

Welfare Potential by Production System for Dairy Cattle

Level	Housing System	Pasture Access	Space/comfort available for lying	Welfare assessment
1 = Bad	Tie stall	None	Poor - severe confinement and discomfort	None
2	Free stall	None or partial access, e.g. only for low-yielding, heifer or dry cattle only	Low – fewer stalls than number of cows or mattresses with little bedding	None or limited, e.g. nothing beyond veterinary health plan
3 = Better	Free stall	Seasonal (RSPCA: at least 4 hours a day ² . Compassion Good Dairy Award: at least 4 hours a day for a minimum of 100 days/year ¹ . Beter Leven one star: 8 hours a day for 150 days) ¹	Better - 5% more stalls available than cows; deep bedded stalls. Pasture provides more lying comfort. (RSPCA: pasture stocking density 10-12 cows/ acre ²)	Active programme to regularly monitor and reduce lameness, mastitis, poor body condition and improve longevity ²
	Deep-bedded barn	As above	High - cows are able to lie in their preferred orientation and near chosen individuals	As above
4 = Best	Free stall or deep-bedded barn (Soil association: provide 10.5m ² per cow indoors) ³	Free choice of access between housing and pasture	As above	Active programme to monitor and reduce lameness, mastitis, poor body condition and improved longevity, robust breeds used ²
	Extensive	Year-round access	High - well-drained pasture, shelter and shade provided	As above

Organic systems can fall under better or best, depending on the type of housing provided

¹ Beter Leven standards <http://beterleven.dierenbescherming.nl/>

² RSPCA Freedom Food Standard <https://science.rspca.org.uk/sciencegroup/faranimals/standards/dairycattle>

³ Soil Association Dairy standards <http://www.soilassociation.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=-LqUg6illo%3d&tabid=353>
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