

# Humane Handling Guidelines for **DAIRY 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 dairy cattle as set out in these guidelines.”

– Dr. Darrell Dalton, Registrar,

Alberta Veterinary Medical Association 

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

– Terra Johnston, Executive Director, Alberta SPCA



Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle (©2009) have been used with permission from Dairy Farmers of Canada and the National Farm Animal Care Council. [www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle](http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle)

## **Acknowledgements**

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Association ([afac.ab.ca](http://afac.ab.ca)) and Alberta Milk ([albertamilk.com](http://albertamilk.com)) 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](http://afac.ab.ca) Supported by Alberta's Livestock Industry



**Alberta SPCA 800-455-9003**



# Table of Contents

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Section 1 – Purpose of this Handbook .....	6
Section 2 – Overview of Applicable Standards and Regulations .....	7
2.1 – EVALUATING FITNESS FOR TRANSPORT .....	8
2.2 – ANIMALS THAT ARE SICK, INJURED OR OTHERWISE UNFIT .....	8
2.3 – SEGREGATING ANIMALS IN TRANSPORT .....	9
2.4 – HANDLING CATTLE .....	10
Section 3 – Specific Conditions that Impact Transport Decisions .....	
ABSCESS .....	12
BLOAT .....	13
BRISKET OR ABDOMINAL FLUID .....	14
CALVES .....	15
CANCER EYE .....	16
CANCER/LEUKOSIS (EXTENSIVE) .....	16
FRACTURE OR OTHER INJURY .....	17
HERNIA .....	18
LACTATING COWS .....	19
LAME OR NON-AMBULATORY .....	20
LEFT OR RIGHT DISPLACED ABOMASUM .....	21
LIKELY TO GIVE BIRTH OR RECENTLY CALVED .....	22
LUMPY JAW .....	23
POOR CONDITION OR EMACIATION .....	24
PROLAPSE .....	25
REPORTABLE DISEASE .....	26
SEPTIC ARTHRITIS .....	27
SLICK COWS .....	27
WATER BELLY .....	28
OTHER CONDITIONS .....	29
Section 4 – Euthanasia .....	30
Section 5 – Emergency Slaughter: What are the Options in Alberta? .....	31
Section 6 – Disposal Options .....	31
Appendix A – Should this Animal be Loaded? .....	
Guidelines for Transporting Cattle, Sheep and Goats .....	35
Appendix B – The Canada and Alberta BSE Surveillance Program .....	38
Contacts and Resources .....	40



## Section 1 – Purpose of this Handbook

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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 they relate to compromised or unfit animals. Consult the regulations (listed in Section 2) for other important animal care obligations. For more information concerning on-farm animal care, consult the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle* (2009) 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](http://afac.ab.ca).

## About Alberta Milk

Established in 2002, Alberta Milk is a non-profit organization that represents Alberta's dairy farmers. The organization is driven by dairy farmers, for dairy farmers. Alberta dairy farmers' commitment to providing quality milk begins with a high standard of animal care. Our members, whom are all licensed dairy farmers, work closely with their animals and the land



every day. They strongly endorse responsible and humane individual animal care. The guidance document for dairy animal care in Canada is the national Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle, which reflects current and leading dairy management practices. More information about Alberta Milk is available at [albertamilk.com](http://albertamilk.com).

## Section 2 – Overview of Applicable Standards and Regulations

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).

Each person involved in the handling or transportation of cattle is legally responsible for adhering to these regulations.

- As the owner or shipper, you must only tender animals suitably fit for the journey
- As the transporter, you must assess the animals and only accept those animals suitably fit to undergo transport
- Auction market personnel working with animals must be instructed in acceptable, humane handling techniques

### *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 Dairy Cattle* (2009) and the transport Code of Practice, are available at [nfacc.ca](http://nfacc.ca).

### *Animal Protection Act (Alberta)*

Provincial animal protection legislation in Alberta prohibits causing distress to an animal. Under the *Animal Protection Act (Alberta)*, 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.

### *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 wilful neglect, cause damage or injury to animals or birds while they are being driven or conveyed (i.e. transported).

### *Animal Transport Regulations*

Requirements for animal transport are covered under the federal *Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII* (SOR/01-525, s.2) and Alberta’s *Animal Protection Regulation* (203/2005).

### *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. The producer, shipper, transporter, transport company, and/or receiver can all be charged under humane transport laws.

