

# Recording Muscle Scores



## TIP SHEET

More heavily muscled cattle typically have higher dressing percentages and higher retail beef yields, both of which are drivers of profitability. It can therefore be desirable to select for increased muscling.

While muscle scores are not currently included in the BREEDPLAN analysis, they may be used in the calculation of EBVs in the future.

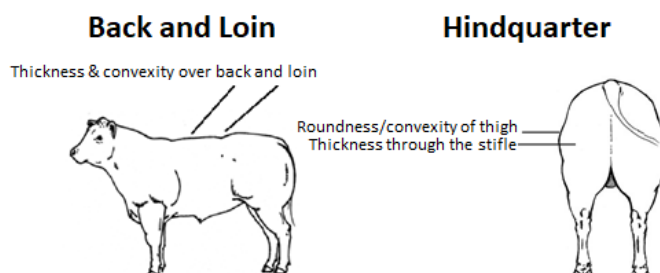
### HOW DO I RECORD MUSCLE SCORES?

The recommended time of scoring is when the animals are in good condition and aged around 400 – 600 days.

The best places to assess muscling are those least affected by fat:

- The thickness and roundness of the hindquarter.
- The thickness of the stifle and width in the twist.
- The width across the back and loins.

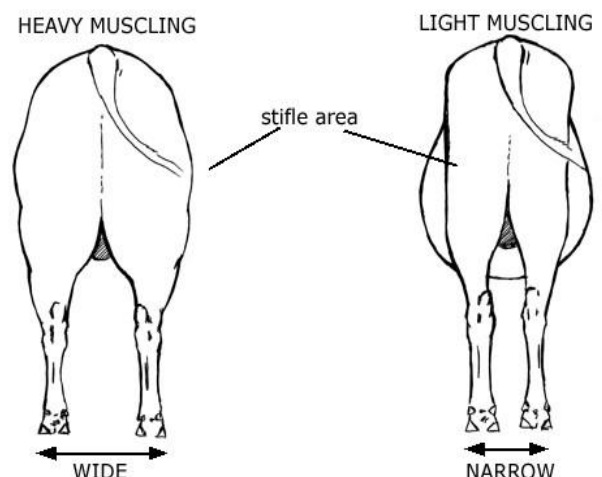
Several of the best places to assess muscling are illustrated below:



When assessing muscle score it is important to distinguish between fatness and muscling. Muscle bulges and is round, whereas fat wobbles, and tends to a smooth shape.

Muscle scoring is based on the shape of the animal, particularly when viewed from behind.

Animals with a high degree of muscling are thicker through the stifle area than they are over the top. A fat, less muscular animal is widest over the top and appears flat through the stifle area. This is illustrated below:



There are 5 basic muscle scores: A, B, C, D and E (shown overleaf). The muscle scoring system can be extended to a 15 point system by introducing a plus and minus for each score. For example, B+, B and B-.

### WHAT CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE MADE WHEN RECORDING MUSCLE SCORES?

- The BREEDPLAN analysis is underpinned by variation between animals. Therefore, using the 15 point system to distinguish between animals of similar muscle types is highly recommended (e.g. scoring animals as B+, B, and B- rather than scoring all as B).
- It is important to record management groups if the animals have been managed differently prior to muscle scoring.
- When recording muscle scores, it is important that both a consistent scoring method is used and the same person scores all animals that are being assessed in the herd on that particular day.


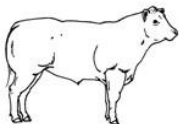

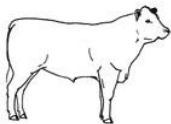

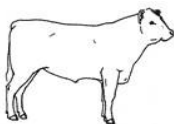



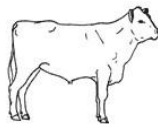
## HOW DO I SUBMIT MUSCLE SCORES?

Muscle scores should be submitted directly to your BREEDPLAN processing centre using any of the following methods:

- The BREEDPLAN compatible Microsoft Excel template (available to download in the [Help Centre](#) on the BREEDPLAN website).
- A BREEDPLAN compatible herd recording computer program.

Please see the [Methods of Submitting Data to BREEDPLAN](#) tip sheet, available in the [Help Centre](#) on the BREEDPLAN website, for further information.

**For more information regarding how to record muscle scores please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre.**

A. Very Heavy Muscling	B. Heavy Muscling	C. Medium Muscling	D. Moderate Muscling	E. Light Muscling
  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely thick through stifle area.</li> <li>• Muscle seams or grooves between muscles are evident.</li> <li>• 'Apple bummed' – when viewed from the side the hindquarters bulge like an apple.</li> </ul>	  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thick stifle.</li> <li>• Rounded thigh when viewed from behind.</li> <li>• Some convexity in hindquarter from side view.</li> <li>• Flat and wide over top line – muscle is at the same height as backbone.</li> </ul>	  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat down thigh when viewed from behind.</li> <li>• Flat and tending to angular over the top line.</li> </ul>	  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrow stance.</li> <li>• Flat to convex down the thigh.</li> <li>• Thin through stifle.</li> </ul>	  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dairy type - very angular.</li> <li>• Sharp 'tent topped' over top line.</li> <li>• Virtually no thickness through stifle at all.</li> <li>• Stands with feet together, concave thigh.</li> </ul>