



Notice of Changes Coming in September New Workbook and Reference Manual

Announcement: Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) will be issuing a new Workbook and Reference Manual for proAction®. The documents are targeted to be published in July 2019, and will be available on the proAction website (www.dairyfarmers.ca/proaction). The new Workbook and Reference Manual will replace the December 2018 versions.

This Notice of Change provides farmers with advance notice of the changes that will be coming into effect on September 1, 2019. The changes are listed below by category: reminder, new requirements, revised requirements, and clarifications or revisions.

Effective Date: The effective date of the changes will be September 1, 2019.

Reminder:

a) **Biosecurity:** all Biosecurity (BIO) requirements and records are mandatory as of September 1, 2019. This encompasses the questions BIO1 to BIO7, which includes a risk assessment, disease records, four Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and a biosecurity sign. The BIO requirements are the same as the December 2018 version of the Workbook and Reference Manual, so this is simply a reminder that BIO requirements will be mandatory as of September 1, 2019.

Location in new Reference Manual will be: Chapter 4, Sections 4.1 to 4.3.

New Requirement:

a) **Dry cattle housing:**

AC18: Do you ensure that dry cattle housing:

- a) Allows cattle to easily stand up, lie down, and adopt normal resting postures?
- b) Provides bedding?

Rationale: dry cattle are often housed in different locations and barns. Since the cattle assessments (an outcome-based method to assess housing design) no longer include dry cattle, the new requirement is being added to address dry cattle housing.

Location in new Reference Manual will be: Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1.1.

Revised Requirements:

a) **Cattle hygiene:** the requirement to ensure the cleanliness of lactating cattle's udders, legs and flanks is being moved to be primarily under Animal Care, instead of Food Safety.

Rationale: Cattle hygiene, particularly udder hygiene, is still important for the Food Safety module, but the requirement is being moved to Animal Care in order to group the requirements related to cattle hygiene. The new question

number will be AC19 (FS). Otherwise, the requirement will not change.

Location in new Reference Manual will be: Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1.1.

- b) Pain control:** under the requirement for a Standard Operating Procedure for animal health practices (AC11), the pain control requirements for disbudding / dehorning will be increased. Farmers must use an anesthetic (i.e. freezing) and analgesic (i.e. a painkiller), at minimum, before disbudding / dehorning. If not already currently doing so, farmers will need to start this practice, and update their SOPs to reflect the changes and state the products they are using.

In addition, for all procedures requiring pain control, farmers must use approved pain control products (i.e. products with a DIN).

Rationale: research clearly shows the benefits to calves with the use of both an anesthetic and analgesic before disbudding / dehorning.

Non-DIN products, such as natural health products or homeopathic remedies, are not acceptable pain relievers since there is no scientific evidence that they provide pain relief during disbudding / dehorning of calves.

Location in new Reference Manual will be: Chapter 4, Section 4.1.

- c) Severely lame cattle:** severely lame cattle will be specifically included in the requirement to provide prompt medical care for cattle that are sick, injured, too thin (BCS ≤ 2), severely lame, in pain or suffering (AC12).

Rationale: farmers must provide immediate care for cattle that are severely lame (e.g. gait score of 5 or classified as severely lame through the stall lameness scoring method). Adding severely lame cattle to the requirement will make the expectation clear.

Location in new Reference Manual will be: Chapter 4, section 4.1.

- d) Down cattle:** the down cattle Corrective Action Plan (previously FS42) will be changed to a SOP (AC20). Farmers will need to ensure that their SOP includes the required elements.

Rationale: the new requirement expands the scope from just moving down cattle to complete down cattle management. Farmers need to consider all of the aspects of down cattle management to ensure prompt and appropriate actions. The structure of the SOP will provide more flexibility for farmers to describe their procedures. See “Down Cattle SOP” section at the end of the Notice for full details.

Location in new Reference Manual will be: Chapter 4, section 4.1.

- e) Euthanasia SOP:** the euthanasia SOP is being changed from a demerits question to a major/minor question. Farms that already have an acceptable SOP will not be impacted by this change. Farms that did not develop previously a SOP will now need to develop one in order to achieve registration.

Rationale: every farm must have a SOP for euthanasia to ensure that farm personnel understand how to humanely euthanize cattle using acceptable methods. Elevating the requirement to a major/minor question will ensure that every farm has a documented SOP to achieve proAction registration.

Location in new Reference Manual will be: Chapter 4, section 4.1.

Clarifications or Revisions:

- a) Overall:** edits are being made throughout the Workbook and Reference Manual to make corrections, streamline information, add clarity or provide more information.
- b) Staff training:** the question number for the requirement for staff training will be revised to clearly indicate that the requirement applies to all proAction modules: FS41 (AC, LT, BIO, EN).

Down Cattle SOP:

AC20: Have you established and implemented a Standard Operating Procedure for managing down cattle? (SOP 10)

Code of Practice: Section 3.9

Issue: Farmers manage their cattle to prevent injuries and illness, but accidents happen and cattle do get sick, which can result in down cattle (cattle that are unable or unwilling to stand). Down cattle are an emergency and need to be managed carefully to ensure adequate care and minimal discomfort.

