

The Role of the NFACC Dairy Code

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SIR JAMES DUNN ANIMAL WELFARE CENTRE
PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION



WELFARE

- Judgment calls? - Based on values
 - Hard to make sometimes
 - Especially with clients you have known for a while
 - “Youngfella I’ve been doing it this way for the last 30+ years.....”
 - EBY – Even better yet – don’t you want to improve?
- I DO NOT CLAIM TO BE AN EXPERT!!

Outline

- Canadian Code of Practice
 - Animal Environment
 - Requirements for feed and water
 - Cover the specific areas of the codes on Animal Husbandry



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Coordinating a national approach to farm animal welfare in Canada.

The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) brings together [diverse stakeholders](#) to:

- develop [Codes of Practice](#) for the care and handling of farm animals,
- create a process for the development of [animal care assessment](#) programs,
- provide a forum for open dialogue on farm animal welfare.

NFACC [in the news](#)

News

- [NFACC Information Update: November 2018](#)
- [Project Achievements Report \(April 2017 - March 2018\)](#)
- [NFACC Information Update: May 2018](#)
- [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Transportation, Review of Scientific Research on Priority Welfare Issues](#)
- [First-Ever Canadian Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Rabbits](#)

The **Codes of Practice** are vital, but alone are not enough – a mechanism is needed to demonstrate that Codes are being followed in order to build confidence throughout the value chain.

The **Animal Care Assessment Framework** provides a credible process to follow when developing an animal care assessment program. Animal care assessment programs will change over time. Click [<here>](#) for NFACC's process for maintaining recognition by NFACC of an animal care assessment program that has undergone changes.

Key goals

- Enhance the transparency, legitimacy and credibility of assessment programs developed according to the framework
- Ensure consistency of communications along the value chain
- Further develop Canada's own cooperative approach to farm animal care, an approach that can be communicated nationally and internationally, and that builds upon existing initiatives
- Assist commodity groups in developing or revising an animal care program by providing an informed framework and useful resources

The framework should also ensure that animal care assessment programs provide benefits to both farmers and the animals under their care.

Codes Of Practice

Current

- [Beef Cattle](#)
- [Bison](#)
- [Chickens, Turkeys and Breeders](#)
- [Dairy Cattle](#)
- [Equine](#)
- [Farmed Deer](#)
- [Farmed Fox](#)
- [Farmed Mink](#)
- [Pigs](#)
- [Poultry - Layers](#)
- [Rabbits](#)
- [Sheep](#)
- [Veal Cattle](#)

Under Revision

- [Aquaculture / Fish](#)
- [Goats](#)
- [Transportation](#)

Code Development Process

- [Development Steps](#)
- [Public Comment Period](#)
- [Frequently Asked](#)

For a quick summary, watch our videos on **You Tube**



“Raising the Bar”

The Codes of Practice Development Process



“Key Features”

...of the Code Development Process

Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farm animals

The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals. The Codes serve as our national understanding of animal care requirements and recommended practices.

NFACC and the Codes

Canada's [Code development process](#) is led by NFACC. Key components of the process are:

- the inclusion of scientific committees to review research on priority welfare issues;
- ownership of the individual Codes by the relevant stakeholders through their active participation in developing the Code;
- measurable components to facilitate the development of assessment programs; and
- a transparent process.

Science- and consensus-based commitment

The Code Development Committee and the Scientific Committee work together to develop a science- and consensus-based Code. The result is a Code that is scientifically informed, practical, and reflects societal expectations for responsible farm animal care.