### *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.

### *What is meant by 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.

## Code of Practice

### *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle (2009)*

*Requirement under Section 5.1 Fitness for Transport*

Every animal must be assessed before being 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.

### ***Animal Protection Act (Alberta)***

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.

An animal that is injured or becomes ill or otherwise unfit for transport while en route must be taken to the nearest suitable place where it can receive proper care and attention.

## **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 or 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 Dairy Cattle (2009)***

#### *Requirement under Section 3.9 Sick, Injured, and Cull Animals*

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

#### *Requirement under Section 6.1 On-Farm Euthanasia Protocols*

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

### ***2.3 – Segregating Animals 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, detusked 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.

### *2.4 – 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 Dairy Cattle (2009)*

*Requirements under Section 4.1 Handling, Moving, Restraining, and Treating Animals*

- 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 behaviour and quiet handling techniques either through training, experience or mentorship.

## **Section 3 – Specific Conditions Impacting Transport Decisions**

See also Appendix A -  
Should this Animal be Loaded?  
Guidelines for Transporting Cattle, Sheep and Goats.

# 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 a sale 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.
- Treat or euthanize on farm.



*Cow with an abscess*



# BLOAT

Bloat occurs when the animal's erucation (belching) mechanism is impaired or inhibited and the rate of gas production exceeds the animal's ability to expell the gas or is contained within a froth or foam that cannot be expelled.

## Check Points – Compromised

- Mild to moderate distension of the left side of the abdomen with the animal not weakened or down and with no impact on the respiratory system.

## *Management Options:*

- Treat or monitor for resolution. 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 a sale 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 stubborn, can't breathe very well, and grinds teeth in pain and won't walk easily.
- Bloated animals can die if stressed during movement or transport.

## *Management Options:*

- Do not transport unless for veterinary diagnosis or treatment on the advice of a veterinarian.
- Provide treatment, consult a veterinarian and/or euthanize.



# BRISKET OR ABDOMINAL FLUID

Brisket edema is commonly associated with congestive heart failure which results from hardware disease or pulmonary hypertension. Abdominal edema is commonly associated in an animal close to parturition or in an animal with a systemic disease that disrupts its normal vascular function.

## 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.
- Do not confuse with the large, fatty brisket of a healthy finished animal.

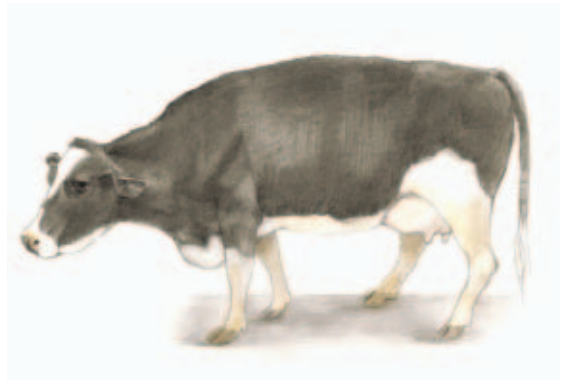
## Management Options:

### Early stages

- Consult a veterinarian.
- Transport with special provisions directly to the nearest veterinary hospital for a diagnosis and the appropriate care, treatment, or euthanasia (NOT to an auction or assembly yard).

**Advanced stages** (emaciated, weak, heavily laboured breathing)

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



*Cow with brisket fluid*





# CALVES

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

## Check Points:

- Under Alberta Regulation (see below) calves under eight days of age cannot be sold through an auction market.
- Very young calves still have curled-up dried umbilical cord hanging down.



*Very young*

## Management Options:

- Only load calves if they are healthy and vigorous.
- Do not transport calves less than 8 days of age to an auction market (see below).
- Must be segregated from larger animals.
- Calves must have received adequate colostrum before being transported (see Code of Practice Requirement, below).

- Calves should also be given at least half of that day's ration of milk prior to transportation.
- Calves are especially vulnerable to extremes of temperature (hot or cold). Avoid transport of calves during very hot or cold weather.
- Especially in cold temperatures, ensure ample bedding is provided to help prevent cold stress.

## 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 PROTECT 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.

## Code of Practice

### CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF DAIRY CATTLE (2009)

#### Requirement under Section 2.2.1 Unweaned Calves

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

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.

#### Requirement under Section 5.1.2 Preparing Cattle for Transport

Calves must have received adequate colostrum before being transported.

