

Humane Handling Guidelines for **BEEF CATTLE**

Standards for the Care of Compromised and Unfit Animals



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Standards for the Care of Compromised and Unfit Animals (2015)

“The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association endorses the standards of humane care practices for beef cattle as set out in these guidelines.”

– Dr. Darrell Dalton, Registrar,

Alberta Veterinary Medical Association 

“We support the standards of humane care for cattle set out in these guidelines. The standards will be a valuable educational tool for our peace officers to use in their discussions with beef cattle owners and handlers.”

– Terra Johnston, Executive Director, Alberta SPCA



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Acknowledgements

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Association (afac.ab.ca) and Alberta Beef Producers (albertabeef.org) would like to thank those individuals and cattle organizations that support this initiative.

ALERT

ALERT is a confidential call line for anyone to report livestock care concerns.

ALERT strives to assist before livestock are in distress.

ALERT Resource Team includes farmers and other rural community members. They offer solutions to improve livestock care.

ALERT has an ALERT veterinarian program that provides knowledgeable counsel.

ALERT informs members of the public that farmers do care for their animals.

ALERT is available for self-reporting to assist those who may be experiencing problems in caring for their livestock.

ALERT works with the Alberta SPCA and RCMP.

LIVESTOCK CARE ALERT

Help Line & Resource Team

To report livestock care concerns **CALL 1-800-506-2273**

afac.ab.ca Supported by Alberta's Livestock Industry



Alberta SPCA 800-455-9003

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Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook provides producers and farm staff, auction market personnel, transporters and processors with the information needed to make humane handling decisions involving the care and transport of compromised or unfit animals.

The Humane Handling Guidelines are intended to complement existing regulations and standards by highlighting key obligations as it relates to compromised or unfit animals. Consult the regulations for other important animal care obligations. For more information about on-farm animal care, consult the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (2013)* which includes a chapter on pre-transport decision-making and other on-farm requirements and recommendations.

About the Alberta Farm Animal Care Association

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Association (AFAC) was started in 1993 by Alberta livestock producers. AFAC now serves as the collective voice of the Alberta livestock industry on matters of farm animal welfare and provides a coordinated approach for all areas of livestock production to work together to advance and promote responsible livestock care. More information is available at afac.ab.ca.

About Alberta Beef Producers

Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) is the democratic organization that represents the interests of 20,000 beef cattle producers in the province. ABP is a strong, clear, and representative voice speaking and working on behalf of cattle and beef producers in Alberta and contributing to a vigorous and profitable beef industry. ABP strongly supports and advocates for responsible

animal care and handling throughout the supply chain. More information about ABP is available at albertabeef.org.

Section 1 – Making Your Decision

Federal and provincial laws have been enacted to protect animals from cruelty and distress, and to ensure humane transportation. In rural Alberta, these laws are enforced by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), and the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

Who can be charged under humane transport laws?

Federal Health of Animals Regulations state that whoever loads or causes to be loaded, or transports or causes to be transported, may be held liable in cases when there are problems with the transportation of livestock. The producer, shipper, transporter, transport company, and/or receiver can all be charged under humane transport laws.

The shipper must assess each animal for transport and is responsible for tendering only animals suitably fit for transport.

The transporter must assess the animals tendered by the shipper and only accept animals suitably fit for transport.

- Discretion must be used when tendering or accepting animals for transport. Use solid judgment based on your knowledge of transporting cattle.
- Rely on your knowledge of the regulations regarding livestock transportation to make a decision.
- Consult an experienced and trustworthy person for assistance.

Section 2 – Overview of Applicable Standards and Regulations

Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals

Codes of Practice are intended to promote sound management and welfare practices through recommendations and requirements for housing, health management, transport and other animal husbandry practices. Code Requirements refer to either a regulatory requirement or an industry imposed expectation outlining acceptable and unacceptable practices and are fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals.

All Codes of Practice, including the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (2013)* and the transport Code of Practice, are available at nfacc.ca.

Alberta Animal Protection Act

Provincial animal protection legislation in Alberta prohibits causing distress to an animal. Under *Alberta's Animal Protection Act*, an animal is in distress if it is (2a) deprived of adequate shelter, ventilation, space, food, water or veterinary care or reasonable protection from injurious heat or cold; (2b) injured, sick, in pain or suffering, or; (2c) abused or subjected to undue hardship, privation or neglect. This does not apply to activities carried out in accordance with “reasonable and generally accepted practices” of animal care. A court may consider the relevant Code of Practice when determining what is reasonable and generally accepted.

Federal and Provincial Transport Regulations

Requirements for animal transport are covered under the federal *Health of Animals Regulations*, Part XII and Alberta's Animal Protection Regulation (203/2005).

The Criminal Code of Canada

The Criminal Code of Canada prohibits anyone from causing suffering, unnecessary pain or injury to an animal or bird, whether through willful action or neglect. The Criminal Code expressly states that it is an offence to, by willful neglect, cause damage or injury to animals or birds while they are being driven or conveyed (i.e. transported).

Federal Food and Drugs Act

Canada's Food and Drugs Act prohibits the sale of food that 4(1)(a) has in or on it any poisonous or harmful substance; and/or 4(1)(b) is unfit for human consumption.

Producers and owners will not be paid for animals that are condemned at the plant. A condemned animal may have one or more of the following:

- drug residue from antibiotics or other drug
- a temperature above 104.5°F (40°C)
- a body condition score of 1
- a disease that renders the carcass unfit for human consumption.

2.1 – Evaluating Fitness for Transport

Under federal law, it is the responsibility of the party that is loading or transporting animals (or causing animals to be loaded or transported) to ensure that all animals are fit for the intended journey.

Unfit animal – DO NOT TRANSPORT

An animal with a reduced capacity to withstand transportation and where there is a high risk that transportation will lead to undue suffering. Unfit animals if transported would endure unjustified and unreasonable suffering.

Non-ambulatory animals – DO NOT TRANSPORT

An animal that is unable to stand without assistance or to move without being dragged or carried, regardless of size or age. Non-ambulatory animals are also called “downers.”

A non-ambulatory animal is considered unfit for transport and can ONLY be transported for veterinary treatment or diagnosis on the advice of a veterinarian (*Health of Animals Regulations*, 138 [2.1, 2.2]).