Explanation: You need to establish a documented Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for managing down cattle. Your SOP must contain enough information to ensure that staff can act and do act promptly and appropriately. You should work with your veterinarian to determine a solution that is adequate for the conditions on your farm, including the type of equipment required to move down cattle. You can consider the following BMPs when you develop your own SOP, but **you must include the BMPs that are shaded grey:**

- ✓ If an animal becomes sick, injured or goes down, promptly diagnose the condition of the animal and the likelihood of recovery. If treating, determine an appropriate duration of treatment / maximum allowable days of treatment without recovery. Call the veterinarian, if needed.
- ✓ Determine if the animal can be treated and/or cared for where she is lying or if she needs to be moved.
- ✓ If you have to move the animal but cannot do so humanely, euthanize her where she is, according to your euthanasia SOP.
- ✓ If the animal can be treated and/or cared for where she is lying, treat her there until she recovers and can get up. If she is beyond recovery, euthanize her humanely according to your euthanasia SOP. Avoid moving animals in labour.
- ✓ If the animal is in an area where she must be moved (e.g. in the milking parlour or walk-way), follow the farm procedure below.
 - Farm personnel must be trained in cattle behaviour and quiet handling techniques so that they understand how to handle and move cattle quietly, and with low stress.
 - Electric prods should only be used in extreme situations, such as when an animal's safety is at risk. For example, an electric prod may be used once on a down animal as a last resort to assess if she has the ability to get up or rise. Never use electric prods on the face, anus or reproductive organs of dairy cattle, and never use electric prods on calves that you can move manually.
 - Down cattle may be lifted to help them stand, to make an initial assessment of their condition/injury. If lifting a down animal, lower the animal immediately if it cannot support its weight immediately after lifting.
 - Move the animal as gently as possible, minimizing stress and trauma.
 - Describe any specialized equipment used on the farm to move cattle, and how to use it. Use specialized equipment according to manufacturer's instructions.Examples of cattle moving equipment are (see Table 1 for details):
 - Full body sling / Skidder / Stoneboat / Rubber mat / Plywood sheet / Bucket of tractor
 - Ropes / straps
 - Gently rock or roll an animal onto special equipment whenever possible.

- Move the animal over the shortest distance possible. Use equipment according to the manufacturer’s specifications, and support the animal as necessary during movement.
- Do not pull, push, drag or lift an animal by the neck or legs unless human or animal safety is at risk and there is no other option. Even then, only do so for a few feet with force being applied for a very brief period of time. Carefully protect the animal as much as possible, and then use your preferred method of moving the animal.
- **Never use hip lifters or clamps to move or carry down cattle from one location to another.**
- Stalls: cattle down in stalls often have their rear leg tucked underneath in an awkward position. Try to rock and move the animal’s hindquarters so that her leg can be positioned properly. If that does not help, your only alternative may be with a halter on her head or a padded chain around her neck.
- ✓ Wherever the animal is located for recovery, ensure the following are provided:
 - Proper non-slip footing (i.e. sand applied around the animal) or, if in a stall, ensure the gutter is covered.
 - Shelter from the elements (i.e. direct sun, rain, extreme cold or heat, moisture) and protection from predators.
 - Frequent easy access to fresh food and water.
 - Isolation from other animals to prevent injury and support recovery.
- ✓ To support the animal’s recovery:
 - Assess animal regularly to monitor progress.
 - Roll animal from side to side every two hours initially for the best chance of recovery.
 - Provide udder pressure relief by maintaining milking routine or milking as necessary.

Table 1. Methods for lifting and moving down cattle (in order of most recommended to least recommended)

Methods for lifting down cattle			
Method	Pros	Cons	Important Considerations
Body slings	Numerous adjustable straps or a single wide strap to provide broader support to thoracic/brisket and inguinal areas	Passing straps under cattle can be challenging and require multiple people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ideally slings should be used to lift down cattle to a standing position to enable the animal to bear weight on its limbs for up to a few hours before returning to sternal recumbency - Single (narrow) belly-band slings are ineffective for use in cattle due to compression of abdomen and compromised respiration - Full body slings can also be used as a method for moving down cattle
Float tanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gently lifts down cattle to a standing position using heated water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not widely available - Timeliness - Costly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to carefully screen candidates to eliminate handling of down cattle with a poor prognosis (e.g. fracture, illness, etc.)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimizes trauma compared to other devices available - Down cattle can remain in the filled tank for up to six to eight hours - Good diagnostic tool for prognosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires multiple people 	
Hip clamps / lifters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May assist in diagnosis, treatment and management of down cattle - May reduce tissue pressure in compressed hind limbs, and improve circulation if used early 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potentially dangerous to the animals as weight transferred to tuber coxae region - Pressure from lifters can easily damage muscle and nerves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Never use hip lifters to move animals - Use hip lifters only to assist an animal that can stand and bear weight when lifted - Never leave lifted animal unattended or hanging - Use of well-padded lifters can be tolerated for 10 minutes twice daily
Methods for moving down cattle			
Method	Pros	Cons	Other Considerations
Rubber mats, stone boats, plywood sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inexpensive - Easily created - Minimizes risk of injury when moving down cattle to a better location for recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May not be readily available - Space requirement for maneuvering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other alternatives exist to move cattle using similar principles – modified gates, Teflon sheets, etc.
Tractor, skid steer, loader bucket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Available on most farms - Can move cattle longer distances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require extra caution and they can be dangerous to animals and people - Space required for maneuvering - May lead to dragging cattle for accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Down cattle must be loaded into bucket carefully and restrained to minimize risk of trauma
<p>To properly place an animal onto the chosen device, cattle should be rolled to one side and the device placed close to or under the legs of the animal. The animal should then be carefully rolled onto the device ensuring its entire body rests on the device.</p>			

Source for recommended procedures for managing down cattle: *Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners, Considerations for Developing a Down Cattle Protocol, 2019.*