# CANCER EYE

Cancer eye is a tumour involving the eyeball or eyelid. It should not be confused with pinkeye which begins as an infection and swelling of the conjunctiva (tissue forming the inner surface of the eyelid) and may progress to a severe ulceration of the cornea of the eye.

**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

- Larger growth, may be ulcerated.
- Growth has obscured the entire eye and/or the cancer has extended beyond the orbit of the eye or involves the bones and tissue of the face.
- Foul smell.
- Weeping fluid.

## Management Options:

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

# CANCER/LEUKOSIS (EXTENSIVE)

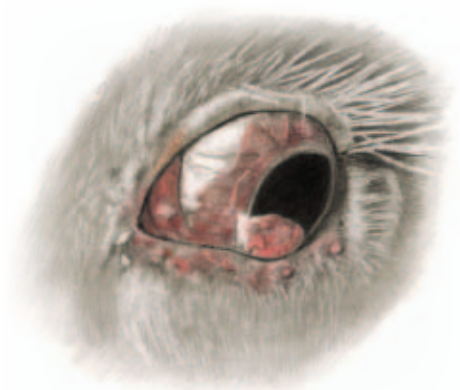
Leukosis is a cancerous disease involving the lymphatic system and caused by the Bovine Leukosis Virus (BLV). It is characterized by the development of tumours in lymphatic tissues throughout the body.

## Check Points:

- Widespread tumour development and severe loss of body condition.

## Management Options:

- Do not transport.
- Euthanize on farm.



Cancer eye



# FRACTURE OR OTHER INJURY

## Check Points – Compromised

- Acute penis injury
- Unhealed broken tail or jaw.

## 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 a sale or assembly yard).

## Check Points – Unfit

- Fractured limb, pelvis or spine.
- 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
- Any other severe injury – 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 or euthanize on farm.



*Penis injury*



# HERNIA

A hernia is characterized by an incomplete closure or rupture of the body wall with protrusion of abdominal organs or tissues through the opening in the body wall. The protruding organs or tissues will form an abnormal bulge under the skin. Common sites for hernias include the navel and groin.

## *Check Points:*

- A hernia renders an animal unfit for transport if it includes one of the following criteria:
  - ⇒ Impedes movement.
  - ⇒ Is associated with severe pain.
  - ⇒ Includes an open skin wound, ulceration or obvious infection.

## *Management Options:*

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



*Hernia*



# LACTATING COWS

Lactating cows that are not intended for milk production in someone else's herd should not be shipped to auction markets. They should go to the nearest suitable abattoir. Slaughter arrangements should be made within 24 hours. The alternative is to dry-off cows on farm (about 3 weeks). It is important to monitor cows during dry-off, as there is an increased risk of complications.

One issue with transporting lactating cows to auction is you cannot further monitor her drying-off period (or the conditions associated with it) and treat any ensuing complications, thus creating an animal welfare problem.

## Check Points:

- All cull cows entering auction markets for meat should be dried-off and their udders should be well involuted.

## Management Options:

- Delay transport – dry off lactating cows.
- If the animal must be shipped, lactating cows should be milked immediately before transport and transported with special provisions and direct to the nearest suitable abattoir (NOT to a sale or assembly yard). Call the facility in advance to ensure prompt access.



*Well involuted udder*



# LAME OR NON-AMBULATORY

## Check Points – Compromised

- Lameness Class 1 – visibly lame but can keep up with the group.
- Lameness Class 2 – Unable to keep up; some difficulty climbing ramps.
- Lameness, even if slight, may deteriorate quickly in transit.

## 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 a sale or assembly yard).

## Code of Practice

### CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF DAIRY CATTLE (2009)

#### *Requirement under Section 3.5 Lameness*

Lame cows must be diagnosed early and either treated, culled or euthanized.

#### *Requirement under Section 4.9 Hoof Trimming*

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

## Check Points – Unfit

- Lameness Class 3, 4, 5 (non-ambulatory animals) are those that cannot walk or that
  - ⇨ are unable to rise or remain standing without assistance
  - ⇨ have difficulty rising or need additional time to rise
  - ⇨ are reluctant to walk or exhibit halted movement
  - ⇨ after splitting, cannot walk
  - ⇨ suffer severe pain when walking, or require assistance to remain standing

## 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.





## LEFT OR RIGHT DISPLACED ABOMASUM

The abomasum (or “true stomach”) normally lies on the floor of the abdomen on the right side but it can become filled with gas and displace to the top of the abdomen on either the left or right side.

