

Optimising the environment for heifers

Best practice farms optimise the quality & performance of heifers by providing a clean, safe enriched environment to support animal health & welfare.



Provide 2 water sources.



Create separate housing and feeding spaces for heifers and cows.



Provide 90 cm space at the water trough for every 10 heifers.



Provide daily access to well-managed pasture, weather permitting.



Use deep bedding yards to encourage resting.



Introduce older heifers to comfortable cubicles, if needed, ensuring at least 10% more cubicles than heifers.



Provide easy access to drinkers or water trough to reduce competition and create feeding space to enable heifers to feed at the same time.

Provide daily access to well-managed pasture, weather permitting. Design housing with ample space, preferably using bedded yards, or else comfortable, bedded cubicles. Employ rubber coated floors and low stress handling facilities to ease movement.

Use rubber coated flooring at feeders and in aisles.



Support positive social interactions by giving adequate space.



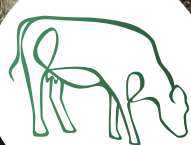
Design walkways to minimise the need for sharp turns.



Heifers



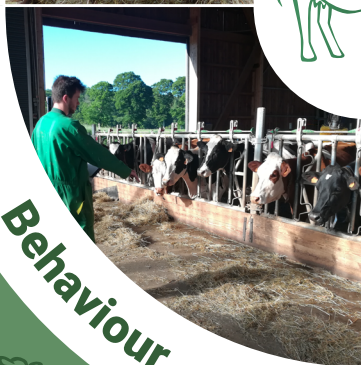
Nutrition



Environment



Behaviour



Health



Provide a complex environment with a variety of enrichments, maintained and replenished regularly.



Provide brushes in all loose housing systems. Number and positions depends on herd size.



Adopt positive training techniques to accustom heifers to their new environments, namely the calving area, milking parlour and main housing. Use different types of enrichment to support good mental and physical development of heifers.



Reduce disease risks by employing high biosecurity standards such as quarantining newly purchased heifers. Provide a comfortable, clean and safe environment to facilitate resting. Know the signs of ill health, intervene promptly and call your veterinarian if necessary.

Provide brushes and additional bedding to avoid dirty animals, wash the animal if necessary.



Create non-slip flooring and ground surfaces.



Ensure adequate time resting in clean and dry conditions. Know the signs of ill health and intervene promptly.



More information

Habituate heifers to the calving area, milking parlour and main housing area.



Keep group composition stable to minimise conflict. If mixing groups, do so in a spacious area.



Document and employ high biosecurity standards.



Quarantine all purchased heifers in accordance with veterinary advice.

