

# Comfortable cows are good producers (Part 1)

by Rykie Visser, export & district sales manager, DeLaval

Recently researchers and producers have put more attention on creating a comfortable environment for dairy cows and their replacements. Cows housed in a comfortable environment produce more milk and generally live healthier, longer lives.

Cows cannot tell us what makes them comfortable. But we can observe and measure cow activity, behaviour and environment. Then we can decide what comfortable cows really are.

Cows should have plenty of quality feed and water, fresh air, a soft, clean resting surface and good footing. Now that's cow comfort!

Cows should behave naturally and stand or lie down easily. Is this happening in your cow housing? Mastitis, sore feet, rubbed necks, and rubbed or swollen hocks can indicate cow comfort problems. The most comfortable milking system in the world cannot be efficient if your cows are not comfortable.



Comfortable cows should have plenty of quality feed

To help you judge cow comfort on your farm, you can use a cow comfort approach to guide you in a structured way. The three main criteria to judge cow comfort are:

- **Animal signs:** See, listen and feel the cow and judge whether she is healthy or not.
- **Body condition score (BCS):** Score your cows according to a standardised scoring method on body fat in relation to lactation stage
- **Locomotion score:** Score the lameness of your cows according to a standardised scoring method. This will help you to identify potential problems before a cow becomes obviously lame. Locomotion scoring will help to identify problem areas about the comfort level of your cows

To understand what real cow comfort is and how it can be judged, we will look at all three areas. This can help you to decide which areas of your dairy operation need to be adjusted or can be improved on. Enhancing cow comfort will improve your bottom line and will contribute to make your dairy farm more profitable.

In the next two issues of *Ubisi Mail*, we will look at specific areas to concentrate on to ensure proper cow comfort. **UM**

This series of cow comfort are extracts from the newly released DeLaval booklet *Efficient cow comfort*. For further information, call Rykie Visser on 082 653 0364.



# Comfortable cows (Part 1)

- **Gemaklike koeie (Deel 1)**
  - **Izinkomo ezithokomele (Ingxenye 1)**
  - **limazi zeenkomo eziphila kakuhle (Isiqendu soku-1)**
  - **Dikgomo tse iketlileng (Karolo ya 1)**
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- Cows that are kept under comfortable circumstances will produce more milk, are healthier and live longer. Cows should have enough feed and water, fresh air, a soft, clean place to rest and a good surface to walk on.
  - Koeie wat onder gemaklike toestande gehuisves word, sal meer melk produseer, is gesonder en lewe langer. Koeie moet genoeg voer en water, vars lug, 'n sagte, skoon plek om te rus, en 'n behoorlike loopoppervlak hê.
  - Izinkomo ezihlaliswe ngaphansi kwesimo esithokomele zikhiqiza ubisi oluningi, zinempilo futhi ziphila isikhathi eside. Izinkomo kufanele zibe nokudla okwenele kanye namanzi, umoya onempilo, indawo ethokomele, ehlanzekile lapho ziphumula khona kanye nendawo ekahle yokuhamba kuyo.
  - limazi zeenkomo ezigcinwe kakuhle ziyohlisa, ziba sempilweni kwaye ziphila ixesha elide. limazi zeenkomo kufuneka zifumane ngokwaneleyo ifidi, amanzi, impepho, indawo ethambileyo necocekileyo yokuphumla kunye nendawo efanelekileyo ezihamba kuyo.
  - Dikgomo tse bolokwang di iketlile di tla hlalisa lebeso le lengata, di ba le bophelo bo botle mme di phela le nako e telele. Dikgomo di lokela ho ba le dijo le metsi a lekaneng, moya o foreshe, sebaka se bonolo, se hlwekileng sa ho phomola le sebaka se setle sa ho tsamaya.

- Mastitis, sore feet and chafed necks are signs of cow comfort problems.
- Mastitis, seer voete en geskaafde nekke, is alles tekens van koeigemakprobleme.
- Isifo sokuvuvukala kwamabele, izinselo ezibuhlungu, izintamo ezihuzukile, yizimpawu ezikhombisa inkanga yezinkomo ezingathokomele.
- Isifo sokudumba kwebele, izilonda emanqineni neentamo ezityabukileyo ziimpawu zeengxaki zokungonwabi kwemazi yenkomo.
- Mastitis (tshwaetso ya matswele), maoto a bohloko, le melala e pikitilweng ke matshwao a mathata a ho hloka boiketlo ha dikgomo.

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- Watch your cows to see if they are in good health.
- Hou jou koeie se gesondheid dop.
- Hlola izinkomo zakho ukubona ukuthi zisesimweni esihle yini sempilo.
- Ziqwalasele iimazi zakho zeenkomo ubone ukuba zikwimpilo entle.
- Sheba dikgomo tsa hao ho bona hore na di phetse hantle.
- Does the cow have enough body fat in relation to the lactation stage?
- Het die koei genoeg liggaamsvet in verhouding tot die laktasiestadium?
- Kungabe inkomo inamafutha enele yini emzimbeni mayelana nesigaba sokuncelisa?
- Ingaba iimazi zeenkomo zibuyisile noko ngexesha lokwanyisa kwazo?
- Na kgomo e na le mafura a lekaneng a mmele ha a bapiswa le nako ya ho hlahisa lebese?

- Does the cow move about easily or is she becoming lame?
- Beweeg die koei gemaklik of raak sy lam?
- Kungabe inkomo ihamba ngokukhululeka noma isiqala ukuba ntekenteke?
- Ingaba iimazi zeenkomo zihamba ngokukhululekileyo okanye ziyaqhwalela?
- Na kgomo ya hao e tsamaya ha bonolo kapa e ya e ntse e hloleha ho tsamaya hantle? **UM**

