



**RSPCA welfare  
standards for**

# **beef cattle**

**November 2007**



Certification Mark

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# Introduction

The *RSPCA Welfare standards for beef cattle* are used to provide the only RSPCA-approved scheme for the rearing, handling, transport and slaughter of beef cattle. They take account of legislation, government welfare codes, scientific research, veterinary advice, recommendations of the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) and the practical experience of the farming industry.

The standards are based upon the 'Five Freedoms' as defined by FAWC; hence the name 'Freedom Food' – see page iv).

Although these 'freedoms' define ideal states, they provide a comprehensive framework for the assessment of animal welfare on farm, in transit and at the place of slaughter, as well as representing an important element of farm assurance requirements.

- **Freedom from hunger and thirst**  
by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- **Freedom from discomfort**  
by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- **Freedom from pain, injury or disease**  
by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- **Freedom to express normal behaviour**  
by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- **Freedom from fear and distress**  
by ensuring conditions and care which avoid mental suffering.

These freedoms will be better provided for if those who have care of livestock practise:

- **caring and responsible planning and management**
- **skilled, knowledgeable and conscientious stockmanship**
- **appropriate environmental design**
- **considerate handling and transport**
- **humane slaughter.**

## Guide to the use of the RSPCA welfare standards

- (i) At the head of each section the broad objectives of the standards are described.
- (ii) The numbered requirements are the standards, all of which must be complied with.
- (iii) Boxed sections (indicated by ①) give additional advice or may highlight areas where the standards will be reviewed in the future.
- (iv) **Farmers are required by law to have a thorough knowledge of the *DEFRA Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Cattle*.**

## **Freedom Food Ltd**

Freedom Food is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RSPCA, formed to implement these standards. Upon satisfactory inspection farmers, hauliers, slaughterers, processors and retailers may subscribe to the scheme and use the Freedom Food trademark. All participants are regularly assessed by Freedom Food Ltd. A charge is levied to cover inspection, administration and marketing costs. Participants are also randomly monitored by members of the RSPCA Farm Animals Department, free of charge.

It is the intention of Freedom Food Ltd to establish sister, franchise organisations in other countries working to the RSPCA welfare standards and therefore, in time, establish a common and consistent message for consumers around the world.


**Freedom Food Ltd is non-profit making. Any surplus income will be used to fund research into farm animal welfare.**

# Food and water

**Livestock must have freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and promote a positive state of well-being. Feed and water must be distributed in such a way that livestock can eat and drink without undue competition.**

## Food

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- FW 1.1** Approved units must:
- a) have a Nutrition Plan
  - b) review the Nutrition Plan at least twice yearly.
- FW 1.2** Cattle must be fed a wholesome diet which:
- a) is appropriate to their species
  - b) is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health
  - c) satisfies their nutritional needs.
- FW 1.3** Cattle must have access to food each day, except when required by the attending veterinary surgeon.
- FW 1.4** Producers must have a written record of the constituents, and their inclusion rate, of compound and home mixed feeds.
- FW 1.5** No feedstuffs containing mammalian or avian derived protein are permitted, with the exception of milk and milk products.
- FW 1.6** Cattle must be fed so that their body condition is likely to sustain full health and normal reproductive capacity over their maximum foreseeable life span.
- FW 1.7** Body condition change in cattle must be carefully planned and maintained according to the stage of production cycle.
-  **As a general rule, no animal should, at any time, have a body condition score less than 2.**
- FW 1.8** Efforts must be made to avoid sudden changes in the type and quantity of food.
- FW 1.9** Adult cattle and calves must be provided with fibre to allow them to ruminate, which must be of such quality and length so as to help avoid acidosis.
- FW 1.10** Cattle must have no necessity to compete for food.
- FW 1.11** Extra trough space must be made available if a restricted diet is applied.

## Food and water

**FW 1.12** Trough lengths must be as follows:

Weight (kg)	Rationed feeding mm/head	Ad lib mm/head
100	350	100
200	400	100
300	500	125
400	600	150
500	700	150
600	750	200

**FW 1.13** Cattle must not be maintained in an environment which is likely to predispose them to nutrient deficiency.

**FW 1.14** Managers must:


- a) be aware of any mineral deficiencies on the farm
- b) correct these as appropriate.

