

Checklist for Dairy Animal Welfare on Farms

The following are requirements of the Code of Practice and farmers are expected to adhere to these practices. This checklist is intended for farmers to use in evaluating their practices and the environment they provide their calves and cows.

The numbers for each requirement links back to the section of the Code of Practice where the requirements and best practices are outlined.

You can choose N/A when a situation does not apply to your particular farm (no bull on farm, no branding, etc...)



CALVES

CALF BARN

1.1.1

Calves have a bed that provides comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction: bare concrete is not acceptable as a resting surface.

YES NO

Housing allows calves to easily stand up, lie down, turn around and adopt normal resting postures.

YES NO

Calves have visual contact with other calves.

YES NO

The bedded area for group-housed calves is large enough to allow all calves to rest comfortably at the same time.

YES NO N/A

CALF HANDLING

4.3 Disbudding and Dehorning

Pain control is used when dehorning or disbudding.

YES NO N/A

(It is recommended to disbud before calf is 3 weeks of age.)

Bleeding control is used when dehorning.

YES NO N/A

4.4 Identification

All cattle are identified using an approved ear tag as stipulated by regulations.

YES NO

Pain control is used if branding is necessary. Face branding is prohibited.

YES NO N/A

4.5 Castration

Pain control is used if castrating calf. YES NO N/A

4.6 Tail Docking

Dairy cattle are not tail-docked (unless medically necessary). YES NO

4.7 Extra Teat Removal

Teat removal is performed by trained personnel. YES NO N/A

4.1 Moving Animals

Electric prods are not used on calves that can be moved manually. YES NO

Animal handlers are familiar with cattle behaviour and quiet handling techniques either through training, experience or mentorship. YES NO

CALF FEEDING

2.2.1

Calves receive at least four litres of good quality colostrum within 12 hours of birth, with the first meal occurring as soon as possible and no more than six hours after birth. YES NO

Calves receive a volume and quality of milk or milk replacer to maintain health, growth and vigour. YES NO

(It is recommended to give Holstein calves eight litres of milk during the first four weeks of life when ability to digest solid feed is limited)

Calves' milk intake is increased during cold stress. YES NO

5.1.2 Preparing for Transport

Calves received adequate colostrum before being transported. YES NO
(recommended at least 1/2 day ration of milk)

Dairy animals are fed and watered within five hours before being loaded, if the expected duration of the animal's confinement is longer than 24 hours from the time of loading. YES NO

ADULT DAIRY CATTLE
(including heifers, dry cows and bulls)

Section A - FREE STALL BARNs

*Fill this section if you have a free stall barn for cows
(go to section B – on next page - if you have tie stall), then continue on p. 5*

1.1.2 Housing

Housing allows cattle to easily stand up, lie down, adopt normal resting postures, and have visual contact with other cattle.

YES NO

1.1.2 & 1.6 Bedding

Cattle have a bed that provides comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction: bare concrete or hard rubber mats without bedding are unacceptable surfaces for humane housing of cows.

YES NO

1.4 Stall Design

Stalls are built to minimize hock and knee injuries and to allow cows to rise and lie down with ease.

YES NO

1.5 Space Allowance

Stocking density does not exceed 1.2 cows per stall in a free stall system.

YES NO

Adequate linear feed bunk space is provided to meet the animals' nutritional needs.

YES NO

(recommended 24 in/60 cm per cow)

Resting areas provide 120ft² (11m²) per mature cow in bedded-pack pens.

YES NO N/A

3.10 Cleanliness

Manure is removed regularly from alleys and beds to keep cows clean.

YES NO

Daily removal of cow patties and use of generous amounts of bedding assures cleanliness of cows kept in bedded-pack pens.

YES NO N/A

1.11 Breeding Bulls

Housing allows bulls to easily stand up, lie down, adopt normal resting postures, and mount safely.

YES NO N/A

Bulls have a bed that provides comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction.

YES NO N/A

Section B - TIE STALL BARNS

Fill this section if you have a tie stall barn for cows, then continue on p.5

1.1.2 Housing

Housing allows cattle to easily stand up, lie down, adopt normal resting postures, and have visual contact with other cattle.

YES NO

1.1.2 & 1.6 Bedding

Cattle have a bed that provides comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction: bare concrete or hard rubber mats without bedding are not acceptable resting surfaces.

YES NO

1.4 Stall Design

Stall design minimizes hock and knee injuries and allows cows to rise and lie down with ease.

YES NO

3.10 Cleanliness

Manure is removed from alleys and beds to keep cows clean.

YES NO

3.14 Electric Trainers

Energizers for electric trainers do not exceed 2500 volts.

YES NO N/A

Electric trainers have a height adjustment.

YES NO N/A

Electric trainers are located over the chine when the cow is standing with her hind feet near the gutter curb.

YES NO N/A

1.11 Breeding Bulls

Housing allows bulls to easily stand up, lie down, adopt normal resting postures, and mount safely.

YES NO N/A

Bulls have a bed that provides comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction.

YES NO N/A

COW HANDLING
(Calving and Special Needs)

3.7 Calving

The calving area is kept clean prior to, and after, delivery of the calf to minimize the risk of disease or bacterial challenges to the calf's immune system.