Compromised animals – TRANSPORT LOCALLY WITH SPECIAL PROVISIONS

An animal with reduced capacity to withstand transportation but where transportation with special provisions will not lead to undue suffering. Compromised animals may be locally transported with special provisions to receive care, be euthanized or humanely slaughtered.

Special Provisions – CONSULT A VETERINARIAN ABOUT APPROPRIATE SPECIAL PROVISIONS

- Transport locally and directly to the nearest suitable place (not through an auction or assembly yard)
- Load the compromised animal last and unload it first
- Segregate the compromised animal from other animals

Other special provisions may be required, such as additional bedding. In some cases it may be appropriate to pen the compromised animal with one familiar animal.

If compromised animals are to be sent to slaughter, they must not travel long distances to the slaughter facility, even if the only slaughter facility is far away. If local slaughter facilities are unavailable, animals should either be treated or be humanely euthanized. Section 5 (page 35) provides information on emergency slaughter.

DO NOT ship animals that may be classified as “unfit to undergo transport.”
Use this booklet to help define whether the animal is fit to be transported.

2.2 – Animals that are Sick, Injured or Otherwise Unfit

Federal and provincial regulations prohibit loading or transporting of animals that because of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause would suffer unduly during transport.

Unfit animals can ONLY be transported for veterinary treatment or diagnosis.

Regulations

Health of Animals Regulations

138(2)(a) No person shall load or cause to be loaded on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no one shall transport or cause to be transported an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

138(2.1) For the purpose of paragraph (2)(a), a non-ambulatory animal is an animal that cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

138(2.2) Despite paragraph (2)(a), a non-ambulatory animal may be transported for veterinary treatment or diagnosis on the advice of a veterinarian.

Alberta Animal Protection Act

2(1) No person shall cause or permit an animal of which the person is the owner or the person in charge to be or to continue to be in distress.

2(1.1) No person shall cause an animal to be in distress.

2.1 A person who owns or is in charge of an animal (b) must provide the animal with adequate care when the animal is wounded or ill.

Alberta Animal Protection Regulation (203/2005)

8 No person shall unload any livestock at a livestock market or livestock assembling station that, by reason of infirmity, illness, injury,

fatigue or other cause, is unable to stand or is unduly suffering.

10(1) No person shall load or transport animals that, by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause, would suffer unduly during transport.

10(2) Despite subsection (1), a person may transport animals to or from a veterinary clinic, a designated confinement area or the nearest suitable place to deal with health concerns as long as the animal is loaded and transported humanely.

Code of Practice

Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (2013)

Requirement under Section 5.2 Arranging Transport

The right of the transporter to refuse to load cattle that s/he deems unfit for transport must be respected. The reason for refusal must be addressed.

An animal that is injured or becomes ill or otherwise unfit for transport while en route must be taken to the nearest suitable place (such as a nearby veterinary hospital, farm, slaughter plant) where the animal can receive care or be euthanized.

Regulations

Health of Animals Regulations

138(4) No railway company or motor carrier shall continue to transport an animal that is injured or becomes ill or otherwise unfit for transport during a journey beyond the nearest suitable place at which it can receive proper care and attention.

Alberta Animal Protection Regulation (203/2005)

10(3) No person shall continue to transport an animal that becomes injured, ill or otherwise unfit for transport during a journey beyond

the nearest suitable place where it can receive proper care and attention.

In addition to federal and provincial regulations, the Code of Practice outlines the following requirements for the on-farm care of sick or injured cattle.

Code of Practice

Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (2013)

Requirement under Section 3.2 Sick, Injured and Cull Cattle

- Monitor cattle health on an ongoing basis to ensure prompt treatment or care.
- Provide appropriate care, convalescence or treatment for sick, injured or lame cattle without delay.
- Monitor the animals' response to therapy or care and, if the initial treatment protocol fails, then reassess treatment options or seek veterinary advice.
- Euthanize (or cull*) without delay cattle that:
 - ⇒ are unlikely to recover, or
 - ⇒ fail to respond to treatment and convalescent protocols, or
 - ⇒ have chronic, severe, or debilitating pain and distress, or
 - ⇒ are unable to get to or consume feed and water, or
 - ⇒ show continuous weight loss or emaciation.

*If culling, Requirements for transporting compromised animals must be followed.

Suspicion of a reportable or notifiable disease as defined by the *Health of Animals Act* and *Alberta's Reportable and Notifiable Diseases Regulation*, must be brought to the attention of a veterinarian.

2.3 – Handling Cattle

Regulations and Codes of Practice also define what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of animal handling. Humane handling must be used - federal and provincial regulations prohibit handling animals in a way that is likely to cause injury or undue suffering.

Regulations

Health of Animals Regulations

139 (1) No person shall beat an animal being loaded or unloaded in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.

139 (2) No person shall load or unload, or cause to be loaded or unloaded, an animal in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.

Alberta Animal Protection Regulation (203/2005)

12 (1) No person shall load or unload livestock in a manner that is likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.

12 (3) No person shall beat or, by use of a prod, goad or other instrument, cause injury to livestock being loaded into or unloaded from a vehicle.

Code of Practice

Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (2013)

Requirements under Section 4.1 Handling and Moving Cattle

- Animal handlers must be familiar with cattle behaviour (through training, experience or mentorship) and use quiet handling techniques.
- Electric prods must only be used to assist movement of cattle when animal or human safety is at risk or as a last resort when all other humane alternatives have failed and only when cattle have a clear path to move.
- Do not use electric prods repeatedly on the same animal.
- Do not use electric prods on the genitals, face, udder or anal areas.
- Do not use electric prods on calves less than three months of age that can be moved manually.
- Willful mistreatment or intentional harm of cattle is unacceptable. This includes but is not limited to: beating an animal; slamming gates on animals; allowing herd dogs to continue pushing cattle with nowhere to move; dragging or pushing cattle with machinery (unless to protect animal or human safety).

Requirements under Section 5.2 Arranging Transport

- Cattle must be transported by competent personnel (through training, experience, or mentorship) using safe, well-maintained equipment.
- Cattle producers and transporters must immediately report instances of inhumane handling to proper authorities.

2.4 – Segregating Cattle in Transport

To prevent injury or undue suffering during transport, cattle must be segregated as follows:

Regulations

Health of Animals Regulations

141 (1) Subject to this section, no person shall load on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no carrier shall transport animals of different species or of substantially different weight or age unless those animals are segregated.

