

## Criteria Overview for the DSF Criteria: Animal Care

**Strategic Intent:** Dairy animals are treated with care, and are free from hunger and thirst, discomfort, pain, injury and disease, fear and distress, and are able to engage with relatively normal patterns of animal behaviour.

**DSF Indicator Metric:** *Average Somatic Cell Count across a 12-month period.*

*Transitioning to – Development and implementation of an annually reviewed Animal Health and Welfare plan by 2027.*

**About this Criteria:** The dairy industry frequently faces challenges from consumers who may perceive aspects of dairy production to be harmful to or being unethical to these domesticated livestock.

High standards of health and welfare for farmed livestock are critically important, hence why the DSF Strategic Intent aligns with the World Office of Animal Health Five Freedoms.

Delivering high health and welfare production, regardless of the production system is not only important from the animal production perspective, it is also critical to address any consumer concerns.

Aspects to consider, include:

- The Five Freedoms
  - o Freedom from thirst hunger and malnutrition – Providing access to water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour and linked to the stage of production individual animals are at.
  - o Freedom from discomfort and exposure
  - o Freedom from pain, Injury and disease
  - o Freedom from fear and distress
  - o Freedom to express normal behaviour.
- The safety and protection of the animal in the environment in which it is kept
- Prevention as a priority, as opposed to cure eg. Vaccination options
- Training for staff in animal husbandry procedures and empathetic livestock handling.
- The importance of good biosecurity to prevent infectious disease transmission
- Health of farm staff from a zoonotic disease perspective
- Safety of both farm staff and animals during animal handling & routine management
- Sick animal management
- Responsible medicine usage eg. antibiotics
- Safe housing for all categories of livestock
- Well maintained handling equipment that is designed for specific tasks
- Records of health and welfare incidents and treatments to underpin annual reviews of health and welfare plans



Dairy Sustainability Framework

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**Interlinkages:** This criteria links closely to **GHG Emissions, Working Conditions** and **Product Safety & Quality Criteria**.