

# Associations between the general condition of culled dairy cows and their selling price at Ontario auction markets

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## Introduction:

- In 2016, the 28 licensed stockyards in Ontario sold ~116,000 culled cows
- Disease or injury is often associated with the reason(s) for culling
- If a cow is sick or injured it may not be able to cope well, with transport

## Study objectives:

- Assess the general physical condition of culled dairy cows being sold at Ontario auction markets
- Determine whether their condition related to their sale price

## Methods:

- Data were collected at 3 Ontario auction markets for 16 weeks (4460 cows)
- Every dairy cow sold was assessed for:
  - Body condition score (BCS)
  - Gait score
  - Hock injury score
  - Presence or absence of a tail
  - Bodyweight (kg) + sale price (\$/kg)

## Results:

- **27% of cows had a hock injury with swelling > 2.5 cm and/or a lesion**
- **40% of cows had a BCS ≤ 2**
- **72% of cows had an abnormal gait**
- **12% of cows had a docked tail**

## Relationship of condition to price:

- **Cows with BCS ≤ 2 sold for \$0.20 less/kg (*P* < 0.001)**
- **Cows with an abnormal gait sold for \$0.04 less/kg (*P* < 0.001)**

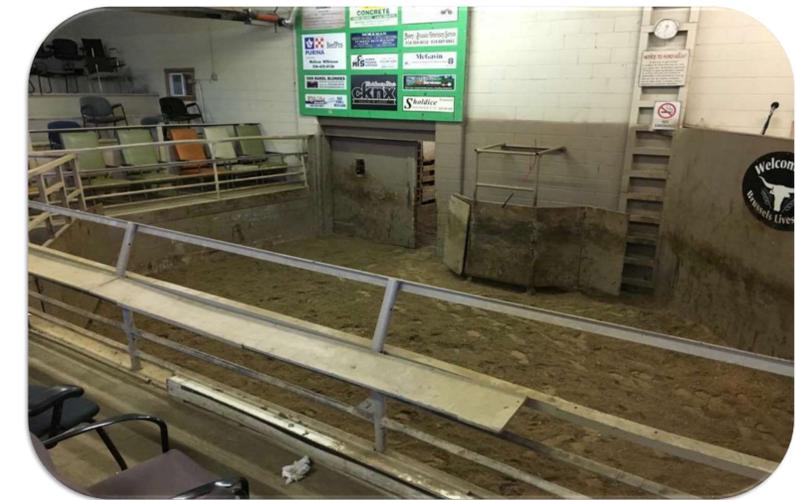


Figure 2: Photo depicting an auction ring

## Summary:

- This is the first benchmark of the condition of culled cows sold at Ontario auction markets
- Cull cows were often sold in less than optimal condition according to industry standards
- Both low BCS and abnormal gait, were associated with a reduced sale price

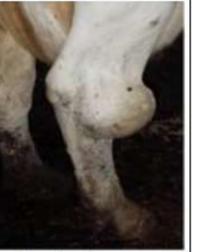
Measure	Acceptable		Requires corrective action	
Hock injuries				
	No swelling or minor swelling (<1 cm); may have some hair loss, broken hair or bald area		Medium or major swelling and/or lesion	

Figure 1: Hock injury score chart, proAction® Animal Care Guidelines (2017)

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