141 (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to a female animal and its suckling offspring.

141(3) Every cow, sow or mare with its suckling offspring shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.

141(4) Animals of the same species that are incompatible by nature shall be segregated during transport.

141(5) Groups of bulls, de-tusked boars, rams and goat bucks, if mature, shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.

Alberta Animal Protection Regulation (203/2005)

15 A person transporting livestock must segregate the livestock during transport as follows: (a) livestock of the same species that are incompatible by nature and livestock of different species are segregated from one another; (b) groups of mature bulls, de-tusked boars, rams and goat bucks are segregated from all other livestock; (c) cows, sows and mares with suckling offspring are segregated from all other livestock; (f) livestock of the same species but of substantially different weight or age are segregated from one another.

Section 3 – Specific Conditions Impacting Transport Decisions

See also Appendix A – Transport Decision Tree

ABSCESS

An abscess is a localized collection of pus in a cavity formed from tissues that have been broken down by a bacterial infection. Abscesses may occur on the skin surface, within muscle tissue, within joints, or within the body involving multiple organs.

Check Points: Compromised

- Single, minor abscess and the animal is otherwise in good condition.

Management Options:

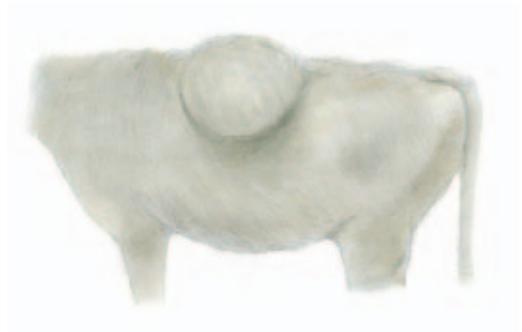
- Treat or transport as soon as the abscess is visible.
- If the animal is transported, transport with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).

Check Points: Unfit

- Multiple abscesses or single, large abscess with potential systemic effects.
- The animal may or may not be having difficulty walking.
- Multiple abscesses are often a sign of an infection affecting body tissue, which makes the carcass unfit for consumption.

Management Options:

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.



Cow with an abscess



AIP/RESPIRATORY

AIP (atypical interstitial pneumonia) is a respiratory condition that appears sporadically in cattle that have been on feed for several months.

Check Points:

- Breathing is very laboured
- Tongue may be sticking out
- Foam may be present around the mouth as the animal tries to breathe
- Sunken eyes, looks sick
- Reluctant to move or may become aggressive when pressured
- An animal with AIP or other respiratory disease can become very sick if transported. Cattle with advanced cases can die if subjected to the stress of handling or transport.

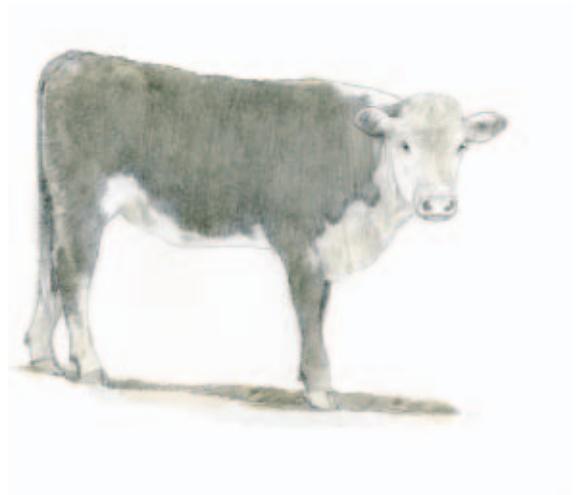
Management Options:

Early stages

- Transport with special provisions direct (NOT to an auction or assembly yard) and very short-haul.

Advanced stages

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.



BLOAT

Bloat occurs when the animal's belching mechanism is impaired or inhibited and the rate of gas production exceeds the animal's ability to expell the gas.

Check Points: Compromised

- Bloat is mild (animal is not in distress, skin over upper left flank can be easily grasped and lifted)
- Gas pressure is relieved (through tubing, anti-foaming agents or trocar)

Management Options:

- As long as the animal is not weak or down, transport with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).

Check Points: Unfit

- Left side of animal is severely distended and this distension may extend to the right side of the abdomen.
- In severe cases, the animal is uncomfortable, will breathe through the mouth and protrude the tongue, will grind teeth in pain and may stagger or refuse to walk.
- Bloated animals can die if stressed during movement or transport.

Management Options:

- Do not load or transport.
- Immediately treat bloat in consultation with a veterinarian.
- Euthanize if the animal shows no signs of recovery.



BRISKET DISEASE

Brisket disease results from elevated pulmonary arterial pressure or pulmonary hypertension and generally affects animals less than one year of age residing at an elevation above 5000 feet.

Check Points:

- Heart disease is indicated by swelling of brisket, jowls, and neck area due to build-up of fluid (edema).
- Other initial signs include lethargy, weakness and an inability to rise, decreased appetite, diarrhea, bulging eyes, and distention and pulsation of the jugular vein.
- The condition is not treatable. If diagnosed early, the animal can be salvaged if sent direct to slaughter; advanced cases not salvageable.
- Do not confuse with the large, fatty brisket of a healthy finished animal.

Management Options:

Early stages

- Transport with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).

Advanced stages (emaciated, weak, heavily laboured breathing)

- Consult a veterinarian.
- Do not load or transport advanced stages.
- Euthanize on farm



Cow with fluid build-up in brisket, jowls and neck area



BULLER-STEER SYNDROME

Buller-steer syndrome is an occasional behavioural problem among feedlot steers, where one steer (buller) is repeatedly mounted by a group of other steers (riders). If not promptly removed from the pen, the buller steer can become exhausted, have reduced feed and water intake, and develop injuries.

Check Points:

- Affected steer, yearling or older, is mounted repeatedly.
- May or may not have any visible physical marks such as hair loss on their back, leg injuries and swelling.