**FW 1.15** All feed troughs and feeding equipment must be managed hygienically at all times.

**FW 1.16** Feeding and watering equipment must be designed, constructed, placed and maintained so that potential contamination of any feed and water is minimised.

**FW 1.17** Control practices must be in place to minimise access to poisonous plants and unsuitable feedstuffs.

**FW 1.18** To prevent the introduction and potential spread of disease, procedures must be in place to prevent the contamination of stored animal feeds.

\*  Procedures to satisfy FW 1.18 may include the use of lids on feed storage bins and food hoppers.

## Food – specific provisions for calves

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**FW 2.1** Calves must be fed on a wholesome diet which:

- a) is appropriate to their age, weight, and behavioural and physiological needs
- b) includes iron
- c) is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and to promote a positive state of well-being.

**FW 2.2** Every new calf must:

- a) receive adequate colostrum from its dam, or from another newly-calved cow, as soon as possible after it is born and certainly within the first 6 hours of its life
- b) continue to suckle for the first 24 hours.



## Food and water

**FW 2.2.1** In relation to FW 2.2, when suckling is not possible:

- a) approximately 6 litres of colostrum must be administered by stomach tube over the first 24 hours (1.5 litres in 4 feeds)
- b) for a further 48 hours, calves must receive approximately 6 litres of colostrum/whole milk daily in at least 2 feeds.

\* **i** Due to the problems associated with Johne's disease and newly born calves, it is strongly recommended that veterinary advice is taken with regard to their management prior to calving. In order to minimise the likelihood of infection, consideration may have to be given to removing the calf from its dam earlier than that recommended in the RSPCA welfare standards. This policy must be recorded in the written Veterinary Health Plan (see H 1.1).

**FW 2.3** Milk substitute must be mixed according to manufacturers' instructions.

**FW 2.4** All non-suckled calves must receive liquid food daily at least through the first 4 weeks of life and until they are eating adequate quantities of suitable solid food, at least 1kg per day of a calf starter ration.

**FW 2.5** Unweaned calves must have unlimited access to grass or palatable, dried feed and fibrous roughage.

**FW 2.6 \*** Calves must not be weaned before 5 weeks of age, unless on veterinary advice it is viewed as detrimental to the welfare of the calf to continue to maintain them on a milk-based diet for this period of time.

**i** The removal of calves from pens into social groups must not coincide with weaning. Both of these procedures are stressful to the animals and hence they should be carried out separately. The group socialisation of calves must be completed by 8 weeks of age.

**FW 2.7** Bought in calves must have received colostrum as set out in FW 2.2 and FW 2.2.1.

**FW 2.8** Movement of bought in calves must not occur at less than 7 days of age.

**i** The aim of the Freedom Food scheme is to adopt a birth to slaughter policy. The RSPCA recognises that at the present time this is not always possible, but will continue to work towards this objective.

**FW 2.9** On arrival, unweaned calves acquired for feeding by artificial means must:

- a) be rested in comfortable conditions
- b) be given a minimum of 2.5 litres of warm, proprietary electrolyte solution; this must be repeated 8 to 10 hours later.

**i** Avoid mixing calves from different sources.

**FW 2.10** If the calf is more than 14 days old, it must have access each day to dried feed or forage material containing sufficient digestible fibre (which must not be less than 100 to 200g daily depending on the age of the animal) so as not to impair the development of its rumen.

## Food and water

**FW 2.11** Starter roughage for calves must be unchopped meadow hay, unchopped barley or wheat straw.

**i** The objective should be to encourage rumen development using long fibre. High dry matter big bale silage/haylage is acceptable

**FW 2.12** Wet acidic silages must be avoided.

**FW 2.13** The calves' diet must prevent anaemia and any mineral and vitamin deficiency.

**FW 2.14** The iron content in the diet must be sufficient to maintain a minimum blood haemoglobin level of 9g/dl.

**i** For calves reared for veal production, blood haemoglobin levels will be monitored at the point of slaughter and, if required by Freedom Food, during production.

**FW 2.15** If blood haemoglobin levels in a significant number of calves in a batch (>25%) are below 9g/dl at the time of slaughter, investigation must be made and appropriate remedial actions taken.

