

FARM PRACTICES

ANIMAL CARE AND HANDLING

Description

Farmers are responsible for ensuring that the basic needs of animals in their care are met. Firstly, primary requirements essential to survival such as feed, water, shelter and basic care must be provided. Secondly, farmers must supply appropriate housing and practice humane handling techniques to satisfy the need for reasonable levels of comfort.

Activities and Operations

The provision of farm animals' basic needs is required under federal and provincial legislation. Voluntary codes of practice, which have been adopted by industry, cover many aspects of husbandry and guide producers in the day-to-day care and handling of their animals. These codes were developed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Agricultural Institute of Canada, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, the Canadian Society of Animal Science, farmers, provincial government representatives, animal welfare advocates and other stakeholders.

Included in the codes are recommendations on the provision of feed and water, housing, sanitation, handling, catching and loading, transportation, and animal behaviour.

In all cases and for all species, the following needs are to be provided inasmuch as possible:

- comfort and shelter
- ready access to fresh water
- a diet to maintain the animals in full health and vigor
- an opportunity for reasonable movement
- company of other animals, particularly of like kind
- the opportunity to exercise most normal patterns of behavior
- light of appropriate length and intensity
- flooring that neither harms the animals nor causes undue strain
- prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment, of abnormal behavior, injury, parasitic infestation, and disease
- freedom from stress
- emergency arrangements to cover outbreaks of fire, the breakdown of essential mechanical services, and the disruption of supplies

Because these codes contain the best information on animal husbandry techniques known at this time and are continually being updated and refined as new care and handling practices are discovered, they serve as an appropriate national guideline. The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCAA)*, empowers the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to intervene if animals are being starved,

housed in squalid conditions, left untreated if injured or sick, neglected, or mistreated through improper handling.

For the most part, complaints concerning animal welfare are not eligible for resolution through the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*. Complaints should be forwarded to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which has the legal authority to investigate.

Related Farm Practices

Other farm practices that are pertinent to animal care and handling include, but are not limited to, the following:

Feeding and Watering

Free access to adequate feed and water are essential components of animal care. Nutritional requirements vary from species to species and producers are responsible meeting these needs.

Legislation

Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C. Acts, regulations and bylaws that regulate or may affect animal care and handling include, but are not limited to, the following:

Federal

Health of Animals Act – protects human and animal health through the control or elimination of diseases and toxic substances, and includes requirements for the humane treatment of animals under the Health of Animals Regulations

Provincial

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act – identifies animal care practices that are subject to prosecution; authorization to enforce Act is governed by BCSPCA

Publications

Publications that provide further information on animal care and handling include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Dairy Cattle
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Beef Cattle
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Horses
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Pigs
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Transportation
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Veal Calves”
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Farmed Deer (Cervidae)
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Mink
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Poultry
from Hatchery to Processing Plant
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Ranched Fox
Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Sheep