Management Options:

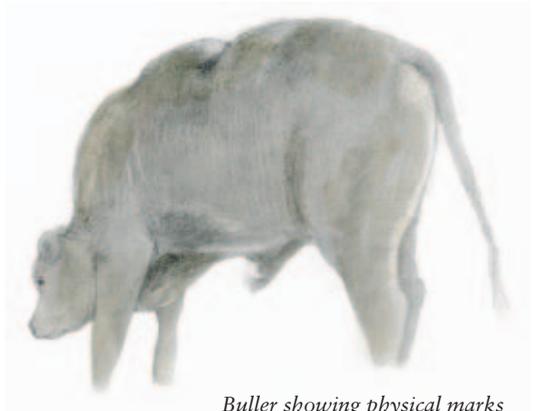
- Buller steers cannot be transported and dropped off with a large load of cattle. If harassment begins once the animals are unloaded and penned it can cause severe bruising, “dark cutters” and stress to the affected animal and penmates.
- Transport as soon as possible direct (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).
- Do not offload and mix with other animals before slaughter. Keep separate.

Code of Practice

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF BEEF CATTLE (2013)

Requirement under Section 3.3.4 Buller-Steer Syndrome

Bullers must be promptly removed from their pen.



Buller showing physical marks from repeated mounting



CANCER/LEUKOSIS (EXTENSIVE)

Leukosis is a cancerous disease caused by Bovine Leukemia Virus (BLV) and characterized by the development of tumours in lymphatic tissues.

Check Points:

- Widespread tumour development.

Management Options:

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.



CANCER EYE

Cancer eye is a tumour of the eyeball or eyelid. Not to be confused with pinkeye.

If the cancer lesion is small and within the orbit of the eye and the eye is visible, the animal should either be treated promptly or transported to slaughter (but not through a sale or assembly yard).

Check Points: Unfit

- Large growth, may be ulcerated.
- Growth has obscured the entire eye causing the animal to be blind on the affected side.
- Foul smell.
- Weeping fluid.

Management Options:

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.
- Allowing the condition to progress to advanced stages without appropriate veterinary care qualifies as neglect.



Cancer eye



DAIRY BREEDS

Check Points:

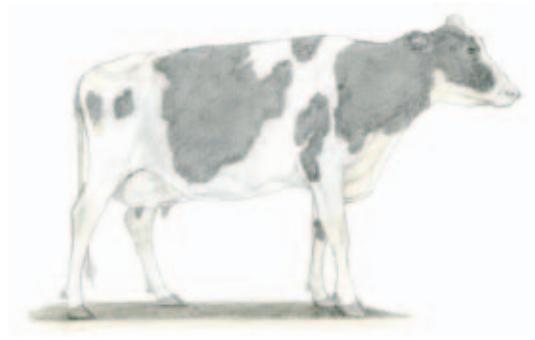
- It is common for dairy cows to enter the beef chain at the end of their productive lives. Cull dairy cows may be more at risk for lameness, mastitis, emaciation or prolapses.
- Dairy cows originating from a warm barn can suffer from hypothermia if transported in cold weather. Dairy cows are often housed in barns and do not have the same winter adaptations as beef cattle.

Management Options:

- Transport with special provisions direct short haul (under 4 hours).
- Dry cows can go to market.
- Lactating cows (large or full udder) must be milked immediately before shipping and go direct to slaughter.
- Appropriate management also depends on the condition of the animal—consult other sections of this guideline for specific guidance.

In very cold weather (i.e. - 15°C or colder)

- Do not transport cows that are not acclimated.



FOUNDER/LAMINITIS

Check Points:

- Long toes, mainly on front feet but can be on all four feet.
- “Paddle” gait due to tenderness of feet.
- Can occur in finished feedlot cattle.
- Older cows may have one or more feet with long toes due to age or other afflictions but they may not show signs of tenderness.
- Foundered cattle may go down in the trailer on a long trip because it is too painful to stand.

Management Options:

- Transport with special provisions direct short-haul (under 4 hours) (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).
- See also page 23 – Lamé or Non-Ambulatory.



FRACTURE OR OTHER INJURY

Check Points: Compromised

- Unhealed broken tail or jaw
- Broken nose

Management Options:

- Transport as soon as possible with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).

Check Points: Unfit

- Fractured limb or pelvis.
- Rupture of the prepubic tendon.
- Acutely “split” animals (torn adductor muscles).
- Reluctance to bear weight on the affected limb.
- Muscles and tissues in the affected area may be swollen and painful.
- Animal shows signs of pain, muscle trembling, grinding of teeth.
- Exposed bone or deep or gaping wound, bleeding.

Management Options:

- Do not lift or drag a conscious animal.
- Do not load or transport.
- Consult a veterinarian
- Euthanize on farm.



Penis injury



LAME OR NON-AMBULATORY

Check Points: Compromised

- An animal with imperfect locomotion, a slight limp; the lame leg may not be immediately identifiable.
- Lameness, even if slight, can deteriorate very quickly especially when the animal must negotiate ramps during loading and unloading. This animal is at risk of becoming non-ambulatory during transport.



Management Options:

- Transport as soon as possible with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).

Check Points: Unfit

- Cannot rise without assistance and is reluctant to walk, and exhibits halted movement.
- Unable to rise or to remain standing without assistance.
- Cannot be transported without undue suffering because of lameness – the animal demonstrates one of the following:
 - ☞ obvious arched back and head bob
 - ☞ obvious limp with uneven weight bearing
 - ☞ not bearing any weight on one leg immediately identifiable i.e. inability to use a foot to walk or obvious shortened strides
 - ☞ must be strongly encouraged to move

Management Options:

- Do not lift or drag a conscious animal.
- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.

A non-ambulatory animal can ONLY be transported for veterinary treatment or diagnosis on the advice of a veterinarian.

Code of Practice

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF BEEF CATTLE (2013)

Requirement under Section 3.3.2 Lameness

Provide appropriate care, convalescence or treatment for lame cattle without delay.

Monitor the animals' response to therapy or care and, if the initial treatment protocol fails, then reassess treatment options or seek veterinary advice.

Promptly cull or euthanize lame cattle that have a poor prognosis for recovery, or that do not respond to therapy or care.



LIKELY TO GIVE BIRTH OR RECENTLY CALVED

Check Points:

- Look for loose vulva area and a tight udder combined with a full belly.
- Sometimes a finished feedlot heifer may not display obvious signs of pregnancy but will deliver a premature calf or fetus in the trailer.
- Consult breeding records or ask producer or shipper if tendered cows are due to calve within a few weeks.

