

Animal Handling Guidelines

For Beef & Dairy Producers

Excerpts from the

Cattle Industry's Guidelines for the Care & Handling of Cattle

Research into the best methods for animal care is now readily available, but much of it validates what producers have known about cattle health and handling for years. In the 1980s, *Beef Quality Assurance* programs across the country incorporated animal welfare practices into its producer education programs. *The Producer Code of Cattle Care*, developed by the BQA Advisory Board in 1996, served as the first formalized animal welfare guidelines for the beef industry.

These standards call for cattle producers to:

- Make timely observations of cattle to ensure basic nutrition, shelter and health care needs are being met.
- Provide facilities that allow safe, humane and efficient movement and/or restraint of cattle.
- Provide personnel with training/experience to properly handle and care for cattle.
- Minimize stress when transporting cattle by loading, unloading and moving cattle through facilities with patience and as quietly as possible to reduce injury.
- All vehicles used to transport cattle should provide for the safety of personnel and cattle during loading, transportation and unloading.
- Non-ambulatory animals should be moved very carefully to avoid compromising animal welfare. Dragging non-ambulatory animals is not acceptable.
- A prompt diagnosis should be made to determine whether injured or ill animal should be humanely euthanized or receive additional care.
- Use appropriate methods to euthanize terminally sick or injured livestock and dispose of them properly.

For more information and complete copies of the resource mentioned above please visit:

www.beeffrompasturetoplate.org/animalwelfare.aspx

Once cattle leave farms, ranches and feedlots, federal meat inspectors assure that meatpacking plants abide by the *Humane Slaughter Act of 1958*, which dictates strict animal handling and slaughtering standards. State and Federal laws restrict the shipment and slaughter of non-ambulatory animals.

Excerpts from the

National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative's Draft Principles & Guidelines

The ethical obligations associated with dairy production include a strong emphasis on animal well-being. As science and practical experience expand our understanding of dairy animal well-being, producers continue to improve animal care and management practices. The *National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative* has developed broad principles and guidelines that dairy animal well-being programs should include to meet our ethical obligations.

These principles for dairy producers include:

- Facilities should be designed and maintained so animals can be moved in a manner that prevents slips, falls and collisions.
- Employees should be trained to follow appropriate handling, movement and transportation protocols.
- All animals and animal groups should be handled, moved and transported in a manner that minimizes behavior modification and the potential for injury, discomfort or disease.
- When an animal becomes non-ambulatory, the potential for recovery must be assessed.
- If the animal is highly unlikely to become ambulatory again, and/or has been treated with drugs that have a long withdrawal period before slaughter with little chance of recovery, it should be euthanized and then moved to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering.
- Farms should have a plan for dealing with non-ambulatory animals.
- Euthanasia may be necessary on animals with a terminal prognosis that are unfit for slaughter. Euthanasia should be performed in a manner consistent with the standards set by the American Association for Bovine Practitioners.

For more information and complete copies of the resource mentioned above please visit:

www.dairywellbeing.org/guidelines.php

In 2004 Washington's beef and dairy producers worked together to establish the following legislation

RCW 16.52.225 Non-ambulatory livestock - Transporting or accepting delivery - Gross misdemeanor

- (1) A person is guilty of a gross misdemeanor punishable as provided in RCW 9A.20.021 if he or she knowingly transports or accepts delivery of live non-ambulatory livestock to, from, or between any livestock market, feedlot, slaughtering facility, or similar facility that trades in livestock. The transport or acceptance of each non-ambulatory livestock animal is considered a separate and distinct violation.
- (2) Non-ambulatory livestock must be humanely euthanized before transport to, from, or between locations listed in subsection (1) of this section.
- (3) Livestock that was ambulatory prior to transport to a feedlot and becomes non-ambulatory because of an injury sustained during transport may be unloaded and placed in a separate pen for rehabilitation at the feedlot.
- (4) For the purposes of this section, "non-ambulatory livestock" means cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equine that cannot rise from a recumbent position or cannot walk, including but not limited to those with broken appendages, severed tendons or ligaments, nerve paralysis, a fractured vertebral column, or metabolic conditions.