YES NO

1.2 Special Needs

Special needs facilities provide comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction: bare concrete is not acceptable as a resting surface.

YES NO

1.2.3 Sick And Injured Animals

Areas are provided to segregate and treat sick and injured cattle.

YES NO

1.10 Handling Facilities

Handling facilities are equipped for the safe restraint and handling of dairy animals.

YES NO

4.4 Identification

All cattle are identified using an approved ear tag as stipulated by applicable regulations.

YES NO

Pain control is used if branding is necessary. Face branding is prohibited.

YES NO N/A

4.6 Tail Docking

Dairy cattle are not tail-docked unless medically necessary.

YES NO

4.7 Extra Teat Removal

Teat removal is performed by trained personnel.

YES NO N/A

4.9 Hoof Trimming

Hoof and claws are inspected and trimmed as required to minimize lameness.

YES NO

5.1.2 Preparing for Transport

Dairy animals are fed and watered within five hours before being loaded, if the expected duration of the animal's confinement is longer than 24 hours from the time of loading.

YES NO

5.2 Loading and Receiving

The requirements for loading and unloading procedures and equipment as described in the Health of Animals Regulations are complied with¹. Cattle that are incompatible are segregated.

YES NO

4.1 Moving Animals

Electric cattle prods are used only in extreme situations, such as when animal or human safety is at risk. Prods are never used on the face, anus or reproductive organs of dairy cattle.

YES NO N/A

Animal handlers are familiar with cattle behaviour and quiet handling techniques either through training, experience or mentorship.

YES NO N/A

MILKING EQUIPMENT

1.8 Equipment is inspected by a qualified person a minimum of every twelve months.

YES NO

COW FEEDING

2.2 Nutrition and Feed Management

Cows receive a ration that is adequate for maintaining health and vigour.

YES NO

(i.e. rations are balanced, of good quality and reflect production level, reproductive stage, body size and weather conditions)

2.2.2 Heifers

Heifers receive a ration that is adequate for maintaining health, growth and vigour.

YES NO

2.2.3 Dry Cows

Dry cows receive a ration that is adequate for maintaining health and vigour.

YES NO

2.2.4 Transition Cows

Transition cows receive a diet that is adequate for maintaining health and vigour.

YES NO

(Meeting increased nutrient demands of cows transitioning from gestation to lactation)

¹ * The Health of Animals Regulations prohibit loading or unloading an animal in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering. The Regulations also require that ramps, chutes and other equipment used for loading and unloading animals:

- be maintained and used so as not to cause injury or undue suffering to animals,
- have sides of sufficient strength and height to prevent animals from falling off the ramp or other equipment, and
- have no unprotected gap between the ramp and the vehicle

The actual regulations are accessible at http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showdoc/cr/C.R.C.-c.296/bo-ga:l_XII-gb:s_139/en#anchorbo-ga:l_XII-gb:s_139

2.3 Water

Cattle have access to palatable and clean water in quantities to meet their needs.

YES

NO

COW HEALTH

3.4 Veterinary Care and Herd Health Management

A working relationship with a practicing veterinarian has been established.

YES

NO

2.1 Body Condition Scoring (BCS)

Corrective action is taken for animals at a BCS of 2 or lower.

YES

NO

N/A

5.1.1 Fitness for Transport

Every animal is assessed before being transported. *(See Appendices G and H for details)*

YES

NO

Non-ambulatory animals, animals with a body condition score indicating emaciation or weakness, or animals with severe lameness are not transported, except for veterinary treatment or diagnosis.

YES

NO

N/A

Animals that are likely to give birth during the intended journey are not transported.

YES

NO

Cattle that require hobbling in order to walk are not transported.

YES

NO

CULLING DECISIONS

3.5 Lameness

Lame cows are diagnosed early and either treated, culled or euthanized. *(See Appendix F and G for more details.)*

YES

NO

3.9 Culling Animals

Cattle that are sick, injured, in pain or suffering are provided prompt medical care or euthanized.

YES

NO

Appropriate authorities are advised of any suspect or confirmed cases of reportable disease.

YES

NO

If animals are culled, drug withdrawal times are observed.

YES

NO

Apparatus to lift and support recumbent animals are used with care and according to manufacturer's specifications.

YES

NO

Animals are able to breathe freely and not suffer unnecessary discomfort.

6.1 On-Farm Euthanasia Protocols

Cattle with untreatable conditions, not responding to treatment, or not fit for transport are euthanized promptly.

YES

NO

6.2 Methods

An acceptable method for euthanizing cattle is used. The method to euthanize cattle is quick and causes the least possible pain and distress.

YES

NO

(see Code p. 43 for acceptable methods on farms: free bullet; captive bolt; injection with barbiturates by veterinarian)

6.3 Evidence of Death

Death is confirmed immediately and before moving or leaving the animal.

YES

NO

Evaluation: Give yourself a path on the back for every “YES” or “N/A”. Then work to address any issues for which you have responded “NO” to see practical enhancement of animal care on your farm.

For more details on the above requirements and other practical tips to enhance animal care on your farm, consult the [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle](#), which you have received. It is also available on Dairy Farmers of Canada’s website (www.dairyfarmers.ca).