Management Options:

- Cows that have calved within the last 48 hours – Transport with special provisions and directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).
- Cows that are likely to give birth in transit – Do not load or transport.

Regulations

HEALTH OF ANIMALS REGULATIONS

138(2) Subject to subsection (3) no person shall load or cause to be loaded on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no one shall transport or cause to be transported an animal (c) if it is probable that the animal will give birth during the journey.

ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION REGULATION (203/2005)

Transportation of Animals 12(2) No person shall load or transport livestock that is likely to give birth during transport unless the livestock is being transported for health reasons.



LUMPY JAW & WOODEN TONGUE

Lumpy jaw is a bacterial infection that produces permanent hard swellings on the jawbones of cattle. It is difficult to treat successfully, but may respond in the early stages. Not to be confused with soft tissue abscesses.

Wooden tongue is also caused by a bacterial infection that enters through abrasions in the mouth, causing the tongue to be hard, swollen and painful. Wooden tongue may respond to treatment in the early stages.

Check Points:

- Permanent hard lumps on the jaw.
- Tissues inside the mouth are soft and swollen.
- Yellow pus may be present in swollen areas.
- May lose teeth irregularly.
- Wooden tongue: hard, swollen, and painful tongue, drooling, protruding tongue with nodules or ulcers.
- Both cause difficulty eating, resulting in weight loss and weakness.

Management Options:

Early stages body condition score of 2 or higher (out of 5)

- Transport with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).

Advanced stages body condition score of 1 (out of 5)

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.

Note: Conscientious management should identify and treat or ship affected animals early in the disease process.



Lumpy jaw



Wooden tongue



PERITONITIS

Peritonitis is an infection of the body cavity (peritoneum).
Peritonitis is almost always fatal.

Check Points:

- Pain, shock, depression, weakness
- Animal will not remain standing
- Foul smell
- Accumulation of fluid in the belly
- Animal may be very thin and appear sick.

Management Options:

- Do not load or transport.
- Contact a veterinarian.
- Euthanize on farm.



POOR BODY CONDITION

Body condition scoring (BCS) is an important tool for determining if an animal is too thin (BCS of less than 2 out of 5), too fat (BCS greater than 4 out of 5), or in ideal condition. Be aware that body condition scores are most applicable to mature cattle. The cause of poor body condition is not always nutritional.

For more information visit bodyconditionscoring.ca



Poor condition or emaciation

Check Points:

- Thin, weak, no muscle mass, obvious signs of malnutrition, old age or disease.
- Wet manure running down hindquarters may indicate disease.
- A bone-thin but very lively animal may indicate disease (see page 29 – Reportable Diseases)
- Abscesses, healed or weeping sores on body may indicate disease.

Management Options:

Body score of 2

- Transport with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).

Body score of 1

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.

Regulations

ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION ACT

2.1 A person who owns or is in charge of an animal (a) must ensure that the animal has adequate food and water.

Code of Practice

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF BEEF CATTLE (2013)

Requirement under Section 2.1 Nutrition and Feed Management

Take prompt corrective action to improve the body condition score of cattle with a score of 2 or less (out of 5).



PROLAPSE

A prolapse is the protrusion of an organ or part of an organ to the outside of the body from its normal position (usually due to inadequate strength of the supportive tissue).

Check Points – Prolapsed vagina or rectum

- At onset, red coloured mucosa of the vagina or rectum protrudes.
- After a short period, the prolapse will become swollen and filled with fluid.
- Vaginal prolapses can be common in heavy, late-stage pregnant cows. Do not confuse with a uterine prolapse, which will be much larger, and occurs after calving.
- Rectal prolapses can occur in calves a few months old especially with diarrhea. They can also occur in conjunction with a vaginal prolapse.



Vaginal prolapse

Management Options:

- Consult a veterinarian.
- **Early stage** – transport as soon as possible with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).



Rectal prolapse

Check Points – prolapsed uterus

- Typically occurs immediately after or within hours of calving.
- A prolapsed uterus begins with the appearance of red lining of the uterus and rapidly increases in size.
- Is a life threatening condition.

Management Options:

- Contact a veterinarian immediately.
- Do not load or transport.



Code of Practice

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF BEEF CATTLE (2013)

Requirement under Section 4.2 Reproduction and Calving Management

Monitor and promptly assist calves and recently-calved cows showing signs of distress.



Prolapsed uterus

REPORTABLE DISEASES

Check Points:

- Be suspicious of any animal that shows signs of disease.
- Look for staggering or circling, slobbering, depression, aggression, fever, oral erosions, anemia, abortion, coughing, signs of pain or shock, blindness, trembling or any other suspicious sign.

Management Options:

- Contact a veterinarian immediately.
- Do not load or transport.
- Take appropriate precautions (e.g. handle cautiously, wear gloves, wash hands etc.)

Regulations

REPORTABLE DISEASES REGULATIONS

There are some diseases in cattle that must be reported by law including rabies, BSE, anthrax, bluetongue, tuberculosis and foot and mouth disease.

Reportable diseases are listed in the federal *Reportable Diseases Regulations*. In addition, provincially reportable and notifiable diseases are listed in Alberta's *Reportable and Notifiable Diseases Regulation*.

Refer also to Appendix B – The Canada and Alberta BSE Surveillance Program.



TOO SMALL

Newly born or very young calves need special care whenever transported.

Check Points:

- Very young calves still have the curled-up dried umbilical cord hanging down.

Management Options:

- Transport with special provisions short-haul (under 4 hours).
- Calves under eight days of age cannot be sold through an auction market (see below).
- Must be segregated from larger animals (except a suckling calf with its dam – see below).

Regulations

HEALTH OF ANIMALS REGULATIONS

141 (1) Subject to this section, no person shall load on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no carrier shall transport animals of different species or of substantially different weight or age unless those animals are segregated.

141 (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to a female animal and its suckling offspring.

141 (3) Every cow, sow or mare with its suckling offspring shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.

ALBERTA ANIMAL PROTECTION REGULATION (203/2005)

7(1) The following may not be present at a livestock market:
(c) any other species of weaned livestock that is less than 8 days old.

15 A person transporting livestock must segregate the livestock during transport as follows: (a) livestock of the same species that are incompatible by nature and livestock of different species are segregated from one another; (b) groups of mature bulls, de-tusked boars, rams and goat bucks are segregated from all other livestock; (c) cows, sows and mares with suckling offspring are segregated from all other livestock; (f) livestock of the same species but of substantially different weight or age are segregated from one another.