**i** The relationship between dietary iron and blood haemoglobin is complex, and will depend on iron levels in milk, water, roughage, original iron status of a calf and the calcium content of water supplies. Specification of a dietary iron level alone, therefore, may not guarantee freedom from anaemia. The European Commission's Scientific Veterinary Committee Report on the Welfare of Calves recommended that:

- a) where calves are fed a diet which is lower in iron than 50mg/kg, blood haemoglobin levels should be monitored
- b) all calves should be fed in such a way that their blood haemoglobin level does not fall below 7.2g/dl.

Signs of anaemia include:

- reduced appetite
- reduced growth rate
- pale mucous membranes
- rapid heard rate
- lethargy, inactivity and weakness.

**FW 2.16** If a teat system of calf feeding is adopted, teats must be arranged so that a calf's neck is positioned at least horizontally or with a slight upward tilt.

**FW 2.17** If calves are bucket fed, each calf must have access to an individual bucket.

**FW 2.18** All utensils which are used for feeding liquids must be managed hygienically, using a method which minimises the risk of disease challenge to the calves.

**i** The practice of allocating individual buckets to calves without the adequate cleansing of them for the time that they are on milk, should be discouraged. The residue which develops in the bucket is an ideal substrate for the multiplication of airborne pathogens.

## Food and water

**FW 2.19** Calves must not be muzzled.

### Water

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**FW 3.1** Cattle, including calves over 7 days, must be provided with continuous access to an adequate supply of clean, fresh drinking water each day, except when required by the attending veterinary surgeon.

**FW 3.2** When cattle are housed, the flow rate of water delivery systems must allow 10% of the herd to drink at any one time.

**FW 3.3** Minimum drinking space must be calculated on the basis that cattle of 350 to 700kg must be provided with 450 to 700mm of water trough space per head.

**i** Drinking space relating to FW 3.3 can either be in a linear trough or a round trough, using trough perimeter as the linear measurement.

Herd size	Minimum effective drinking perimeter (m)
50	2.25
100	4.50
125	5.65
150	6.75
200	9.00

(Figures based on standard FW 3.2 - 10% of the herd must be able to drink at any one time)

**FW 3.3.1 \*** Regarding FW 3.3, special attention must be given to horned/rare beef breeds.

**FW 3.4** If drinking bowls are used, there must be at least 1 drinking bowl per 10 cattle.

**i** Cattle require the following volume of drinking water:

4.5 litres per 50kg liveweight per day  
plus, 3.0 litres per litre of milk produced.

**FW 3.5** All drinking facilities must be:

- kept thoroughly clean
- managed in a way which ensures that they are capable of dispensing sufficient water at all times.

## Food and water

**FW 3.6** Water troughs must:

- a) not result in wetting/fouling of bedded areas
- b) be accessed, where possible, from concrete.

**i** Ideally, the water trough should be set into the bedded area with the front of the trough in line with the division separating the bedded area and the hard standing/ loafing area, where there is one. This will assist scraping. The water trough should be walled-off on the bedded side to a height of approximately 1.4m above the level of bedding. This will force the cattle onto the loafing area to drink and will help to prevent any poaching of the bedded area.

At pasture, the area around the water troughs should be managed to avoid excessive poaching and, if necessary, consideration should be given to troughs on concrete aprons.

Cattle should not be expected to have to walk more than 250m to access water, if maximum intakes are to be achieved.

Wherever possible, troughs and gateways should be sited away from the bottom of slopes and dips in the ground. This will ensure better drainage and will allow areas of deep mud to be avoided.

**FW 3.7** When cattle are kept extensively at grass, a supply of sufficient fresh, clean water must always be available.

**FW 3.8** Natural water sources are not recommended but, if used, advice must be taken regarding any potential disease risk.

**FW 3.9** Provision must be made to ensure an emergency supply of suitable drinking water is available in case normal supplies fail, for instance due to freezing, drought, etc.

# Environment

**The environment in which livestock are kept must take into account their welfare needs and be designed to protect them from physical and thermal discomfort, fear and distress, and allow them to perform their natural behaviour.**

- E 1.1** Where management systems, designs or layout of facilities are not covered in the RSPCA Welfare standards, these must be referred to, and discussed with, the RSPCA Farm Animals Department before they can be considered for certification.

