

April 11, 2025

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

May send at a later time.

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Temperament Scoring

My Grandfather would often spend time sitting down, whittling and people watching as we traveled on family vacations or while Grandma did her shopping. I've got fond memories of the times spent in conversation with him as we observed human behavior. Having just pushed all my cows through a chute multiple times in the process of artificial insemination, differences in temperament become clear! Recording and managing temperament should be a consideration for beef producers.

Cattle temperament is defined in literature by the animal's response to handling or forced movement by humans. It is a pattern of how an animal distinguishes alarming or challenging situations. Responses can be as small as vocalization, increased respiration, or nervous movements. However, responses can also be extreme, like attempting escape or charging. This is important to producers due to the risk to human safety and animal welfare when cattle respond negatively. Temperament traits, like aggression and fear, can be detrimental.

"Handling Temperament" is the most-common set of traits studied, and practical measures are available to determine animal temperament. To understand what is observed, there are a few things to define and observe. Keep the following in mind. Response time - does the animal respond quickly or hesitantly? Adaptation - how easily does the animal adapt to new situations? Level of activity - are animals alert, walking around and exploring? Reaction threshold - what level of stimulation is required for the animal to respond? Finally, Intensity - when the animal does respond, how intense is their reaction?

Assessments can easily be observed and recorded during routine handling. While you have the cattle up and ready to work, scores can be assigned and added to your recordkeeping. There are many factors that can influence an animal's reaction, so these measures should be repeated if used to make culling or breeding decisions. The value of these measures depends on repeatability; the suggestion is three times for accuracy, as temperament is usually stable over time.

The Beef Improvement Federation offers standardized scoring systems in a few different settings. "Pen score" guidelines for evaluating temperament of cattle in a small group penned in a small lot. These range from a score of 1 - Non-Aggressive to 5 - Very Aggressive. "Chute score" guidelines for evaluating temperament of cattle individually restrained in a chute. These scores range from 1 - Docile to 5 - Very Aggressive. Additionally, an "exit velocity" is measured as the speed at which an animal clears a specified distance. This test can be conducted easily when cattle are exiting a chute; set a distance and have someone observe the animal. Scores range from 1 - Walk (Slow) to 4 - Run (Very Fast). Variations of scoring systems exist; the goal is to use the same score over the years and benchmark.

These assessments are an easy way to determine the temperament of your livestock, ensuring the safety of animals and humans during handling events. Temperament is a moderately heritable trait, so putting selection pressure on temperament can make a difference on herd docility. There are a few good University references for this topic if you want to learn more. The University of Nebraska "[Chute Scoring Cattle for Temperament](#)" and University of Missouri "[Managing the Effects of Stress and Temperament on Beef Cattle Reproduction](#)" address this topic well.

April 11, 2025

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

May send at a later time.

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Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Why Your Medicare Summary Notice Matters

If you are on Medicare or helping someone navigate the Medicare maze, reviewing the Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) is critical to managing your health and protecting you from fraud and abuse. Senior Medicare Patrol says Medicare loses billions of dollars yearly to fraud, errors, and abuse. Sixty billion is lost annually.

Every quarter, you will receive your Medicare Summary Notice in the mail. This statement provides you with information about the healthcare you have received. If this information is inaccurate, it could impact your health and financial well-being. This notice is not a bill; it lists services and items billed to Medicare, what Medicare paid, and the amount you might owe. It also lists any claims that have been denied.

You will want to compare your records with your Medicare Summary Notice. By keeping a healthcare log, you easily catch mistakes if they happen. If you notice any errors, call your healthcare provider with your questions. You can also check your statement by creating an account on the Medicare website. Go to www.medicare.gov to set it up. You will want to look for the following:

- Claims you don't recognize. It could be fraud if you didn't receive treatment or equipment.
- Check for provider mistakes. If you think a charge is incorrect, ask your provider about the charge. The staff can give you information that helps you better understand the services or supplies you received.

If you find discrepancies, you can report this information by calling 1-800-Medicare. You must have your Medicare card and the claim or MSN ready. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan or a Medicare drug plan, you can call the Investigations Medicare Drug Integrity Contractor at 1-877-7SAFERX (1-877-772-3379).

Remember, there are things you can do to protect yourself from fraud. Protect your Medicare card like it is a credit card. Please don't give out your Medicare or Social Security number to anyone except your healthcare provider or people you know who should have it. Don't let someone use your Medicare card; never use someone else's card. Ask questions if you are unsure about something. You have the right to access your medical information, including the costs billed to Medicare.

If you have questions about your Medicare Summary Notice, contact Teresa Hatfield with the Meadowlark Extension District at thatfield@ksu.edu or call 785-364-4125.

Cindy Williams
District Extension Agent, Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

Testing Pressure Canners

Now is the time to get dial gauges tested on pressure canners. Here are some reminders. Most Extension offices have the Presto® Gauge Testing Unit. This can test pressure gauges on the brands Presto®, National, Maid of Honor, and Magic Seal.

This testing unit cannot test All American pressure gauges. Newer models of the All-American canner have both regulator weights (weighted gauge) and the dial gauge. The weight is more accurate than the gauge and customers should use the weight to achieve the pressure needed.

If the weight begins to rock at the desired pressure and the gauge is off by more than 2 psi, the company recommends replacing the gauge. The dial gauge is now used as a reference to know when the unit is at 0 psi and can safely be removed. Any questions about testing pressure gauge canners, approved recipes and other food preservation questions, contact Cindy Williams, at 785-863-2212.