




WHAT IS ANIMAL CARE?

Animal care refers to the care provided to domesticated animals to meet basic animal welfare requirements and enhance their quality of life through management and environmental factors. Below are important aspects of farm animal care.

HEALTH

Early detection and treatment of diseased animals is an extremely important aspect of good health management. Producers work with their veterinarian to determine the best measures to keep their animals healthy. Healthy animals are more likely to result in higher productivity, safer food supply, and improved animal welfare. Whereas, unhealthy animals are more susceptible to disease which can decrease animal well-being and even lead to death.

NUTRITION



Proper nutrition is essential for optimal performance and good animal welfare. It enhances cell-tissue integrity and optimizes immune defence mechanisms. A well-balanced diet and adequate supply of water prevents physical and psychological suffering from hunger and thirst. Poor nutrition can lead to metabolic disorders and negatively effect reproductive performance.

HOUSING

Animals should be housed with a goal of maximizing species-specific behaviours and minimizing stress-induced behaviours. Farmers keep the majority of farm animals indoors, except beef cattle, to protect them from predators and extreme weather. Cages, pens, or stalls should be kept in good condition to prevent injury to animals, promote physical comfort, and facilitate sanitation and husbandry practices.

HANDLING

Handling refers to how humans work with, respond to, and interact with animals within their surroundings. Proper handling techniques help maintain production quality and effectively reduce stress on animals and handlers. Handlers must be confident, have a positive attitude towards animals, and competent in animal behaviour to work effectively with farm animals. Improper handling can increase risk of injury to both animals and handlers.

PROCEDURES

Routine husbandry procedures are performed in relation to the care and management of animals to maintain their health and well-being as well as for worker safety. Procedures should be done in a manner that minimizes stress on animals.



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REPRODUCTION

Proper animal care optimizes reproductive performance. Good reproductive performance is essential for livestock because they provide humans with animal protein and animal by-products. Poor animal care can negatively impact animal reproduction by decreasing reproductive performance.

TRANSPORTATION

Transporting farm animals is a regular part of everyday farming across Canada. Transporters, farmers, and meat processors are committed to making sure animals are treated humanely during transport as they rely on delivery of healthy animals for their livelihoods. There are also strict laws and regulations concerning animal transport that must be followed to ensure only fit animals are transported.

PROCESSING



All livestock raised for meat are slaughtered at the end of their life cycle. Canadian law requires that federally registered slaughter facilities ensure that all species of livestock are handled and slaughtered humanely. Individuals performing slaughter must be highly trained in humane slaughter techniques. Improper handling and slaughter techniques pose unacceptable risks to animal welfare.

Overall, animals that are well housed, fed, watered, and cared for produce a better quality, safer product for customers.



The National Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals is a resource available for producers that provides recommendations on the best practices to ensure quality animal care.

