

# Making the most of abattoir feedback



## Health practice and livestock management factsheet

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If lambs or finished cattle are sent direct to the abattoir from the farm then it is possible to get direct feedback on the quality of the animals submitted.

### Feedback

With abattoir feedback you will get valuable information on the fat class and conformation and further detail can be provided on health and welfare. Some major health issues can be easily identified and improved veterinary measures implemented to rectify the problems, and maximise returns.

Not all abattoirs provide this information as a routine but it is available on request. Make the most of this to improve health care and management.

### Fat class and conformation

Abattoirs often make deductions in p/kg for over-fatness – where fat has to be trimmed off a carcass before it can be cut and packed. For instance if too many lambs are in fat class 3H consider selecting a week or two earlier to both save feed and increase p/kg carcass. It will not pay to simply add fat. Conformation is largely genetic but is influenced by fat cover. You may need to consider buying improved bulls or rams (with Estimated Breeding Values - EBV) to improve lean meat yield and conformation and reduce fat levels.

### Carcass contamination

If dirty animals (soiled with faeces or mud) are presented for slaughter the producer will incur charges for clipping or shearing and may get a reduced price for the carcass as carcass trimming may be needed to remove contamination.

The table overleaf shows some of the terminology used by the abattoirs to describe carcass faults.



Cranfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu  
Ciwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi  
mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig  
The European Agricultural Fund for  
Rural Development: Europe Investing in  
Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government





*FSA inspector examining a lamb carcass.*



*Bruising on a lamb carcass from wool pull.*

## Abattoir carcass fault descriptions

Description	Notes
Abscesses	Caused by injection site infections or as a consequence of rumen acidosis.
Arthritis	Infected joints – sometimes caused by joint ill.
Contamination	Surface contamination of the carcass by faecal or soil borne bacteria.
Cysticercus ovis	Larvae of the dog tapeworm <i>Taenia ovis</i> burrow through the intestines and into muscles and form oval cysts. A particular problem in sheep.
Cysticercus tenuicollis	Damage caused to the liver by larvae of the dog tapeworm <i>Taenia hydatigena</i> . A particular problem in sheep.
Fasciola Hepatica/cirrhosis	Damage to the liver by liver fluke.
Gen lymphadenitis	An increase in size of four or more lymph nodes.
Hydatid	Larvae of the dog tapeworm, <i>Echinococcus granulosus</i> form cysts in liver, lungs, brain, heart etc. A problem in sheep.
Jaundice	On account of liver disease. Carcass has a yellow tinge to it.
Oedema	An excessive collection of fluid in the body tissues.
Pericarditis	Infection of the heart lining.
Peritonitis	Infection in the abdominal cavity.
Pleurisy/pneumonia	Lungs are not functioning correctly. Often have an abscess in them. Instead of being spongy and full of air they are often one large mass stuck to the chest wall.
Pyaemia	Widespread abscesses.
Nephritis	Kidney inflammation.
Suspect fever	Evidence of inflammation in the abdomen. Carcass appears very dark red/purple.
Trauma (bruising)	Damage to the underlying tissues from either fighting or inadequate handling e.g. wool pull or excessive use of a stick.
Uraemia	On account of kidney disease urea is not excreted from the body effectively. Carcass smells of ammonia.

If abattoir feedback suggests a particular problem e.g. liver rejections then there may be a significant problem with either fluke or dog tapeworms. Get advice from your vet to deal with health or handling issues on farm and avoid the problem in the future.