

Scales

*..a marketing
tool*



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It's your money they're weighing!

EVERY TIME an agricultural commodity is weighed on scales, profit hangs in the balance. And, as more and more of our produce is sold by weight, the scales gain in importance.

Stockmen, for example, weigh all animals in and out, as well as periodically, to check rate of growth. Slow-gaining animals may be culled to prevent losses. Fast-gaining animals may be kept for feeding or breeding stock. Stockmen often find the cost of reliable scales can be written off quickly by the increase in return from known weights as contrasted with the "by guess and by golly" system.

If you're in the market for scales, shop for quality. You can't afford a "bargain" when quality is sacrificed. If you buy or sell labor or goods over any scales, examine them—it's your money they're weighing.

All scales require careful use and proper maintenance. They should be sheltered from weather and mechanical abuse to prevent warped timbers, sagging gates, and rust. Careful installation, frequent cleaning, and regular testing protect both buyer and seller.

Safeguards

- Take a frank interest in scales and weighing procedures. You have as much right to check weights as to count money when you do business.
- Check to see that the scale bears a current State inspection seal.
- See that the platform is free of binds. Be wary of debris on or around the platform.
- Record the weight. Memories are not perfect.

Buy the Right Scale for the Job

Some scales are built for a single purpose, such as weighing eggs. Others may be used for a wide range of loads—for example, the livestock scales.

Livestock scales usually consist of a *load platform* fitted with stock rack and gates to confine the animals; a *lever system*, placed in a pit, to support the platform and transmit the load force to the weigh beam; and the *beam*, fitted with a movable *poise* to balance the platform weight and indicate the load. Often there is some device attached to the poise to imprint the weight on a ticket. Obviously the imprinted weights are no more accurate than the scales.

If you are buying scales, consider first the job to be done. If possible, choose a scale that will handle its most usual load at about three-fourths capacity. Pit scales are best for general farming, even if ground water or other conditions necessitate building the pit above ground. Scales can be part of a truckloading dock, with a ramp at the other end for easy handling of livestock.

Buy standard-made scales from a reputable dealer who will warrant them. Before buying used scales, check carefully to see that they are free of rust and in good working condition. Buy a late model if possible, made by a manufacturer still in business.



Location of weighman is important. He should be shielded from stock, but in clear view of buyer and seller. He must be able to see the platform and approaches.

Install It Right

When you buy a scale it is yours for many years. Pit-type scales, especially, are a permanent installation. Installed properly, they will require little maintenance. Here are some pointers for installing a livestock scale:

- Install in a concrete pit. All stands holding levers should rest on solid concrete piers. Inside pit walls should be vertical. Provide access to the pit for easy examination and cleaning. Let pit floors slope to a sump, and keep water out.
- Top of the scale platform should be level with top of pit walls and approaches.
- Stockracks and gates should be attached firmly to platform, free of pit walls.
- Scales should be protected from weather and mechanical damage such as stock rubbing.
- Graduations on weigh beams should conform to regulations under the Packers and Stockyards Act.

Maintenance

Maintenance is a continuing business. Don't put it off.

- Clean beam and poise. Oil beam and wipe dry. *Do not oil poise.* See that nothing rubs against the beam or interferes with its free movement.
- Check rack and platform to see there is no bind. Check this under load occasionally to be sure the rack does not rub or rest on walls of the pit.
- Clean platform and remove debris from under scale levers.
- Check scale balance to be sure scale operates correctly. Scale sensitivity should be within 1 minimum graduation on the weigh beam.

*Your County Extension Agent or the
State Department of Agriculture
can advise you on types of scales for
your weighing jobs, and scales
that consistently meet
State inspection requirements*

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