

Economic Resilience



Animal Welfare



**Background**

By measuring young stock on a regular basis, the farmer gets a better insight into the growth of the young stock. For example, the farmer can detect at an early stage if growth is not optimal and can intervene quickly. Optimizing young stock growth leads to lower rearing costs, higher milk production when they become lactating cows and more sustainable livestock as they have a higher lifetime production. Therefore, this measure can lead to a more resilient farm.

**How does the strategy work?**

Follow the growth of the youngstock by:

① **Weighing the animal:**

- Most precise method
- Labour intensive



② **Measuring the chest circumference with measuring tape:**

- Good alternative instead of weighing
- Bring the tape just behind the shoulders
- Make sure you can still bring 2 fingers below the tape (don't tighten too much)
- Based on this measurement, the weight can be estimated using the table in annex



③ **Measuring the rump height with a measuring stick:**

- Least precise method of all 3 options
- Flat horizontal surface needed (e.g. slatted floor)
- Check with a spirit level to measure correctly
- Measure height at the level of the 2 hip bones
- Based on this measurement, the weight can be estimated using the table in annex



Important growth milestones for **Holstein** calves:

- 2 months: 80-85kg
- 6 months: 200kg
- 13 months: 380-400kg
- Calving: 630kg (calf included)

**Equipment involved?**

- Weighing scale
- or
- Measuring tape to measure chest circumference
- or
- Measuring stick to measure rump height

**Quote of the farmer:**

*"I am convinced that monitoring young stock growth makes an important contribution to the profitability of my farm"*

**Positive features**

Calves who follow the optimal growth curves:

- have lower rearing costs
- have a higher milk production later
- have higher lifetime production

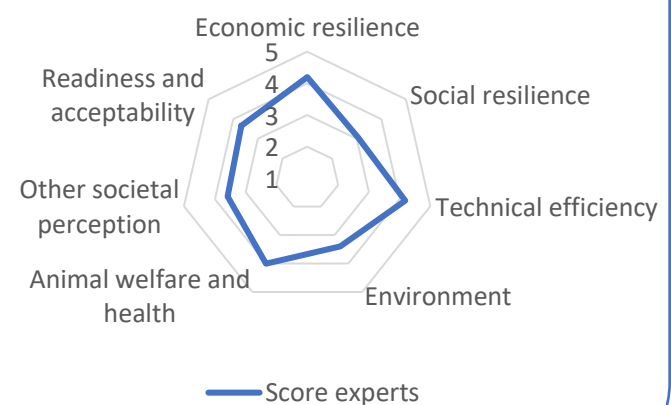
**Be careful, especially on these points:**

- Working with a weighing scale is labor intensive
- Measuring the rump height is not very precise
- Pay attention that the animal stands nicely squared, with the head facing straight forward when measuring the chest circumference or the rump height

**Specific advice**

Link measuring with fixed moments such as weaning, moving pen/stable - This will help regular measuring become a habit

**Assessment of method**



**More info:**

- <https://jongleven.ilvo.vlaanderen.be/nl/kenniscentrum>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o55Mt-DHVAA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxElc eaSull>

## Optimal growth curve for **Holstein** calves

	Weight (kg)	Chest circumference (cm)	Rump height (cm)
	40	75	81
	45	78	83
	55	84	87
	65	89	90
	75	94	93
<b>2 months</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>95</b>
	100	105	99
	110	108	101
	125	114	104
	145	120	107
	160	125	110
	180	130	113
<b>6 months</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>116</b>
	220	140	118
	240	145	121
	265	150	124
	290	155	126
	315	160	129
	345	166	132
	370	170	134
<b>13 months</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>137</b>
	435	180	139
	470	186	142
	505	191	144
	545	196	147
	585	201	150
	625	206	152
	665	211	155
	710	216	157