

Heat strength

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In Sweden the heat strength of the cow is recorded. At every single insemination the strength is evaluated and reported to the milk recording and AI schemes.

The heat strength is recorded on a five degree scale since 1997. The judgement is done by the farmer and is based on how clearly the cow shows oestrus signs during the whole oestrus period. No comparisons shall be done between herds. The codes used are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Codes and general definition of heat strength

| Code | Heat strength | Definition |
|------|----------------|---|
| 1 | Very weak | Uncertain signs, for example some slime |
| 2 | Weak | Uncertain signs, for example some slime and red, swollen vulva |
| 3 | Obvious | More evident signs, for example lowering of the back when touched, clear and stringy slime, jumping other cows or standing heat |
| 4 | Strong | Spontaneously lowering of the back, slime, jumping other cows or standing heat |
| 5 | Very strong | Very strong sexual activity, lowering of the back, frequent jumping other cows and standing heat |
| 0 | No information | |

In the genetic evaluation the recorded codes for heat strength is translated back to the former three degree scale (Table 2).

Table 2. Explanation of translation between current recording system and codes used in the genetic evaluation

| Recorded code | | Corresponding codes in the genetic evaluation | |
|---------------|-------------|---|-------------|
| 0 | Missing | 4 | Missing |
| 1 | Very weak | 3 | Weak |
| 2 | Weak | 3 | Weak |
| 3 | Obvious | 2 | Obvious |
| 4 | Strong | 1 | Very strong |
| 5 | Very strong | 1 | Very strong |