## Buildings

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- E 2.1** For all accommodation, the key points relating to welfare must:

- a) be recorded on the farm site plan
- b) amended accordingly.

- E 2.2** Regarding E 2.1, the key points recorded must include:

- a) total floor area
- b) number of cubicles or bedded area
- c) number of cattle in relation to age, weight, feeding and drinking, and bedding space.

**i** If practical, this information should be displayed at or near to the entrance to each building.

- E 2.3 \*** In both indoor and outdoor systems, there must be no features of their environment likely to cause injury or distress to the animals. This includes the provision of adequate and safe holding and handling facilities (whether indoors or outdoors).

**\* i** Injury is defined as damage severe enough for the formation of granular scar tissue and to an extent significantly greater than would be caused by accidental bumps and scratches.

**i** Floors should be made of non-slip material or be maintained so as to reduce the risk of slipping. Floors should never be so rough as to cause foot damage nor so smooth as to result in slipping.


- E 2.4** Smooth concrete floors must be grooved (9mm deep) or treated with a non-slip coating.

**i** Indicators of a poor environment include:

■ neck calluses	■ interdigital infections
■ knee, hock swellings/calluses	■ haematomas
■ teat/udder injuries	■ abscesses
■ bruised soles	■ broken tails
■ laminitis	■ chronic scar tissue.
■ soft feet	

## Environment

- E 2.5** Farm tracks must be maintained in order to prevent damage to the feet of the animals.
- E 2.6** Except where preservatives with an insecticidal role are used, cattle or calves must not come into contact with toxic fumes or surfaces, for example from paints, wood preservatives or disinfectants.
- E 2.7** All electrical installations at mains voltage must be:
- a) inaccessible to cattle
  - b) well insulated
  - c) safeguarded from rodents
  - d) properly earthed
  - \* e) tested at least once a year.

- \*  **By law, electrical installations need to be tested every 3 years as part of the Periodic Inspection Report. However, at least once a year, the 'trip switch' needs to be tested to ensure it is in correct working order.**

- E 2.8** Passages must be of such a design and width, and so constructed, to allow two animals to pass freely.
- E 2.9** Efforts must be made to minimise, and ideally exclude, the number of blind alleyways in buildings, in order to avoid the incidence of bullying by dominant animals.
- E 2.10** Internal surfaces of housing and pens must be made of materials which can be readily cleansed and disinfected or be easily replaced when necessary.

## Thermal environment and ventilation

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- E 3.1** The internal environment must not be so hot or so cold as to significantly affect production or cause distress.
- E 3.2** For all cattle, an assessment of their surrounding environmental temperature and air movement (draught) must be undertaken, taking into account:
- a) breed hardiness
  - b) age of stock
  - c) foreseeable climatic conditions
  - d) natural shelter/shade.

## Environment

- E 3.3** Effective ventilation of buildings, permitting air movement at low velocity whilst avoiding draughts and ingress of rain and snow, must be provided.

**i** The prime concern relating to winter housing is to keep cattle out of wind, rain and snow which reduces insulation.

Properly designed natural ventilation reduces the risks associated with mechanical failures.

This is best achieved by:

- space boarding along side walls to a depth of at least 1 metre below the eaves, and from eaves to the ridge at each gable end
- 100mm planks with gaps of 20mm
- open roof ridges.

- E 3.4** Provisions must be made to ensure that, when cattle are housed, aerial contaminants do not reach a level at which they are noticeably unpleasant to a human observer.

**i** Inhalable dust should not exceed 10mg/m<sup>3</sup> and ammonia levels should not exceed 25ppm.

- E 3.5** Building ventilation must aim to achieve a relative humidity below 80% when ambient conditions allow.

**i** The objective is to provide a large volume of air and high ventilation rates to remove the moisture produced by the stock and to reduce the number of airborne pathogens being passed from animal to animal.

Factors contributing to provide good ventilation include sufficient and correctly positioned air inlets and outlets, and correct air inlet-outlet height differential.

Professional advice should be sought if ventilation problems are being encountered.

