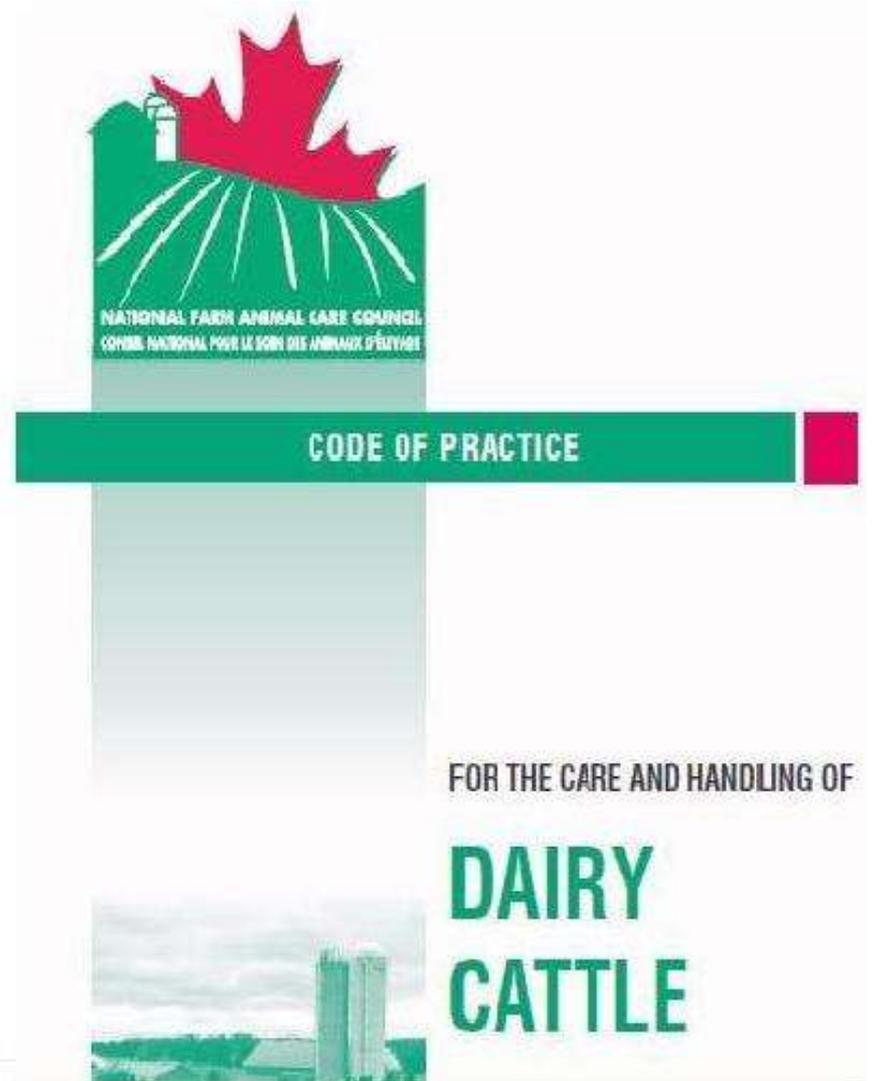
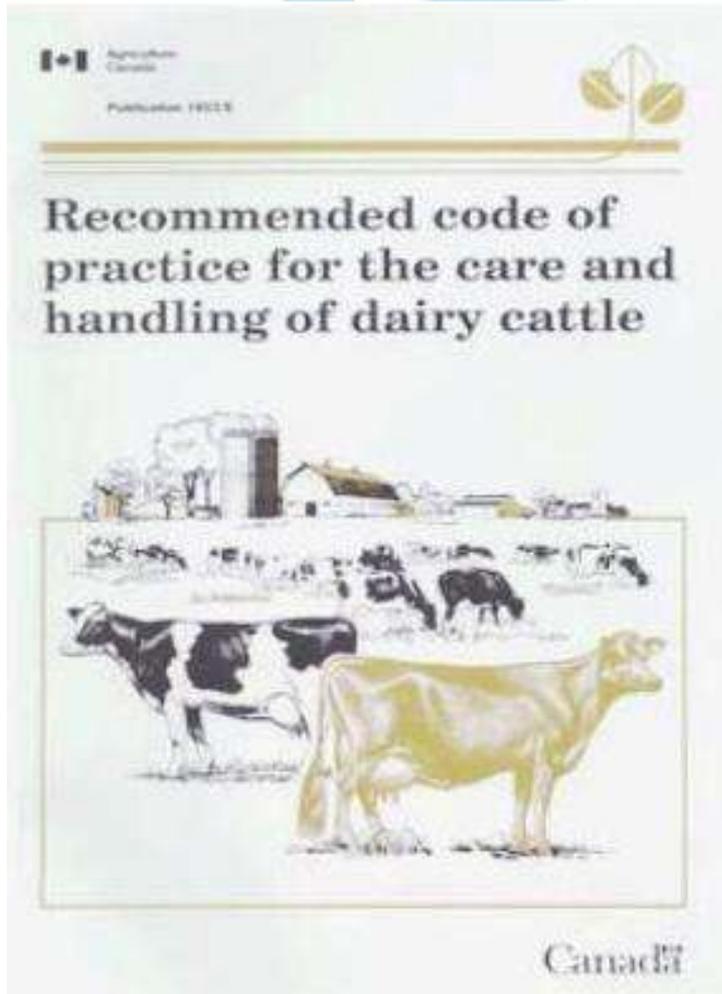


