A subjective scoring system known as the Australian Carcase Bruise Scoring System is a successful means of recording bruises by visual appraisal. The system was developed and established by the combined efforts of officers of the Australian Meat Board, C.S.I.R.O. and Queensland Department of Primary Industries. It was first used in Queensland in 1973. The system has definite advantages over previous visual scoring systems and the collection of bruise trim weights (Meischke 1975).

The severity of bruising on the carcase is recorded by means of diagrams which are classed into three basic categories according to surface area of the bruise, i.e.,

- slight = from 2-8 cm,
- medium = from 8-16 cm,
- heavy = from 16 cm.

The basic categories are divided into three further categories for those bruises which involve tissue other than surface tissue. This makes a total of six classifications signified, e.g., s = slight, Sd = slight deep.

The visual appraisal of bruising is confined to seven areas, i.e., butt, rump and loin, rib, forequarter, back, hip and pin; only trimmable bruises are recorded. Areas of subcutaneous inflammation (fire bruising) are not recorded unless specifically required.

A suitable position to carry out scoring on the slaughter-floor is essential in order that the whole carcass can be observed. If rate of kill is more than 50 carcasses an hour, two assessors will be required. When determining whether a bruise is superficial or deep, the assessor has to use his judgement; this improves with experience.

The information on the bruise scoring is collected on sheets and calculated numerically or stored directly onto computer punch cards for analysis. The system enables each site, side or whole carcase, to be allocated a numerical value which reflects the amount of bruise tissue trimmed. It has been estimated that 8 bruise score points approximate to 1 kg of trim.

The system has been employed by researchers to establish the factors which relate to the incidence of bruising in cattle in Australia. External influences such as transport and yard design affect the site distribution of bruises over the carcase while animal factors such as horn status, sex, weight and temperament affect the severity of the bruising.


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