

Benefits of Weighing Cattle

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Weighing cattle is an important management tool within any herd. It provides accurate, animal specific performance data which allows farmers to make better informed decisions – helping to improve both the productivity and efficiency of their cattle herd.

Modern automatic weigh scale systems typically comprise of four key components: - a cattle crush, load bars, EID panel reader and a weigh head. By weighing animals through a cattle crush, it also allows farmers to carry out other routine tasks such as clipping or dosing simultaneously. This helps to promote effective utilisation of both time and labour, with a lone operator capable of weighing and handling large amounts of cattle both safely and effortlessly. The example shown demonstrates how a weigh scale system can be easily added onto an existing on farm handling system.



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There are several significant benefits which can be brought about by weighing cattle, many of which translate into notable savings for farmers:

- **Monitor Animal Performance** – Regularly weighing cattle allows their performance to be assessed. This information can be used to highlight whether animals are meeting their daily liveweight gain targets and indicates management areas that may require re-evaluation such as ration formulation.
- **Improve Animal Health** – Regularly weighing cattle may help to identify any underlying health issues at a very early stage. Underperforming animals who are failing to meet their growth targets can be easily identified and investigation carried out to determine the cause. Weighing cattle also allows for accurate administration of veterinary treatments. This helps prevent any under or overdosing of animals, which is beneficial in minimising the risk of antibiotic resistance occurring on farm.
- **Forecast Optimum Time for Sale** – Regular weighing of cattle aids timely selection for both sale and/or slaughter, helping to ensure that processor requirements are met. By ensuring cattle meet the required specification, farmers can minimise the likelihood of incurring penalties for producing overweight cattle.
- **Increased Accuracy of Benchmarking and Performance Recording** – EID technology allows animal performance to be linked back to their specific sire and dam – helping highlight high performing genetic lines within a herd. This can be useful in terms of selecting replacement breeding stock. This performance data can also be used as a benchmarking tool, allowing factors such as cow efficiency to be expressed.

Remember - You can't manage what you don't measure!