CODE OF PRACTICE

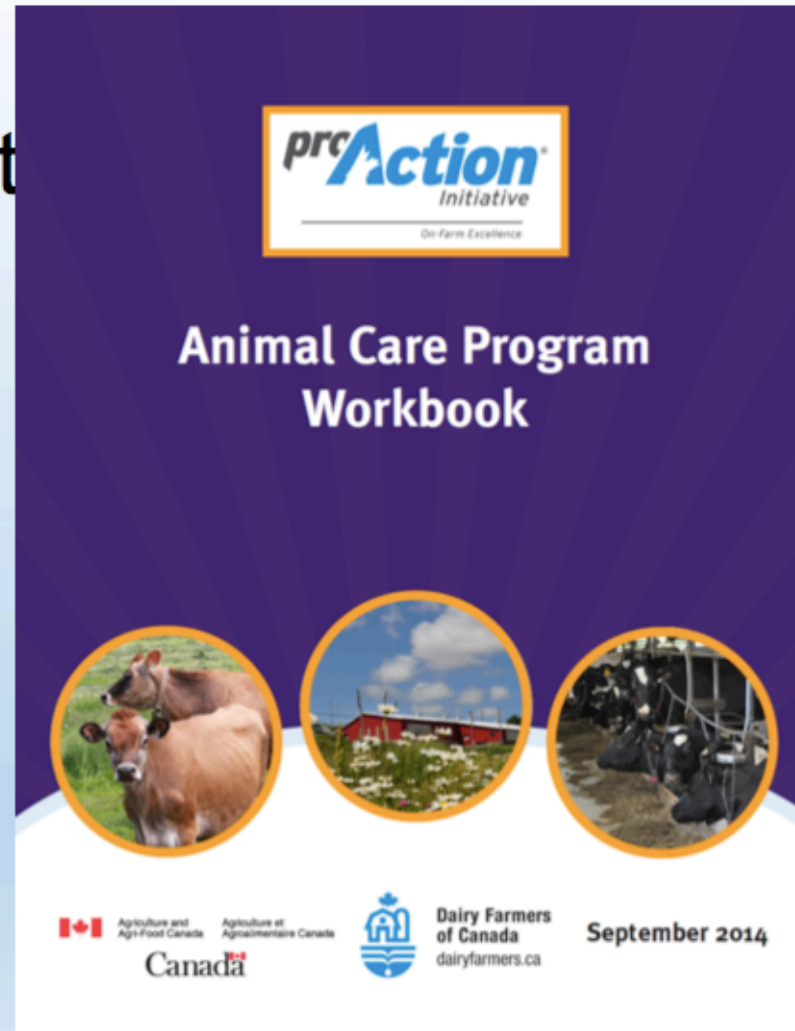
FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF

DAIRY CATTLE



Canada

Program Requirement



Section 1 - Accommodation, Housing and Handling Facilities

Animal Environment

- according to their reproductive state, size, age, and lactation period
- fusing a variety of systems. Systems may include loose housing, free stalls, or tie stalls, each

1.1.1 Calves - Requirements

REQUIREMENTS

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

Housing must allow calves to easily stand up, lie down, turn around, adopt normal resting postures, and have visual contact with other calves.

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



Calves – Recommended Best Practices (RBPs)

- Un-weaned calves less than 10 per group
- Opportunity to exercise and socialize
- Minimize environmental impact

1.1.2 Larger Heifers and Cows - Requirements

REQUIREMENTS

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

Cattle must have a bed that provides comfort, insulation, warmth, dryness and traction. Bare concrete is not acceptable as a resting surface.

RBPs for Heifers & Cow

- Bedding on mattress
- Floor traction / non-abrasive
- Facilities for management
- Access to exercise/weather permitting
- Be mindful of behaviors that indicate fear
- Inspect cattle for signs of injury
- Watch for lameness
- Lighting / safe access routes for cow-flow

1.2 – Facilities for Special Needs

REQUIREMENTS

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

Calving RBPs – dry/clean individual pen, monitor for aggressive behavior, access to feed and water, well lit with minimal draft

Post calving RBPs – one cow per stall, minimize competition at feed bunk and waters, soft – non slip floors (bedding pack)

1.2 – Facilities for Special Needs

REQUIREMENTS

Areas must be provided to segregate and treat sick and injured cattle.

Sick or injured RBPs – segregated area which is sheltered and well bedded and provide softer, non-slip flooring (straw pack)

1.3 Ventilation, temp and humidity

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- a. maintain adequate air quality and ventilation at all times (ammonia levels < 25ppm). Ventilation systems should be capable of keeping the barn dry, removing stale air and strong odors, bringing in fresh air without drafts, and removing excess heat and moisture
- b. remove manure from livestock buildings frequently
- c. avoid exposing dairy cattle to sudden extremes of temperature wherever possible
- d. strive to avoid conditions of heat stress.

When facing cold stress:

- a. allow for increased feed energy intake during cold winter months
- b. protect cows from wind and moisture during winter months
- c. ensure that the relative humidity inside a housing facility does not exceed 75%.

When facing heat stress (THI exceeds 72):

- a. provide shade as the first step in any cooling system
- b. consider average temperature and relative humidity in deciding upon an appropriate cooling system (5)
- c. use evaporative cooling if environmental temperatures are near or above normal cow body temperature for a significant portion of the summer (5)
- d. use a combination of evaporative cooling, tunnel ventilation and feedline soaking for high temperature/high humidity conditions. Do not depend on evaporative cooling alone, except in very arid environments (5)
- e. keep milking parlors, holding pens and housing areas cool during hot summer periods (21).

1.4 Stall Design

REQUIREMENTS

Build stalls to minimize hock and knee injuries and to allow cows to rise and lie down with ease.