- E 3.6** A building must provide adequate air space:

Weight class (kg)	Minimum unit building volume
Up to 60	7m <sup>3</sup>
60 to 100	10m <sup>3</sup>
100 to 200	15m <sup>3</sup>
> 200	20m <sup>3</sup>

- E 3.7** When removing slurry from under slats, care must be taken to avoid fouling the air with dangerous gases which may be fatal to man and animals.

- E 3.8** When cattle are kept in partially roofed units they must be provided with:

- a) effective shelter from the wind
- b) a dry, comfortable lying area.

## Environment

**E 3.9 \*** Provisions must be made to protect cattle from heat stress.

**i** Consideration may need to be given to the provision of artificial shade or to allowing animals access to buildings.

### Lying area/space allowance

**E 4.1** Cattle kept in straw yard accommodation must be kept on, or have access at all times to, a lying area which is:

- a) well-drained or well maintained with dry bedding
- b) of sufficient size to accommodate all cattle lying down together in normal resting posture.

**E 4.2 \*** The floor space allowances must be as follows:

* Weight of animal (kg)	Minimum bedded lying area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Minimum non-bedded/loafing area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Minimum total area per animal (m <sup>2</sup> )
< 100	1.5	1.8	3.3
101 to 199	2.5	2.5	5.0
200 to 299	3.5	2.5	6.0
300 to 399	4.5	2.5	7.0
400 to 499	5.5	2.5	8.0
500 to 599	6.0	2.5	8.5
600 to 699	6.5	2.5	9.0
700 to 799	7.0	3.0	10.0
> 800	8.0	3.0	11.0

(Space allowances for weights in the range of 200kg to 800kg comply with British Standard BS 5502:2005.)

**E 4.3** When employing a cubicle house, cattle must be provided with the lying area plus a further 50% loafing/passage space.

**E 4.4** A 'loafing' area must be provided.

**E 4.5** Unbedded areas must be:

- a) slatted or of solid concrete
- b) scraped at least twice daily.

**E 4.6** Slats must not result in injury to legs/feet.

**i** With straw yard systems, there should ideally be a hard standing. However, if there are no obvious clinical foot deformities or any historical evidence of chronic or acute foot problems in the production or medicine records, then pens without hard standings are acceptable.

**E 4.7** Loose housed, growing cattle must be grouped according to size and age.

**E 4.8** The space allowance for cattle housed in groups must take account of the presence or absence of horns.



## Environment

- E 4.9** Cattle must not be closely confined except in the following circumstances, and even then only for the shortest period of time necessary:
- a) for the duration of any examination, routine test, milking, blood sampling, veterinary treatment
  - b) while they are being fed on any particular occasion
  - c) for the purpose of marking, washing or weighing
  - d) while accommodation is being cleaned
  - e) during the procedure of artificial insemination
  - f) while they are awaiting loading for transportation.
- E 4.10** The use of housing systems in which cattle are tethered either for the whole, or part, of the housing period is prohibited.
- E 4.11** Cattle must be able to lie down in a normal position without undue risk of being trodden on or kicked by other cattle.

## Cubicle housing

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**i** The emphasis of cubicle design should be to maximise the comfort of the animal. Given the wide range of sizes and bodyweights within and between herds and individual breeds, it is difficult to prescribe actual dimensions of cubicles.

- E 5.1** Cubicle housing must provide a clean, dry and comfortable bed which is free from contamination.
- E 5.2** There must be a sufficient slope front to rear on concrete bases, to encourage free drainage.
- E 5.3** Adequate bedding must be provided on the cubicle base.

**i** Straw or wood shavings may be used to a minimum depth of 50mm. Cow mats (not of the solid type) may be used with a thin layer of bedding to absorb moisture.

- E 5.4** Bedding must be topped up at least 3 times per week.
- E 5.5** Fouled bedding must be removed twice daily.
- E 5.6** Animals using cubicles must be able to stand with all 4 feet in the dry cubicle.
- E 5.7** Animals using cubicles must be able to change position from standing to lying and vice versa:
- a) in a normal manner without difficulty or injury
  - b) with adequate space to allow the normal forward lunging motion during this manoeuvre.

\* **i** In general, standard E 5.7 can usually be achieved by providing a minimum of 0.5m of forward lunging space. However, for some larger animals, this may not be sufficient to ensure adequate forward lunging, so more space will need to be provided.