### *Check Points:*

- Loss of appetite
- Drop in milk yield
- Reduced rumination
- Mild diarrhea

### *Management Options:*

- Non-severe cases (without weakness or toxicity) – 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 a sale or assembly yard).



# LIKELY TO GIVE BIRTH OR RECENTLY CALVED

## Check Points:

- Look for loose vulva area and a tight udder combined with other characteristics of pregnancy.
- Consult breeding records.

## Management Options:

- Cows that are likely to give birth in transit – Do not load or transport.
- Cows that have calved within the last 48 hours – delay transport until 48 hours post-partum or until the cow has fully recovered.

## 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)

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.



*Recently calved*



# LUMPY JAW

Lumpy jaw is a bacterial infection that invades the jawbone and produces permanent hard swellings that are very difficult to treat successfully.

## Check Points:

- Hard lump on jaw.
- May have ruptured and might be draining pus.
- Advanced cases can interfere with the animal's ability to eat resulting in weight loss and weakness.
- Not be confused with "wooden tongue", a soft tissue infection of the tongue and surrounding tissue also characterized by swelling around the jaw but the swelling is more flexible than lumpy jaw, not attached to the jawbone, and it can be successfully treated.

## Management Options:

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

- Transport with special provisions and direct to slaughter (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).

**Advanced stages** (body condition score of 1):

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

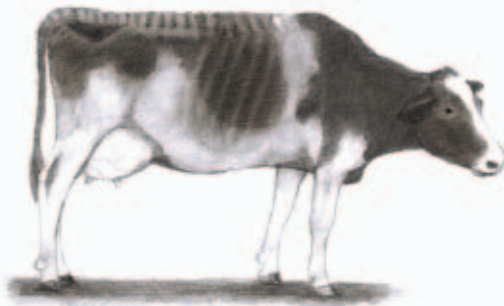


*Lumpy jaw*



## POOR CONDITION OR EMACIATION

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 and may be of little use for cattle under one year of age. The cause of poor body condition is not always nutritional.



*Poor condition or emaciation*

### Check Points:

- Thin, weak, loss of 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 Reportable Disease page 26)
- Abscesses, healed or weeping sores on body may indicate disease.

### Management Options:

Body condition score of 2

- Consult a nutritionist or veterinarian for advice on providing adequate feed and nutrition
- Transport with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).

Body condition score of 1 or any animal that is weak

- Do not transport.
- Euthanize on farm.



### Regulations

#### ANIMAL PROTECTION ACT (ALBERTA)

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

### Code of Practice

#### CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF DAIRY CATTLE (2009)

##### Requirement under Section 2.1 Body Condition Scoring

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

# PROLAPSE

A prolapse is the protrusion of the rectum, vagina or uterus to the outside of the body from its normal position usually due to inadequate strength of the surrounding 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.

## Management Options:

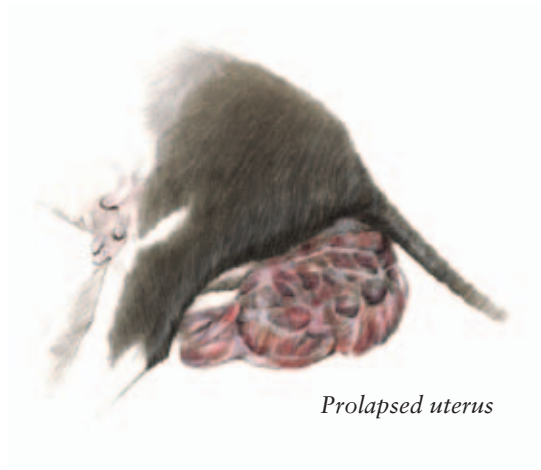
- A prolapse must be identified early.
- Consult a veterinarian on treatment.
- Early stage – transport as soon as possible with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).

## Check Points – Prolapsed uterus

- In dairy cows, a prolapsed uterus will typically occur immediately after or within hours of calving.
- Prolapse begins with the appearance of red lining of the uterus and is confirmed by the presence of the multiple caruncles (buttons).
- Is a life threatening condition.

## Management Options:

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



*Prolapsed uterus*



# REPORTABLE DISEASE

## Check Points:

- Be suspicious of any animal that shows signs of disease.
- Look for staggering or circling, slobbering, depression, fever, oral erosions, lameness, anemia, abortion, coughing, diarrhea, signs of pain or shock, bleeding, blindness, trembling or any other suspicious sign.
- Animals with a nervous disorder may stumble, appear hyper-excited and they may lie with their neck bent back and one or more legs extended.

