

A SIMPLIFIED WEIGHT BAND FOR CATTLE PROJECTS

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The best method of weighing cattle is by using a scale. However, if a scale is not available, a good estimate of weight can be obtained by using a weight band. The weight of the animal is read off direct from a special tape measure used to measure the girth (distance round the body) just behind the shoulders.

This article describes a simplified weight band which is easy to make, strong and simple to use. The band has only three marks on it. These marks show the three important weights in cattle management. They show when to wean calves, when to mate heifers and when to sell steers.

To make the weight band you will need:

1. 3 m of good white nylon rope.

2. Three different colours of old paint.
3. A good tape measure.

Mark the rope with the paints as shown in the diagram below. The colours shown are red, green and black, but any other colours could be used.

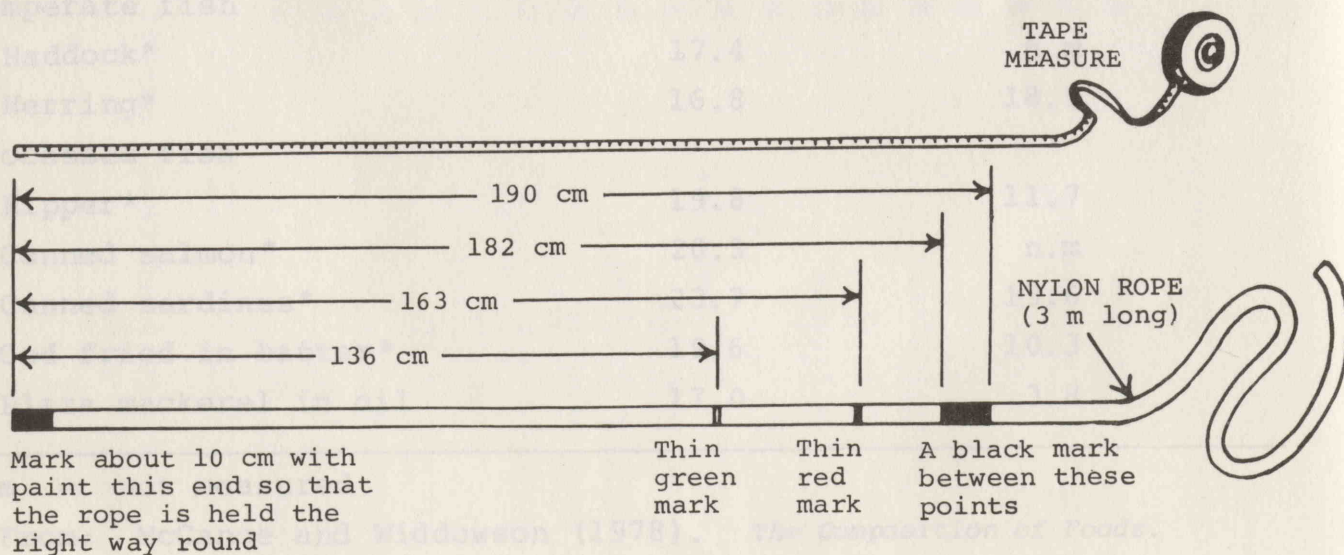
The lengths are based on generally accepted weights for weaning, mating and selling.

Weaning

The green mark shows the girth of the animal when it is ready for weaning. The weight is about 180 kg. As soon as a calf reaches this girth, it should be weaned.

Mating

The red mark shows the girth of the heifers when they are



Measurements and markings for the simplified weight band

ready for mating. The weight is about 300 kg. A heifer should not be mated before reaching this girth.

Selling

The wide black mark shows the girth of the animal when it is best to sell it. The range of weights is 430-500 kg. Once an animal reaches 500 kg, it starts getting too big and may put on too much fat. It is best to sell before it reaches this weight.

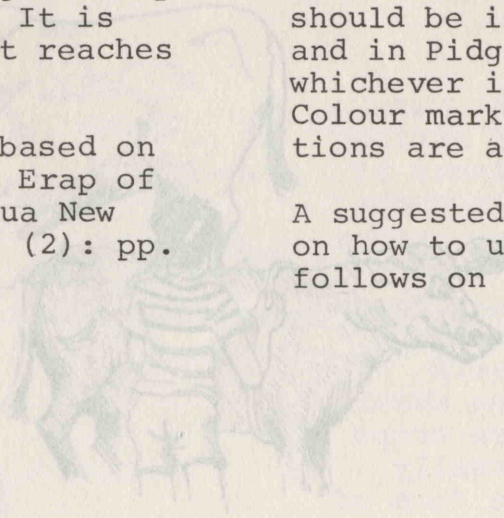
The measurements are based on measurements taken at Erap of typical cattle in Papua New Guinea (see HARVEST 1 (2): pp. 68-70).

