FEEDING PLACE

Dimensions:

**Neck rail height:** at least 150 - 160 cm above stall floor, no contact with the withers

**Feeding place width:** At least 75 cm per cow

For designing a feeding table the specified standard gauges are recommended (Wandel, 2006). Elevated feedstalls with side dividers reduce cows pushing others away while eating.

**Tip:** feed racks can be slanted forward about 20°, e.g. if they are too low

If the withers are injured, check the feeding table height and the self-catching feed rack or the bar.

**Level of feeding table:** 15 - 20 cm above stall area (substitutes for lacking "pasture step")

At least 20 cm higher with a step only for the forelegs

**Elevated feedstalls** have a positive effect on feed intake, lower ranking cows are less often pushed away from the feeding place; animals spend less time in the vicinity of the feeding area without real feed intake (De Vries et al., 2006)

**Surface feeding table:**
- acid proof (feed acids are aggressive!)
- within a 60 cm reach it is even and easy to clean
- neutral odour (cows can smell 15 times better than humans!)
- smooth, because cows have sensitive tongues

**Management:**
- cow-feeding place ratio of 1:1
- providing feed twice a day has a positive effect on feed intake
- a soft walking area significantly increases the frequency of visiting the feeding places

Elevated feedstalls are especially recommendable for paved walking alleys in combination with automatic milking systems. Herd feed intake in these systems is less synchronous. In elevated feedstalls cows can feed undisturbed, despite high scraping frequency, and their claws remain dry and clean.

The better the feeding place partition, the more seldom cows are pushed away while eating (Keyserlingk, 2008).