## Management Options:

- Do not transport.
- Contact a veterinarian immediately. It is the responsibility of animal owners, veterinarians, and laboratories to report provincially and federally reportable diseases.
- 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. Some diseases are reportable to federal and/or provincial authorities. Federally reportable diseases are listed in the Reportable Diseases Regulations. In Alberta, reportable and notifiable diseases are listed in the Reportable and Notifiable Diseases Regulation.



*Cow with nervous disorder*





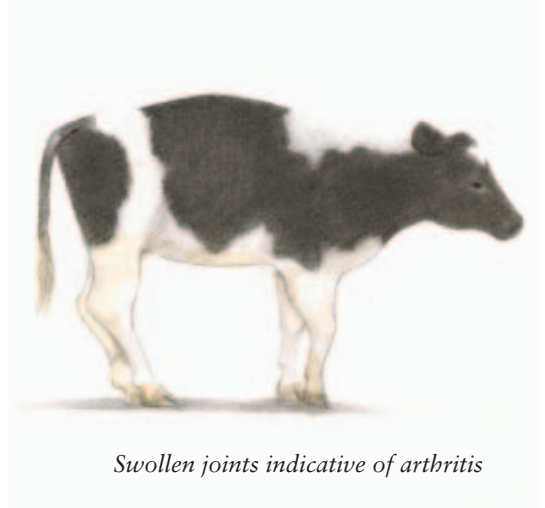
# SEPTIC ARTHRITIS

## Check Points:

- Inflammation of the joint caused by a bacterial infection and characterized by severe pain, progressive difficulty moving and increased time spent lying down.

## Management Options:

- Do not load or transport if arthritis affects more than 2 joints or the animal is in overall poor condition.
- Euthanize on farm.
- Strive to detect and treat arthritis early and ship before the condition worsens.
- Also refer to “Lame or Non-Ambulatory” on page 20



*Swollen joints indicative of arthritis*



# SLICK COWS

## Check Points:

- Slick cows coming from warm barns must be shipped with special provisions to avoid hypothermia.

## Management Options:

- In winter, slick cows must be acclimated for at least two weeks prior to transport. If this is not an option, take climate into consideration - an animal shipped to auction may be in transit for 2-3 weeks.
- As an alternative, ship with special provisions directly to the nearest suitable abattoir.



*Slick cow*



# WATER BELLY

The urinary tract can become blocked by a calculus (stone) resulting in partial or complete stoppage of urine flow. Prolonged blockage results in perforation of the urethra or rupture of the urinary bladder.

## Check Points:

- In early stages as the animal attempts to urinate, the tail may show a “pumping action”; the animal may kick at its abdomen, wring its tail and lie down frequently.
- The accumulation of urine under the belly or in the abdominal cavity is referred to as “water belly”. It means the bladder has ruptured.
- Once the rupture has occurred, the animal may no longer display signs of discomfort but bladder rupture can be fatal – it can cause poisoning of the animal due to urine accumulation in the abdominal cavity.
- In advanced stages, the animal may appear tired, sleepy, groggy, won’t rise or remain standing (signs of toxicity).

## Management Options:

### Early stages

- Consult veterinarian.
- Transport with special provisions direct short-haul upon veterinary recommendation.

### Advanced stages

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



*Water belly*



# OTHER CONDITIONS

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## *Delay transport*

- Acute mastitis
- Ketosis
- Fever > 39.1°C (102.5°F)

## *Compromised*

- Transport with special provisions directly to the nearest available place to receive care, treatment, be humanely slaughtered or euthanized (NOT to a sale or assembly yard).
- Blindness in both eyes.
- Acute frostbite, frozen or frostbitten teats.
- Hardware with localized signs.
- Amputation or deformity (transport only if fully-healed and not painful).
- Not fully healed after an operation, such as dehorning or castration.
- Hobbled to prevent kicking.



## *Unfit*

- Do not transport except for veterinary treatment or diagnosis on the advice of a veterinarian
- Emaciation, dehydration or weakness.
- Fever, shock or dying.
- Pneumonia (unresponsive with fever).
- Hobbled due to an injury (e.g. rupture of the prepubic 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.