URINARY TRACT INJURIES

Check Points:

- Animal may be in pain, shock.
- May wring the tail, grind the teeth, repeatedly get up and lay back down and kick at its belly.
- There may be a visible urinary swelling on the belly of bulls with broken urethras.
- Bladder rupture (“water belly”) can cause poisoning of the animal. A poisoned animal may appear tired, sleepy, groggy, won’t rise or remain standing.

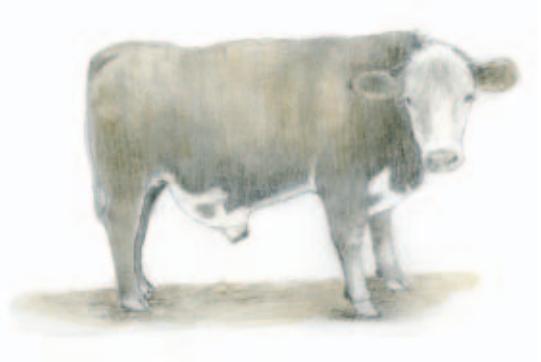
Management Options:

Broken urethra

- Consult a veterinarian.
- Transport with special provisions direct short-haul (4 hours or less) upon veterinary recommendation.

Water Belly

- Do not load or transport.
- Euthanize on farm.



OTHER PROBLEMS

Compromised

- Transport with special provisions directly to the nearest available place where the animal can receive care, treatment, be slaughtered or euthanized.

Check Points:

- Blindness in both eyes.
- Broken horns or extremely long horns.
- Hobbled to prevent kicking.
- Amputation or deformity (transport only if fully-healed and not painful).
- Not fully healed after an operation, such as dehorning or castration.
- Left/right displaced abomasum (without weakness, toxicity).
- Hardware disease with localized signs.
- Wet cattle – hauling wet cattle on a cold day without special provisions is not acceptable.

Unfit for transport

- Do not load or transport other than for veterinary diagnosis or care.

Check Points:

- Emaciation, dehydration or weakness.
- Fever, shock or dying.
- Pneumonia (unresponsive with fever).
- Hobbled due to an injury (e.g. rupture of the pre-pubic tendon)



Section 4 – Euthanasia

Acceptable Methods

Euthanasia refers to a humane and painless death. The method used must render the animal immediately insensible and the animal must not regain sensibility prior to death.

See page 34 of this handbook for acceptable methods as outlined in the beef cattle Code of Practice (2013).

Key Considerations

When selecting a method, consider the following:

- The medical condition of the animal being euthanized
- The ability to restrain the animal for proper application of the procedure
- Human safety and the safety of other animals
- Disposal options
- Emotional comfort with the procedure for the person performing euthanasia

Anatomical Landmarks for Euthanasia

Proper positioning of the firearm or penetrating captive bolt is necessary to achieve the desired results.

The frontal target area is high up on the head of the animal, NOT BETWEEN THE EYES. An X can be made on the animal's head by drawing imaginary lines between the outside corner of the eye to the horn (or where a horn would be for polled or dehorned cattle) on the opposite side. The firearm should be positioned so that the muzzle is perpendicular to the skull and the bullet will enter the front of the head and travel toward the tail of the animal. There may be some differences in location of the shot based on the skull shape and horn mass of an animal.

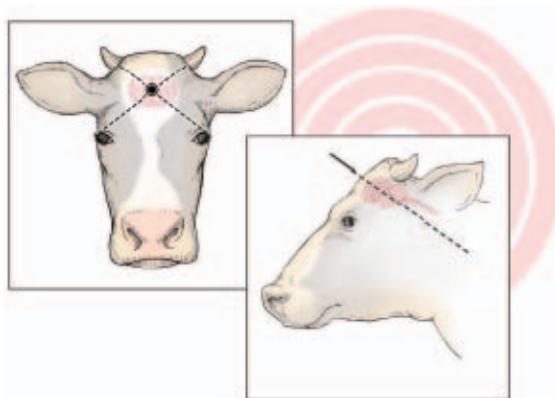


Image source: J.K. Shearer and A. Ramirez, College of Veterinary Medicine, Iowa State University www.vetmed.iastate.edu/HumaneEuthanasia. Reprinted with permission.

When euthanasia is performed by gunshot, the firearm should be held within a few inches of the intended target.

When using a penetrating captive bolt, ensure the device operators are trained and competent, and ensure the design, calibre, charge, bolt length, bolt tip and velocity are appropriate for the type/age of animal, as per the manufacturer's specifications. The animal must be restrained for accurate placement of the captive bolt. Unlike with the use of firearm, the proper use of captive bolt requires that the muzzle of the device is held firmly against the animal's head using proper landmarks as shown in the diagram.

Method	Suitable for	Procedure and Equipment
Gunshot	Calves (under 181 kg [400 lbs])	Requires a minimum of 407 joules (300ft-lb) muzzle energy. Examples of appropriate firearms include: centrefire high powered rifle or shotgun (20 gauge or greater, from no more than 10m [32ft]) Note: A standard .22 calibre long rifle is not sufficient to humanely kill cattle.
	Yearlings, Cows and Mature Bulls	Requires a minimum of 1356 joules (1000 ft-lb) muzzle energy. Examples of appropriate firearms include centrefire high powered rifle or shotgun (20 gauge or greater, from no more than 10m (32ft)) Note: A standard .22 calibre long rifle is not sufficient to humanely kill cattle.
Penetrating Captive Bolt Device + Secondary Kill Step	All weight and age classes	Choose appropriate calibre, charge, and bolt length for animal size. Restraint if needed. A secondary method (bleeding out or pithing) may be required if the penetrating bolt device is designed only to stun the animal.
Non-penetrating Captive Bolt Device + Bleeding Out	Young calves only	Restraint if needed. Bleeding out step required.
Approved Euthanasia Drugs	All cattle	Must be administered by a veterinarian. Restraint if needed. Safe disposal of carcass when barbiturates are used.

