



The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has implemented a clean livestock policy since 1998.

Why do we need a clean livestock policy?

- Clean cattle at slaughter minimises any risk to human health
- Needed to maintain the highest standards in safe meat production
- Leads to more efficient processing
- Enhances Ireland's reputation as a leading export-driven food producer
- Instils greater consumer confidence

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CLEAN LIVESTOCK POLICY A GUIDE FOR BEEF PRODUCERS



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What is the current system?

At slaughter plants, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) uses three categories to score cattle on their cleanliness on arrival at the lairage:

A Satisfactory cattle that can be slaughtered without an unacceptable risk of contaminating the meat during the slaughter process, by using the standard hygienic dressing procedures routinely employed by the plant;

B Acceptable cattle that can only be slaughtered without an unacceptable risk of contamination of the meat during the slaughter process, by putting in place extra defined hygienic dressing controls; or,

C Unacceptable cattle unfit for slaughter because of hide condition. These cattle must not be presented for ante mortem in this condition and it is the responsibility of the food business operator (FBO) to take the required remedial action.

There is an onus on farmers, hauliers and factory operators to ensure that animals entering the slaughter plant are clean. The target should be to get the maximum number of cattle in category A.



“Sending dirty cattle to slaughter increases the contamination risk from harmful bacteria such as *E. coli* 0157, salmonella and campylobacter putting our customers’ health at risk.”

Five areas to improve cattle cleanliness

1. DIET

- ▶ Where possible feed higher dry matter diets
- ▶ Reduce the amount of wet silages, roots and molasses pre slaughter
- ▶ Avoid any sudden changes to the diet

2. HOUSING

- ▶ Avoid overstocking and under stocking of cattle on slats
- ▶ Keep any solid areas in the shed free from dung build up
- ▶ When using straw bedding, bed regularly using adequate amounts
- ▶ Sheds should be well ventilated to keep cattle clean and dry

“Dirty cattle cost money and risk our valuable beef and hide markets.”

3. HUSBANDRY

- ▶ Keep animals dosed and worm free to minimise scouring
- ▶ Diets should be well balanced for vitamins and minerals
- ▶ Trim tails and along the backs of cattle at housing time

4. PRE-SALE MANAGEMENT

- ▶ Do not mix unfamiliar groups of cattle
- ▶ Remove any low dry matter feeds in the final 48 hours pre slaughter and replace with straw or high DM silage
- ▶ Do not restrict water or starve cattle in the final 24 hours
- ▶ Cattle that are very dirty should ideally be moved to dry straw bedding in the final two-to-three weeks pre-slaughter

5. TRANSPORT

- ▶ Avoid loading cattle that are very wet or in wet conditions
- ▶ Covered trailers should be well ventilated to avoid stock sweating
- ▶ Do not use sawdust on the trailer floor
- ▶ Hauliers should pen cattle correctly and check them regularly during transit
- ▶ Vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected between loads