- Free bullet – examples of appropriate firearms include: centrefire high powered rifle or shotgun (20 gauge or greater, from no more than 10m [32ft]). A standard .22 calibre long rifle is not sufficient to humanely kill cattle, including calves.
- Penetrating captive bolt followed by pithing, bleeding or cardiac puncture
- Non-penetrating captive bolt followed by bleeding (not for adult cattle)
- Injection with barbiturates and other drugs (administered by a licensed veterinarian)

### 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

### Code of Practice

#### *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle (2009)*

Requirements under Section 6.1 On-Farm Euthanasia Protocols

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

#### *Requirements under Section 6.2 Methods*

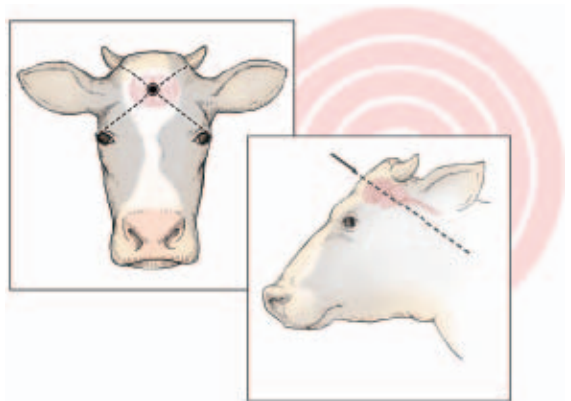
An acceptable method for euthanizing cattle must be used.

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

#### *Requirements under Section 6.3 Evidence of Death*

Confirm death immediately and before moving or leaving the animal.

### Anatomical Landmarks for Euthanasia



**Not between the eyes! Above the eyes as illustrated**

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

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.

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.

## 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 and 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 [www.qp.alberta.ca](http://www.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

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The primary purpose of this handbook is to assist people involved in the handling and transport of dairy 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 rising 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 – Should this Animal be Loaded?**  
**Guidelines for Transporting Cattle, Sheep and Goats**

Should this Animal be Loaded?

## Guidelines for Transporting Cattle, Sheep & Goats

### LOAD HEALTHY ANIMALS



### Do Not Load Do Not Transport

### Do Not Transport to a Sale

#### Delay Transportation and Reassess



- Exhaustion
- Calving/lambing/kidding
- Dehydration
- Weakness/unstable
- Acute mastitis
- Ketosis
- Fever:
  - Cattle – 102.5°F 39.1°C
  - Sheep/goats – 103.3°F 39.6°C

#### Euthanize

- Non-ambulatory (see box below)
- Fractures of limb or spine
- Arthritis in multiple joints
- Cancer eye (severe)
- Cancer/leukosis (extensive)
- Extremely thin
- Pneumonia (unresponsive with fever)
- Prolapsed uterus
- Water belly
- Nervous disorders, such as rabies must be reported to CFIA
- Hernia that impedes movement

**Non-ambulatory animals:** Unable to stand without assistance, or unable to move without being dragged or carried (downers). **Do not load or transport.**

**Lame animals:** Animal should not be loaded if at risk of going down in transit. Animals that can't bear weight on all four legs may be in pain and are at risk of going down during transit. These animals are often euthanized at sales and plants.

**Lactating animals:** Dry off heavy lactating cows before shipping when possible or ship directly to an abattoir.

#### Transport with special provisions Direct to Slaughter

##### As Soon As Possible

- Abscess
- Blind
- Frost bite
- Cancer eye (eye intact)
- Lameness Class 1, 2
- Left/right displaced abomasum (without weakness, toxicity)
- Lumpy jaw
- Penis injuries
- Pneumonia (without fever)
- Prolapsed vagina or rectum
- Animals that have given birth within 48 hours

##### Within 12 Hours

- Seek advice from your veterinarian  
Advise inspector at the destination
- Bloat\*
  - Hardware with localized signs
  - Intestinal accidents
  - Recent injury\*
  - Urethral blockage (acute)\*
  - Broken tail or jaw
  - Smoke inhalation

*\*Animals must travel in a small compartment, either individually or with one quiet animal.*

Animals with multiple conditions may not be fit for transport.

#### Emergency On-Farm Slaughter

If an animal is fit for human consumption but not fit for transport (i.e. injured but not sick) emergency on-farm slaughter may be an option. Please consult with your provincial government for more information on the availability of emergency on-farm slaughter in your province.