Important — The following are some examples of methods that are unacceptable because they cause suffering:

- manually-applied blunt trauma to the head – does not consistently cause immediate loss of consciousness
- injection of chemical agents not approved for euthanasia into conscious cattle – does not cause immediate loss of consciousness
- air embolism – causes pain associated with cardiac arrest
- electrocution – causes pain associated with cardiac arrest after ineffective stunning
- exsanguination (bleeding out) without proper stunning first – causes pain and distress prior to loss of consciousness

Adapted from the beef cattle Code of Practice. Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (©2013) have been used with permission from the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association and the National Farm Animal Care Council. www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle
For more information on euthanasia, consult the beef cattle Code of Practice.



Code of Practice

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF BEEF CATTLE (2013)

Requirements under Section 6.1 Euthanasia and Culling Decisions

Euthanize (or cull*) without delay cattle that:

- are unlikely to recover, or
- fail to respond to treatment and convalescent protocols, or
- have chronic, severe, or debilitating pain and distress, or
- are unable to get to or consume feed and water, or
- show continuous weight loss or emaciation.

*If culling, requirements for transporting compromised animals must be followed.

Requirements under Section 6.2 Methods of On-Farm Euthanasia

- An acceptable method for euthanizing cattle must be used. (See page 34 of this handbook.)
- Euthanasia must be performed by competent personnel (through training, experience, or mentorship).
- Equipment used for euthanasia, such as guns or captive bolt devices, must be maintained according to manufacturers' instructions to ensure proper function.
- Non-ambulatory cattle may not be dragged or forced to move prior to euthanasia.

Requirements under Section 6.3 Confirmation of Insensibility and Death

- Evaluate the animal's consciousness immediately after the application of the appropriate euthanasia method by checking for a corneal reflex.
- Be prepared to immediately deliver a second application should the first attempt not render the animal immediately insensible.
- Confirm death before moving or leaving the animal.

Confirm insensibility:

- Touch the eyeball and note if the animal blinks (corneal reflex). An insensible animal will not blink.
- Confirm death: A lack of heartbeat and respiration should be used to confirm death:
 - ⇒ Evaluate heartbeat by physical palpation or by placing a stethoscope over the left lower chest area of the animal, just behind the elbow.
 - ⇒ Evaluate respiration by observing the chest for any breathing movement. Note that breathing may be slow and erratic in an unconscious animal.

Section 5 – Emergency Slaughter: What are the Options in Alberta?

Animals that become acutely unfit for transport, for example, due to a broken leg, may be salvageable by means of on-farm slaughter. There are currently two available options to ensure the humane treatment of animals and alignment with the provincial Meat Inspection Act:

Inspected Meat

The Meat Inspection Act empowers the Director to appoint veterinarians or other persons as Inspectors. The appointed individual is responsible for performing an ante-mortem (AM) inspection at the farm or feedlot. Once the animal has had an AM inspection performed, an emergency slaughter (humane stunning and bleeding) can be performed. The carcass must then be transported, in a manner that protects it from contamination or spoilage, to a Provincially Licensed Abattoir for evisceration and further processing. The carcass must be delivered to the abattoir within 2 hours of slaughter and receive a post-mortem (PM) inspection. The PM inspection can be done by either the appointed Inspector or by a Meat Inspection Branch Inspector. Once approved, the product is stamped as inspected and is then legal to sell. Note that the appropriate forms must be

completed by the appointed Inspector on farm or feedlot and these forms will need to accompany the carcass to the licensed facility. Professional fees to engage an appointed Inspector are at the discretion of the provider.

Uninspected Meat

For uninspected meat, which cannot be sold and is for consumption by the animal owner and their household only, the animal can be slaughtered by a licensed mobile butcher or the owner at the farm or feedlot. The carcass can then be transported to a facility to be processed. It must arrive clean and free from contamination. The processor is required to keep the carcass separate from any inspected products and mark it as “UNINSPECTED NOT FOR SALE”

For more information about emergency on-farm slaughter, including a list of appointed Inspectors, abattoirs, and mobile butchers in your area, contact the following regional meat inspection offices:

Airdrie 403-948-8514

Edmonton/Grande Prairie 780-427-7011

Vermilion 780-853 8113

Lethbridge 403-382-4261

or toll free by first dialing 310-0000.

Section 6 – Disposal Options

The owner of a dead animal must dispose of the animal in accordance with Alberta’s *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014) (empowered by the *Animal Health Act*).

According to section 3 of the regulation, the owner of a dead animal must dispose of the animal within 7 days unless the owner stores the dead animal:

- outside during the winter months when the temperature is low enough to keep the dead animal completely frozen,
- in a freezer unit, or

- in accordance with the direction of the chief provincial veterinarian, an inspector appointed under section 6(2) of the Act or a veterinary inspector appointed under the *Health of Animals Act* (Canada).

The owner of an animal that is euthanized with drugs and other chemical substances must take steps to prevent scavengers from gaining access to the animal from the time the substances are used until final disposal.

On farm disposal methods, including the use of burial, burning, natural disposal, and composting, can only be used if the owner had custody or care and control of the animal immediately before the animal’s death, and only on land owned by the animal owner. Disposal options are highlighted below. Please refer to the *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014) for complete information. All of Alberta’s legislation, including this Regulation, can be accessed through Alberta Queen’s Printer at qp.alberta.ca.

Natural Disposal

Disposing of a dead animal to allow for scavenging. There are several conditions that must be met—see section 14 of the *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014) for details. Carcasses that have been euthanized with drugs (permitted use by a licensed veterinarian ONLY) cannot be disposed of in this manner as it poses a significant poisoning risk to scavengers (coyotes, birds), pets and drinking water.

Burial

On-farm burial is permitted provided several conditions are met – consult section 8 of the *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014).

Composting

Carcasses may be composted on-farm provided the conditions under the *Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* (132/2014) are met. Carcasses may also be taken to a Class 1 compost facility. Some landfills accept carcasses for a fee (Class I or Class II landfills).

Burning

May occur if done in accordance with the applicable provisions in the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and in the regulations and codes of practice under the Act relating to burning in an open fire or an incinerator.

Rendering

A dead animal may be transported to a licensed rendering plant for disposal.

Any animal that is confirmed or suspected of dying from an infectious or reportable disease must be disposed of in accordance with the federal Health of Animals Act and Alberta's Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation.