- E 5.8** The cubicle must be constructed so that it prevents the animal from standing so far forward that it may consistently soil the back of the bed.

## Environment

**E 5.9** Cubicle divisions must be designed to:

- a) align a cow properly in her own cubicle
- b) prevent interference with or injury to her neighbour or herself.

**E 5.10** Cubicle divisions must be constructed or adapted so that space sharing is possible.

**E 5.10.1** Where cubicles are narrower than the ideal, rigid lower horizontal rails must be removed and replaced by a flexible alternative.

**i** Where appropriate, head rails may be removed and replaced by a correctly positioned brisket board or equivalent structure.

**E 5.11** A minimum of 1 cubicle per animal must be provided and preferably 5% more.

**E 5.12** The step between the cubicle bed and the dung passage must:

- a) avoid slurry being pushed into the bed during scraping
- b) encourage cows to enter the cubicle headfirst.

**E 5.13** The height of the step must not be such that it results in an increased incidence of concussion injuries to the soles.

**E 5.14** Cows and heifers must be adequately prepared for calving.

**i** In the case of some suckler animals which are to be milked, consideration should be given to early introduction to pre- and post-calving accommodation (if used), the milking parlour, and any proposed changes in diet.

**E 5.15** Provision must be made for milking isolated cows.

## Lighting

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**E 6.1** In all cattle housing, adequate lighting, whether fixed or portable, must be available to enable them to be thoroughly inspected at any time.

**E 6.2** Housed cattle must have access for the normal period of daylight hours to an area lit to a level of a minimum of 100 lux at cattle eye level.

**E 6.3** During housing, a period of low level lighting must be provided to promote resting behaviour.

**i** A light intensity of 50 lux is sufficient to allow a person of normal eyesight to read standard newsprint without difficulty.

## Environment

### Calving environment

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- E 7.1** Where any cattle which are calving are kept in a building, they must be kept in a pen or a yard which is fully bedded.
- E 7.2** The pen or yard must be of such a size, and equipped with a means of restraint, so as to permit a person to safely attend to the cows and their calves.
- E 7.3** Cattle which are calving must be kept separate from other livestock other than calving cows.
- E 7.4** Adequate provision for securing cattle must be provided.
- E 7.5** Depending on the calving pattern, a minimum of 5 calving places per 100 cattle must be provided.
- E 7.6** Hospital, calving and isolation boxes must be designed so that they can be managed hygienically.
- E 7.7** Measures must be in place to minimise the risk/incidence of dry cow (summer) mastitis.
- E 7.8 \*** Calving cows and heifers must be inspected at least twice per day.

### Bull pens

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- E 8.1** Bull pens must be sited so as to allow the bull sight, sound and odour of other cattle and general farm activity.
- E 8.2** Bulls must be attended to at least twice daily by farm staff.
- E 8.3** Individual accommodation for an adult bull of average size must include a bedded sleeping area of not less than 16m<sup>2</sup>.
- E 8.4** For very large bulls, the sleeping area must not be less than 1m<sup>2</sup> for each 60kg liveweight.
- E 8.5** An exercise and service area must:
- be provided
  - be no less than 25m<sup>2</sup> in total area.
- E 8.6** Bull pens must:
- be safe for the stock-keepers tending them
  - include adequate restraining facilities
  - include an escape route.

### Handling facilities

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- E 9.1** Races and gates must be designed so that animals can move through them unhindered when required.
- E 9.2** When operating gates and catches, every effort must be made to reduce excessive noise which may cause distress to the animals.
- E 9.3** If a problem is identified, noise reduction mechanisms must be fitted as necessary.
- E 9.4** Loading facilities must provide a ramp of no more than a 20% incline.

## Environment

- E 9.5** All loading ramps and tailboards must be appropriately designed and covered with litter, to prevent animals from falling off or slipping.

**i** Consideration should be given to providing a loading bay and/or ramp that enables animals to walk straight into or out of the vehicle on the level or slight gradient.