- a. build stalls that provide adequate room for cows to lay comfortably for at least 12 hours per day
- b. ensure stalls are designed to minimize hock and knee injuries and allow cows to rise and lie down with ease (e.g., width and length, lunge space, brisket board location, neck rail height and location, length of chain). Refer to [Appendix C - Flowchart for Evaluating Free Stalls](#) and [Appendix D - Flowchart for Evaluating Tie Stalls](#)
- c. provide a comfortable resting surface in stalls (e.g., sand, deep bedding, mattresses with bedding)
(11)
- d. ensure stalls are clean and dry.

1.5 Space Allowances

REQUIREMENTS

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

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

Provide adequate linear feed bunk space to meet the animals' nutritional needs.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- a. provide one stall for each cow in each group (12)
- b. provide 120ft² (11m²) per cow of resting area in a bedded-pack barn or a composted-pack barn
- c. provide 160ft² (15m²) per cow of resting area in individual cow maternity pens
- d. build wide alleys at feed bunks to allow cows to pass freely while other cows eat (approximately 14ft, 4.3m)
- e. provide traction on concrete in alleyways (e.g., darby or broom finish, grooved)
- f. clean alleyways regularly
- g. provide adequate linear feed bunk space (e.g., 24in, 60cm, per cow).

1.6 Bedding Management

REQUIREMENTS

Bare concrete platforms or hard rubber mats without bedding are unacceptable surfaces for the humane housing of cows.

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

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- a. ensure stalls are routinely bedded and raked out
- b. add and level new sand routinely to sand-bedded stalls
- c. ensure the cows are lying in the stalls (not in the alleyways or standing in the stalls)
- d. observe the legs of the cows over pressure points for signs of abrasions, swelling or sores
- e. use straw choppers to decrease the amount of straw required
- f. ensure calves and cattle have a dry area to lie down (i.e., if your knees get wet in 25 seconds of kneeling in the rest area, then it is too wet)
- g. for bedded-pack pens, add clean, dry bedding (e.g., straw, sawdust, shavings) daily
- h. for bedded-pack pens, remove cow patties a few times each day to assure cow cleanliness and to reduce the quantity of bedding needed
- i. for composted bedded-pack pens, bed as needed and till twice per day
- j. for composted bedded-pack barns, assure excellent ventilation to reduce humidity
- k. for bedded-pack or composted-pack barns, provide access to pasture or an exercise yard to decrease labor and bedding requirements.

1.7 Feeding Areas

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- a. in free stall and bedded-pack barns:
 - provide 24in (60cm) per cow fence line feeding space for mature milking cows
 - provide 30in (76cm) of linear bunk space for pregnant dry cows
- b. ensure feed surfaces are smooth and approximately 4-6in (10-15cm) higher than the standing area
- c. minimize competition at the feed bunk (e.g., use physical barriers at the feed bunk (10))
- d. ensure alleys at the feed bunk are at least 14ft (4.3m) wide to allow easy movement of cattle.

1.8 Milking Systems

REQUIREMENTS

Equipment must be inspected by a qualified person a minimum of every twelve months.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- a. ensure the milking system is comfortable for cows
- b. ensure the interior of the milking parlor is free of protrusions or other hazards and that gates and restraining devices of individual holding units operate safely
- c. ensure the facility is constructed to minimize the time cows spend away from feed and water and a comfortable stall
- d. ensure only milking equipment with an appropriate vacuum level, pulsation rate, and pulsation ratio is used
- e. ensure all milking equipment is maintained in good working condition
- f. ensure access routes are safe, illuminated and clean
- g. ensure the floor has good traction and is kept clean
- h. do not use electrified crowd gates.

1.9 Pasture, Yards and Transfer Alleys

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

- a. adjust cattle gradually to pasture feeding to prevent digestive problems
- b. use geotextile fabric to build laneways, trackways to pastures, high-traffic gateways, yards, or outdoor feeding areas
- c. provide cattle with pastures and yards that have good drainage
- d. ensure pastures and fences (including electric fences) are safe and properly maintained
- e. limit exposure to areas that may compromise animal health and safety
- f. provide clean water and supplementary feed on a daily basis to meet recommended nutritional needs if pasture forage is not adequate
- g. ensure cattle are provided with shade and protection from inclement weather if provided outdoor access (e.g., natural or artificial shade in the summer, or shelter in the winter, dry area during wet weather)
- h. provide handling facilities at pastures that are far from the barn
- i. inspect and maintain cow paths to minimize risk of injury and lameness (e.g., sharp protrusions)
- j. minimize the time cows spend in concrete alleyways
- k. flush and/or scrape alleyways 2-3 times per day.

