



Animal Scales at County Fairs

BUREAU OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708
(608) 224-4942
datcp.wi.gov

RESOURCES

Wis. Statute 98
<http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/98>

Wis. Admin. Code ATCP 92
https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/atcp/090/92

Licensed Service Company Listing
<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/WeightsMeasuresServiceCompanyListing.pdf>

County fairs that use animal scales to determine animal size or sales weight, including rabbits and poultry, must use commercial scales. In order to obtain accurate weights and be compliant with the law, scales must meet the following requirements.

Selecting and using the right scale

Before using a scale, ensure all of the following:

- The scale is legal for trade.
 - Scales brought into the state after January 1, 1997, must have a National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) Certificate of Conformance. This ensures that the scale meets the requirements of NIST Handbook 44. The NTEP certificate is a document that certifies that the scale meets all commercial scale design requirements and is a separate from the annual calibration performed by a weights and measures service company. You can check for NTEP Certificates of Conformance here: <http://www.ncwm.net/certificates>
 - Scales brought into the state on or before January 1, 1997, must be designed for commercial use by the manufacturer to be legal for trade
- The scale is properly maintained and meets all of the requirements of Wisconsin weights and measures laws.
- The scale is suitable for its intended use, including the size of the animal to be weighed, scale capacity, and minimum graduation/division size.

Contact a licensed Wisconsin Weights and Measures service company to help select a suitable scale. County fair animal scales must be installed and serviced by a Wisconsin licensed service company. Scales should also be tested by a service company immediately prior to use.

A list of licensed service companies is available on our website:

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/WeightsMeasuresServiceCompanyListing.pdf>

Maintaining the scale

Proper maintenance of scales while they are in use at the fair is required. Plan to have a designated person who is responsible for maintaining the scale in proper operating condition. Discontinue use and contact your service company if you observe abnormal operation of the scale.

- Make sure the scale is at zero before each weighing. Scales that do not return to zero cause incorrect weights.
- Clear out the debris from animals that collects on the scale platform and underneath the scale. Debris can obstruct the weighing elements of the scale and cause inaccurate weighing.
- Look at the scale and make sure it is not binding or rubbing on anything, including the scale frame.
- Ensure the scale remains level.

Moving the scale

Animal scales are sensitive instruments and care needs to be taken when transporting them. Scales that are not designed to be portable can only be moved by a service company. Scales that are designed to be portable can be moved by the owner, following these instructions:

- Be familiar with and follow appropriate instructions for moving a portable scale—dragging and bouncing a scale can easily result in incorrect weighing.
- Carefully place the scale on a smooth, hard, stable surface.
- Place the scale so that nothing is binding or rubbing the scale platform.
- Ensure the scale is level before use. A scale that is not level can easily weigh incorrectly.
 - If the scale includes a built-in level, use it to level the scale.
 - If the scale does not have a built-in level, use a hand-held level to check and adjust the scale.
- Ensure that the scale starts and returns to zero after each weighing.

Clarifying terms

- Calibration: Performance and accuracy testing of the scale. Sometimes referred to as “certifying the scale.”
- NTEP Certificate of Conformance: Document that certifies that a model of a measuring device (scale) met all NIST Handbook 44 design and performance requirements at the time it was manufactured. This certificate does not need to be in the owner’s possession.
- Commercial: Used or employed in establishing the size, quantity, extent, area, composition (limited to meat and poultry), constituent values (limited to grain), or measurement of quantities, things, produce, or articles for distribution or consumption, purchased, offered, or submitted for sale, hire, or award, or in computing any basic charge or payment for services rendered on the basis of weight or measure.

If you have any questions about animal scales or Wisconsin weights and measures law, please contact Stephen Peter at (608) 224-4954, or Stephen.Peter@wisconsin.gov.