### Specific provisions for calves

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- E 10.1** Calf pens must be of a size which is appropriate for the age, size and breed of the animal.
- E 10.2** The calf must be able to stand up, turn round, lie down, rest and groom itself without hindrance.
- E 10.3** Calves must be removed from pens by 8 weeks of age.
- E 10.4** When housed, all calves must be provided with accommodation that is:
- a) well-ventilated
  - b) dry
  - c) well-bedded
  - d) draught-free.
- E 10.5** Sick individuals must be provided with a source of artificial heat where necessary.
- E 10.6** Where there is a high risk of infectious disease, consideration must be given to the individual quarantining of calves for the initial rearing period.
- E 10.7** Individual quarantine accommodation for calves must be of minimum dimensions 1.0m x 1.8m providing a minimum floor space of 1.8m<sup>2</sup>.
- E 10.8** The floor must not be slatted.
- E 10.9** The pen must be maintained to ensure that a well drained, dry, draught-free, comfortable lying area is provided at all times.
- E 10.10** Construction and siting of individual calf pens used for quarantine must be such that each calf has an opportunity to see, smell and hear other calves.
- E 10.11** Calves must not be kept permanently in darkness.
- E 10.12** To meet their behavioural and physiological needs, appropriate natural or artificial lighting must be provided.
- E 10.13** Artificial lighting must function for a period at least equivalent to the period of natural light normally available between 9am and 5pm.
- E 10.14** A suitable source of lighting (fixed or portable), strong enough to allow the calves to be inspected at any time, must be available.

## Environment

### Calf hutches

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- E 11.1** Hutches must be made of a material which minimises heat stress and wide temperature fluctuations.
- E 11.2** The ventilation of the hutch must be able to remove excess humidity and condensation whilst at the same time eliminating draughts but retaining constant air circulation.
- E 11.3** Tethering of calves is prohibited.
- E 11.4** Hutches must be placed on a free draining base and affixed to the ground to prevent movement in high winds.
- E 11.5** Hutches must be sited in a sheltered spot, away from prevailing weather.
- E 11.6** There must be enough bedding in the hutch to exclude any draughts.
- E 11.7** Calves must have access to a dry bed at all times.
- E 11.8** Hutches must be of a size appropriate to the age and breed of the animal.
- E 11.9** Calves must be removed from the hutch no later than 8 weeks of age.
- E 11.10** Hutches must be arranged so that calves may see and hear other calves in neighbouring hutches.

 **The law requires that all calf accommodation must allow calves to have tactile contact.**

### Fencing

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- E 12.1** All fencing must be adequately inspected and maintained.
- E 12.2** Electric fences must be designed, installed, used and maintained so that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the cattle.
- E 12.3** The use of electric fences on self-feed silage systems is prohibited.
- E 12.4** Alternative feed barriers must be designed so as to avoid any potential threat to the animals, for example, becoming trapped between the feed face and the barrier.

### Disposal of waste

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- E 13.1** Animal waste and effluents must be stored and disposed of in such a way as to:
  - a) minimise the risk of spread of disease to other animals or humans
  - b) avoid polluting the environment.
- E 13.2** Muck and slurry storage must be located in a safe situation and precautions taken to avoid the spread of disease both to livestock and humans.
- E 13.3** Muckheaps in fields must be fenced off to prevent direct access by grazing livestock.



# Management

**A high degree of caring and responsible management and stockmanship is vital to ensure good animal welfare. Managers and stock-keepers must be thoroughly trained, skilled and competent in animal husbandry and welfare, and have a good working knowledge of their system and the livestock under their care.**

- M 1.1 \*** All records, checklists, health plans, contingency plans, farm pest control plans, written standard operating and emergency procedures, policies and publications that the RSPCA welfare standards for beef cattle require the producer to keep and maintain, must be made available to the Freedom Food Assessor and RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer.