The New Code of Practice



Original Dairy Code: 1990



- An educational tool to promote sound husbandry and welfare practices
- Not a production manual
- Contain recommendations to assist farmers to compare and improve management practices

Why a Code of Practice for the care and handling of dairy cattle?

- Canada's dairy industry is an active leader in animal care improvement
 - Dairy farmers care about their animals
 - Farmers invest in research in animal care
 - Farmers want to apply research findings to their animal care practices
 - A comfortable cow is a productive cow
- Contribute to continuous improvements in dairy animal care on Canadian dairy farms

Why a Code of Practice for the care and handling of dairy cattle?

- Provide information and guidance on dairy management and welfare practices that are based on sound science
- Promote a national understanding of dairy care requirements and recommended best practices
 - Through regular communication with farmers
 - To continue improvement of animal care, and
 - Encourage a higher level of care on our farms

The revision process

- Initiated by Dairy Farmers of Canada
- The Code Development Committee comprised of four dairy farmers working in collaboration with diverse stakeholders : veterinarians, researchers, government, humane societies, transporters, processors & restaurant sector.

What's in the Dairy Code?

Four types of information to improve animal care on dairy farms:

- Regulatory requirements
- Industry requirements
- Recommended best practices
- Appendices



Regulatory Requirements

Food

- Cows must receive a ration that is adequate for maintaining health and vigour
- Cattle must have access to palatable and clean water in quantities that meet their needs

Euthanization

- An acceptable method for euthanizing cattle must be used

Regulatory Requirements

Transportation

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

Industry Requirements

- Cattle must have a bed that provides comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction. Bare concrete is not acceptable as a resting surface.
- Ensure stalls are designed to minimize hock and knee injuries and allow cows to rise and lie down with ease
- Calves must 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.

Industry Requirements

- Lame cows must be diagnosed early and either treated, culled or euthanized
- Pain control must be used when dehorning or disbudding
- Dairy cattle must not be tail docked unless medically necessary
- Sickness: cattle with untreatable conditions, not responding to treatment, or not fit for transport must be euthanized promptly

Recommended Best Practices...

- The Code contains a long list of tips to improve animal care practices on the farm
- Various tips are employed on many different dairy farms across Canada!

1934-2009

Recommended Best Practices

- Offer calves a minimum total dairy intake of 20% of body weight in whole milk (or equivalent nutrient delivery via milk replacer) until 28 days of age (about eight litres per day for Holstein calves)
- Clean stalls and floors frequently to improve cow cleanliness
- Work with the herd veterinarian to develop a Herd Health Management and Biosecurity Program

Recommended Best Practices

Care for Compromised Animals

- Dry off heavy lactating cows destined for slaughter before shipping to auction. If this is not feasible, ship directly to an abattoir
- Work with a veterinarian to develop and implement an on-farm euthanasia protocol to facilitate timely and humane on-farm euthanasia

Appendices

More detailed information on:

- Temperature humidity index table
- Flowcharts for evaluating free and tie stalls
- Body condition scoring chart
- Gait scoring system for dairy cows
- Guidelines for dealing with compromised cattle
- Euthanasia of cattle guide
- Resources for further information

A role for veterinarians

- Veterinarians work closely with dairy farmers and they can help farmers in:
 - Developing herd health management plan
 - Counselling on pain control methods
 - Advising on transportation of animals
 - Evaluating their own practices compared to the requirements, and change their practices if needed

Promoting the Dairy Code

- DFC distributed the dairy code to all dairy farmers
- DFC held panel on animal care and the Code at its 2009 Annual Meeting
- DFC developed an assessment tool (check list) for farmers to evaluate their application of Code's requirements to the care they give their animals

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Promoting the Dairy Code (cont)

- Regular communications / presentations on the dairy code to dairy farmers in 2009 – 2010
- Communication and dialogue with stakeholders: veterinarians, extension staff, SPCA, etc.

DFC website will be updated regularly with practical information about animal care practices for farmers

- DFC board expects that within next year, farmers will be very familiar with requirements of the Code