NOTE: These measurements and weights do not apply to Javanese Zebu cattle.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE ROPE

If the rope is going to be made up for someone who cannot read it is a good idea to draw up simple illustrated instructions (a wantok can read it). These should be in simple language and in Pidgin, Motu or tok ples whichever is appropriate. Colour markings on the instructions are also helpful.

A suggested instruction sheet on how to use the cattle rope follows on pages 24 and 25.



3. WHEN THE PAINTED END REACHES THE BLACK MARK IT IS WHEN STEERS ARE BIG ENOUGH TO SELL. IT IS BETTER TO WAIT UNTIL THERE ARE THREE OR FOUR STEERS BIG ENOUGH AND SELL THEM TOGETHER.

1. WHEN THE PAINTED END OF THE ROPE REACHES THE GREEN MARK IT IS WHEN YOU WEAN YOUR CALVES.



This rope is to help you manage your cattle better. The rope will help you know when to wean, mate and sell your cattle.

TO MEASURE THE GIRTH OF YOUR ANIMAL:

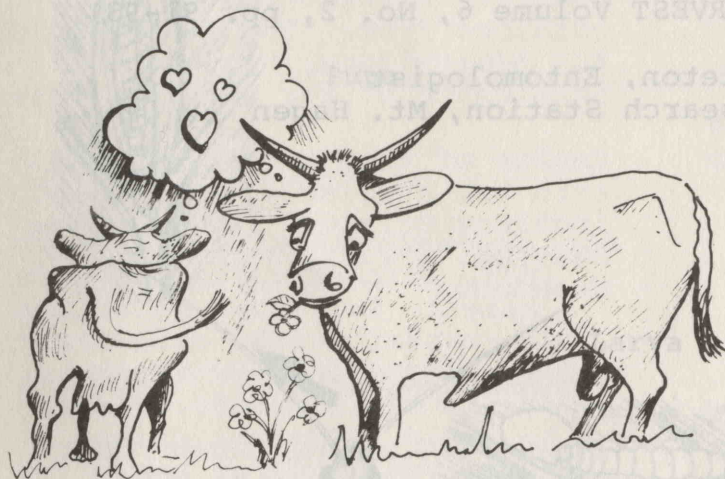
First make sure that the animal is standing up straight, pull the rope a little bit tight but not enough to wrinkle the skin.



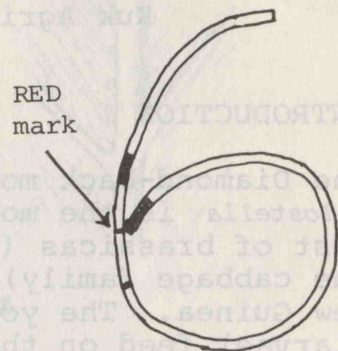
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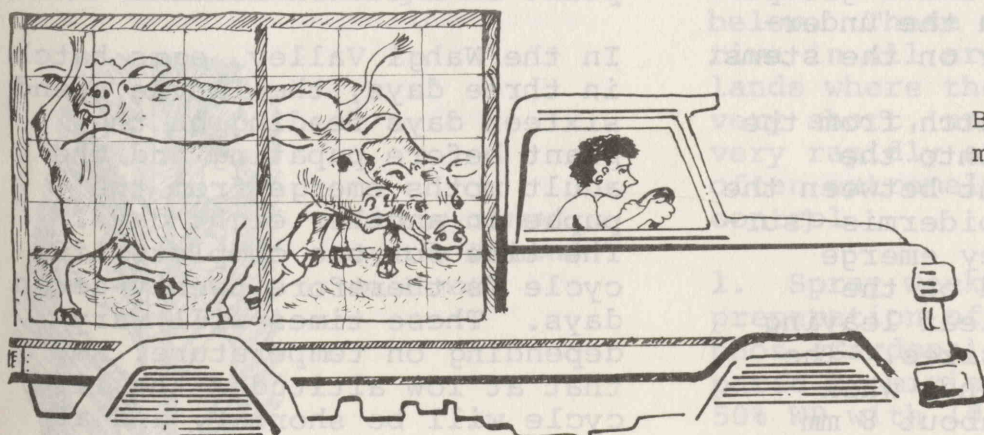
2. WHEN THE PAINTED END OF THE ROPE REACHES THE RED MARK, HEIFER CALVES ARE BIG ENOUGH TO MATE WITH THE BULL.



RED
mark



3. WHEN THE PAINTED END REACHES THE BLACK MARK IT IS WHEN STEERS ARE BIG ENOUGH TO SELL. IT IS BETTER TO WAIT UNTIL THERE ARE THREE OR FOUR STEERS BIG ENOUGH AND SELL THEM TOGETHER.



BLACK
mark