1.10 Handling Facilities

REQUIREMENTS

All dairy operations must be equipped for the safe restraint and handling of animals.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES (14)

- a. provide non-slip flooring
- b. ensure restraint devices are used properly. A slow steady motion with optimal pressure is calming to cattle. Excessive pressure that causes pain or discomfort should be avoided
- c. ensure the entrance to a restraint device is well lit
- d. ensure handling equipment is engineered to minimize noise. High-pitched sounds are more disturbing to cattle
- e. ensure restraint devices do not exert uncomfortable pressure points on an animal's body.

2. Requirements for feed and water

2.1 Body Condition Score (5 pt scale with ¼ point index)

REQUIREMENTS

Producers must take corrective action for animals at a BCS of 2 or lower.

aim for the following ideal BCS ranges:

- dry off, 3.25 to 3.75
- calving, 3.25 to 3.75
- early lactation, 2.50 to 3.25
- mid-lactation, 2.75 to 3.25
- late lactation, 3.00 to 3.50
- growing heifers, 2.75 to 3.25
- heifers at calving, 3.25 to 3.75

employ corrective measures if more than 15% of the herd is above or below ideal BCS for their stage of lactation (25)

2.2 Nutrition and Feed

REQUIREMENTS

Calves must receive at least four liters 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.

Calves must receive a volume and quality of milk or milk replacer to maintain health, growth and vigor.

Increase milk intake during cold stress.

REQUIREMENTS

Cattle must receive a diet that is adequate for maintaining health and vigor.

2.3 Water

REQUIREMENTS

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

- a. have an alternative watering system in the event of an interruption in water supply
- b. construct and locate watering systems so that they are protected from fouling and freezing
- c. keep water troughs, bowls, and nipples clean and check them at least once daily to ensure they are dispensing water properly
- d. situate watering points at walkthrough areas (cross-over alleys)
- e. provide water with a depth of at least 4in (10cm) in water troughs and mount troughs at a height comfortable for the cow to drink (24-30in, 60-75 cm)
- f. test water quality annually and occasionally test for stray voltage.

3. Health and Welfare

REQUIREMENTS

Producers must establish a working relationship with a practicing veterinarian (VCPR)

REQUIREMENTS

Lame cows must be diagnosed early and either treated, culled or euthanized. See [Appendix F](#) & [G](#) for more details.



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Prevalence of lameness and associated risk factors on dairy farms in the Maritime Provinces of Canada

[M.T. Jewell](#)^{1,*}, [M. Cameron](#)¹, [J. Spears](#)², [S.L. McKenna](#)¹, [M.S. Cockram](#)¹, [J. Sanchez](#)¹, [G.P. Keefe](#)¹



- Standing on edge of stall
- Shifting weight
- Resting limb
- Uneven weight bearing when moved side to side

■ How can you not look at lame feet as a vet?

REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

If animals are culled, drug withdrawal times must be observed.

Apparatus to lift and support recumbent animals must be used with care and according to manufacturer's specifications. Animals must be able to breathe freely and not suffer unnecessary discomfort.

- We aren't saying there can't be any sick, but must be attended to

4.1 Animal Husbandry – Handling, Moving, Restraining

REQUIREMENTS

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

Electric prods must not be used on calves that can be moved manually.

Animal handlers must be familiar with cattle behavior and quiet handling techniques either through training, experience or mentorship.

- Training assistance and lead by example

Section 4.3-4.5

REQUIREMENTS

Pain control must be used when dehorning or disbudding.

Bleeding control must be used when dehorning.

REQUIREMENTS

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

Pain control must be used if branding is necessary.

Face branding is prohibited.

REQUIREMENTS

Pain control must be used when castrating.

4.6, 4.7, 4.9

REQUIREMENTS

Dairy cattle must not be tail docked unless medically necessary.

REQUIREMENTS

Teat removal must be performed by trained personnel.

REQUIREMENTS

Feet and claws must be inspected and trimmed as required to minimize lameness.

5. Transportation

REQUIREMENTS

Every animal must be assessed before being transported - Refer to Appendices G - Guidelines for Dealing with Compromised Animals, and I - Should this Animal be Loaded?

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.

Do not transport animals that are likely to give birth during the intended journey.

Do not transport cattle that require hobbling in order to walk.

REQUIREMENTS

Calves must have received adequate colostrum before being transported.

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.

6. Euthanasia

REQUIREMENTS

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

REQUIREMENTS

An acceptable method for euthanizing cattle must be used.

The method to euthanize cattle must be quick and cause the least possible pain and distress.

REQUIREMENTS

Confirm death immediately and before moving or leaving the animal.

Summary

- The code is a tool in your toolbox!
- Specific guidelines
 - With wiggle room for finding improvements
- I have certainly found it useful in my career and look forward to updates

Thanks for listening