## Guidelines for Dealing with Compromised Cattle, Sheep & Goats

Federal Transportation Regulations (2010)  
Health of Animals Regulations [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)

### DO

- Segregate animals of different species, or substantially different weights and ages, or if incompatible by nature.
- Provide proper ventilation, drainage and absorption of urine.
- Have sufficient headroom for animals to stand in a natural position.
- Spread sand in the vehicle or have vehicle fitted with safe footholds, in addition to appropriate bedding.
- Ensure that animals unloaded for feed, water and rest remain at least five hours and longer, if necessary, for all animals to receive food and water.
- Ensure that calves too young to exist on hay and grain are provided with suitable food and water at intervals of no more than 18 hours.\*
- Ensure that animals segregated in trucks receive extra protection from cold and wind chill; supply ample bedding.
- Euthanize animals promptly when you identify conditions outlined in the "Should this Animal be Loaded?" chart.

\*Note: The Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals Transportation suggests no more than 12 hours between intervals for calves.

## Lameness Classes

These categories can be used to determine the status of an animal's mobility, from normal to non-ambulatory.

### Transport as soon as possible

**Class 1:** Visibly lame but can keep up with the group: no evidence of pain.

**Class 2:** Unable to keep up; some difficulty climbing ramps. Load in rear compartment.

### Do Not Load or Transport\*

**Class 3:** Requires assistance to rise, but can walk freely.

**Class 4:** Requires assistance to rise; reluctant to walk; halted movement.

**Class 5:** Unable to rise or remain standing.

\* Any animal, including Lameness Classes 3, 4 or 5 may be transported for veterinary treatment, on the advice of a veterinarian.

### DO NOT

- Transport a sick or injured animal where undue suffering may result.
- Transport when the animal is liable to give birth during the journey, unless under the advice of a veterinarian for medical care.
- Continue to transport an animal that is injured, becomes ill, or is otherwise unfit to travel beyond the nearest place it can be treated.
- Use goads or prods on the face, anal, udder or genital area.
- Load or unload animals in a way that would cause injury or undue suffering.
- Crowd animals to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering.
- Transport livestock in trailers not designed for safe handling of that species or class of livestock.

## LIVESTOCK CARE ALERT Help Line & Resource Team

To report livestock care concerns **CALL 1-800-506-2273** [afac.ab.ca](http://afac.ab.ca)

Supported by Alberta's Livestock Industry

**Alberta SPCA 800-455-9003**

Adapted from Appendix G and H of the dairy cattle Code of Practice. Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle (©2009) have been used with permission from Dairy Farmers of Canada and the National Farm Animal Care Council. [www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle](http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle)



## Appendix B – The Canada and Alberta BSE Surveillance Program

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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](http://agriculture.alberta.ca/bse)

Humane Handling Guidelines for DAIRY CATTLE  
Standards for the Care of Compromised and Unfit Animals

The Alberta Farm Animal Care Association has developed Humane Handling Guidelines for most farmed animal species.

Copies of the Humane Handling 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](mailto:info@afac.ab.ca)  
Web-friendly versions available at [afac.ab.ca](http://afac.ab.ca)

*Funding for this project was provided by Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial- territorial initiative. The views and opinions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada or Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.*





## Contacts and Resources

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

All of Alberta's legislation can be accessed through Alberta Queen's Printer at <a href="http://www.qp.alberta.ca">www.qp.alberta.ca</a> . The Health of Animals Regulations (Canada) are available from: <a href="http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._296/">laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._296/</a>	Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) North Region 780-395-6700 South Region 587-230-2468	
	RCMP (Livestock Investigation) North 780-289-5510 South 403-699-2617	

Report suspected animal neglect and abuse: Alberta SPCA 800-455-9003

## Additional information and resources

Livestock Care ALERT Line – Livestock help line and resource team to report livestock care concerns	800-506-2273	
Alberta Farm Animal Care Association	403-652-5111	<a href="http://afac.ab.ca">afac.ab.ca</a>
Alberta Milk	780-453-5942	<a href="http://albertamilk.com">albertamilk.com</a>
Alberta Veterinary Medical Association	780-489-5007	<a href="http://abvma.ca">abvma.ca</a>
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry	403-310-FARM <a href="http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca">www.agric.gov.ab.ca</a> (click on livestock)	
Livestock Identification Services	403-509-2088	<a href="http://lis-alberta.com">lis-alberta.com</a>
Alberta Processors (Rendering)	403-279-4441	<a href="http://wcr1.com">wcr1.com</a>



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