However, when being processed through chute offers some resistance to the head gate. Animal is anxious to leave the chute upon exiting. When in a confined situation with other animals, animal is not nervous and remains calm. When isolated individually, animal becomes slightly nervous, but does not attempt to exit.

4 – Animal is calm in most pasture situations, but will become nervous when approached. Is generally nervous when processing. When entering corrals, will be high-headed and unmanageable. When confined, may tend to circle the pen. When isolated, animal will attempt to exit.

5 – Animal is not calm when approached. Spends considerable time being high-headed. Offers great resistance to head gate and processing through corrals. When in confined situation, animal is nervous and will tend to circle confined area. When isolated individually, animal attempts to aggressively exit the confinement. Will attempt to endanger the handler and will “go after you.”

Measurements on cows at calving time may not be the best indicator of docility and breeders are not encouraged to collect measurements at this time.

After all, it is important for a cow to possess strong maternal characteristics, and mothering ability is one of those. When breeders cull cows from their herd due to unacceptable docility, they are encouraged to accurately report this information. A new disposal code to unacceptable docility has been added to the registration application forms.

Breeders should continuously screen for unacceptable docility. Unfortunately, there were few cattle sold in the past that did have an unacceptable docility. However, the breed has eliminated most of those animals from the population. It is important for commercial producers and feedlots to have manageable cattle that do not create problems for them.