

Morphological characterisation of Piemontese cows by using score card



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Background

Score card based on **linear description** of different body areas of animals are widely used in animal judging, checking the **subject conformity** to the Breed Standards for selection purpose.

Material and methods

on **381 cows** from **88 farms**

- **data on subjects**: age at judging, age at last calving
- **data on farming**: housing system and length, nutritional condition
- **animal biometric** data: withers height, trunk length
- **animal evaluation**: final score and size, thoracic capacity, meat potential, rump, limbs, lactiferous characters scores
- **morphological description** (scale 1-9)
 - appearance**: head, top line, fore limbs, hind limbs, pastern
 - muscularity**: withers, shoulders, loin width and thickness, thigh muscularity, buttock convexity
 - finess**: skeleton, skin
- **notes**: defects

Aim

To **describe** the **Piemontese cows** reared in a low hills area near Torino by using **data from score card** for the breeding stock.



Results

The **housing system** heavily used was the **tied stall** (60%), although the **partially open pen** was spreading (>25%), and the **pasture** was used for more than 6 months/years (>85%).

The evaluated cows had **23÷208 months of age**, with the **last calving** at **21÷198 months**, showed a **normal nutrition**, a **height at shoulder** of **133±3.9 cm** (range 125÷139 cm) and a **trunk length** of **162±5.6 cm** (range 155÷169 cm).

The cows were mainly evaluated between **80 and 89 point of final score** (mean 83.9±2.8), values matching the breed standard, although some subjects deviating from them (range 71÷91).

Regarding the **morphological description**, the subjects obtained values almost always **slightly higher than the medium code** (excluding limbs, only 20-30% corrected), especially for **muscularity and finesse**, very positive results for the productive attitude of the breed (meat production).

Few subjects (n=18; 4.7%) presented **defects** such as discoloration, atypical coat, brachynathism and prognathism.