Disclaimer

The primary purpose of this handbook is to assist people involved in the handling and transport of beef cattle to make responsible animal care decisions. It is important to note that while the authors have made every effort to ensure accuracy and completeness this should not be considered the final word on the areas of law and practice. Seek the advice of appropriate professionals and experts as the facts of each situation may differ from those set out here. All information is provided entirely “as is” and the authors make no representations, warranties or conditions, either express or implied, in connection with the use of or reliance upon this information. The information is provided to the recipient entirely at the risk of the recipient and, because the recipient assumes full responsibility, the authors shall not be liable for any claims, damages or losses of any kind based on any theory of liability arising out of the use of reliance upon this information (including omissions, inaccuracies, typographical errors and infringing of third party rights). Expert, professional, legal or veterinary advice should be referenced by the reader on a case-by-case basis. This handbook is subject to updates, revisions and modifications at any time.

Appendix A – Transport Decision Tree



FIT ANIMALS TRANSPORT

- Those that will arrive at their destination in good condition
- According to the *Health of Animals Regulations Part XII* and CFIA policies
- Consult also *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Transportation*



COMPROMISED ANIMALS

TRANSPORT WITH SPECIAL PROVISIONS*

*Compromised Animal Policy
(Health of Animals Regulations
Part XII)*

Examples:

- Lameness, even if slight (may deteriorate quickly in transit)
- Cancer eye
- Bloating (if not weak or already down)
- Having given birth in the preceding 48 hours
- Acute frostbite
- Labored breathing
- Blindness in both eyes
- Open wound (depending on the severity of the wound, the animal may be unfit)
- Not fully healed after an operation, such as dehorning or castration
- Rectal or vaginal prolapse
- Lumpy jaw
- Left/right displaced abomasum (without weakness, toxicity)
- Abscess
- Acute penis injury
- Hardware disease with localized signs
- Unhealed broken tail or jaw
- Hobbled to prevent kicking, or
- Amputation or deformity (only if fully-healed and not painful)



UNFIT ANIMALS

DO NOT TRANSPORT

*Other than for veterinary
diagnosis or care*

Examples:

- Unable to rise, remain standing, or move without assistance, reluctant to move (non-ambulatory)
- Severe lameness
- Fractured limb or pelvis
- Rupture of pre-pubic tendon (after splitting)
- Likely to give birth
- Uterine prolapse
- Severe cancer eye
- Arthritis in multiple joints
- Cancer/leukosis (extensive)
- Pneumonia (unresponsive with fever)
- Water belly
- Nervous disorder (e.g. rabies – must be reported to CFIA)
- Emaciation, dehydration
- Fever, shock or dying

*Special Provisions for Compromised Animals

Compromised animals, if loaded, must be transported directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be slaughtered or euthanized — but only with special provisions, such as:

- Local direct transport only
- Extra bedding
- Loading in a rear compartment
- Separation from other animals
- Penning with a familiar companion animal
- Other measures as appropriate, e.g. veterinary assessment prior to loading when unsure of the animal's capacity to withstand transportation.

Do not continue to transport an animal that becomes compromised or unfit beyond the nearest available place where it can receive care, be euthanized or slaughtered.

Adapted from Appendix D of the beef cattle Code of Practice. Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (©2013) have been used with permission from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the National Farm Animal Care Council. www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle

Appendix B – The Canada and Alberta BSE Surveillance Program

Animals that are unfit to be transported and/or are unsuitable for slaughter may be eligible for BSE testing. BSE testing (surveillance) is a tool used to measure the effectiveness of the actions put in place to control BSE. Through ongoing surveillance we can demonstrate the reduction of this disease in the Canadian cattle herd. By participating in BSE surveillance you will help build and enhance confidence on our cattle and beef products, resulting in increased market access and a competitive, sustainable and profitable cattle industry.

The Canada and Alberta BSE Surveillance Program targets animals most at risk for the disease, which are:

- cattle over the age of 30 months that are dead, down, dying or diseased
- cattle exhibiting strong clinical signs of BSE, including the following:
- nervous or aggressive behaviour
- abnormal posture
- lack of co-ordination
- difficulty rising from a lying position

Producers are compensated for the time and effort to secure the carcass pending test results. You will benefit from the disease information that the veterinarian gathers while assessing your animal for the program. **The veterinarian visit and sample collection are free to producers.**

For more information about BSE testing, talk to your veterinarian, call the Ag-Info line at 310-FARM (3276), or visit agriculture.alberta.ca/bse

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Association has developed Humane Handling Guidelines for most farmed animal species. Copies of the guidelines are available from:

Alberta Farm Animal Care Association
PO Box 5201
#5 112 Centre St SE
High River, Alberta T1V 1M4 CANADA
Tel: 403-652-5111 Fax: 403-663-3035
Email: info@afac.ab.ca
Web-friendly versions available at afac.ab.ca

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Contacts and Resources

Questions on the care of compromised or unfit animals: contact your local veterinarian

<p>All of Alberta's legislation can be accessed through Alberta Queen's Printer at www.qp.alberta.ca. The Health of Animals Regulations (Canada) are available from: laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._296/</p>	<p>Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) North Region 780-395-6700 South Region 587-230-2468</p>
	<p>RCMP (Livestock Investigation) North 780-289-5510 South 403-699-2617</p>
	<p>Report suspected animal neglect and abuse: Alberta SPCA 800-455-9003</p>
<p>Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian: 780-427-3448</p>	

Additional information and resources

<p>Livestock Care ALERT Line – Livestock help line and resource team to report livestock care concerns</p>	<p>800-506-2273</p>	
<p>Alberta Farm Animal Care Association</p>	<p>403-652-5111</p>	<p>afac.ab.ca</p>
<p>Alberta Veterinary Medical Association</p>	<p>780-489-5007</p>	<p>abvma.ca</p>
<p>Alberta Agriculture and Forestry</p>	<p>403-310-FARM www.agric.gov.ab.ca (click on livestock)</p>	
<p>Livestock Identification Services</p>	<p>403-509-2088</p>	<p>lis-alberta.com</p>
<p>Alberta Processors (Rendering)</p>	<p>403-279-4441 (Calgary) 403-327-8460 (Lethbridge) 780-472-6750 (Edmonton)</p>	<p>wcr1.com</p>
<p>Ag Info Centre</p>	<p>310-3276 (Toll free in AB) 403-742-7901 (Out of province)</p>	
<p>Alberta Beef Producers</p>	<p>403-275-4400</p>	<p>albertabeef.org</p>

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