## Managers

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- M 2.1 \*** Managers must ensure that all stock-keepers:
- have a copy of the current version of the RSPCA Welfare standards for beef cattle
  - are familiar with its content
  - understand and apply its content.
- M 2.2 \*** Should an emergency require the removal of livestock to unregistered premises, Freedom Food Ltd and the RSPCA Farm Animals Department must be informed immediately.
- M 2.3** Personnel with responsibility for the management of approved establishments must be named and recorded.
- M 2.4** Managers must:
- develop and implement a suitable training programme for stock-keepers, with regular updates and opportunities for continuing professional development
  - keep records of such training.
- M 2.5** Producers/managers must:
- demonstrate that staff with responsibilities for stock care have the relevant and necessary skills to perform their duties
  - demonstrate that, if necessary, staff are given the opportunity to participate in an appropriate form of training.
- M 2.6** Managers must develop and implement plans and precautions to cope with emergencies such as fire, flood or interruption of supplies.
- M 2.6.1 \*** Managers must provide an emergency action board, sited in a prominent position, which must include:
- the procedures to be followed by those discovering such an emergency
  - the location of water sources for use by the fire brigade
  - a map grid reference and postcode for the location of the unit.
- M 2.7** Managers must:
- have access to, and make available to all stock-keepers, a copy of the DEFRA (formerly MAFF) booklet, *'Emergencies on Livestock Farms'* (PB 1147, 1992)
  - be familiar with its contents.

## Management

- M 2.8** Managers must ensure that the Veterinary Health Plan (see H 1.1):
- is implemented
  - is regularly updated
  - data required is recorded appropriately.
- M 2.9** Managers must maintain records of production data and use of medication, which must include:
- documentation on all incoming and outgoing stock on the farm
  - types and quantities of medicines used.
- M 2.10** Managers must develop and implement a transport plan to Freedom Food approved abattoirs which:
- includes a method of identification of animals (see M 5.2)
  - minimises waiting time for the cattle.

## Stock-keepers

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- M 3.1** Stock-keepers must understand the times and circumstances in which cattle are prone to welfare problems on their own unit.
- M 3.2** Stock-keepers must be able to demonstrate their competence in recognising and dealing with these problems.
- M 3.3** Stock-keepers must be aware of the welfare implications during calving, injection, oral dosing and castration.
- M 3.4** Stock-keepers must be aware of welfare requirements during breeding, particularly the selection of suitable bulls, semen and embryos for use in heifers.
- M 3.5** Prior to being given responsibility for the welfare of livestock, stock-keepers must be given appropriate training for their specific area of responsibility.
- M 3.6** All stock-keepers must:
- be able to recognise signs of normal behaviour, abnormal behaviour and fear
  - be able to recognise signs of common diseases and understand their prevention and control, and know when to seek veterinary help
  - have a basic knowledge of what constitutes good nutrition in cattle
  - have a knowledge of body condition scoring
  - understand the functional anatomy of the normal foot, its care and treatment
  - understand the functional anatomy of the normal teat and udder
  - have a knowledge of calving and the care of the newborn calf.
- M 3.7** Stock-keepers must be able to demonstrate competence in handling animals in a positive and compassionate manner.
- M 3.8** Stock-keepers must be able to demonstrate their proficiency in procedures that have the potential to cause suffering, e.g. injections, foot trimming, disbudding, castration, marking.
- M 3.9** When loose housed, polled and horned cattle must not be grouped together, except where a social group exists.
- M 3.10** Precautions must be taken to prevent injury through bullying.




## Management

- M 3.11** Staff must:
- be aware of water sources for use by the fire brigade
  - ensure access is available to them at all times.

## Handling

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- M 4.1** Cattle must be handled quietly and firmly at all times, with care to avoid unnecessary pain or distress.
- M 4.2** Cattle have the following behaviour characteristics which must be taken into account when being moved:
- they have poor vision for distance and detail; therefore they must not be led into shadowy areas.
  - they must not be subjected to sudden movement of nearby objects.
  - their hearing is similar to humans so they must not be subjected to sudden loud noise.
  - their instinct to herd is strong so they must not be isolated.
- M 4.3** Animal handlers must:
- be trained
  - understand the likely stress factors cattle may be subjected to
  - appreciate how cattle react towards other cattle, towards man and to strange noises, sights, sounds and smells.
- M 4.4** Cattle must not be moved or loaded unless the way forward for the lead animal is clear, and there is adequate space available for them to move into.
- M 4.5** Cattle must not be rushed or run along tracks/races/passageways or through gateways.
- M 4.6** No animal must be pulled or lifted by the tail, ears or limbs.
- M 4.7** Sticks must not be used for hitting cattle.
- M 4.8** Electric goads must not be used.
-  **Sticks or other benign handling aids may be used as extensions of the arms.**
- M 4.9** A cattle-handling unit must be available, comprising of a collecting system and a method of restraint, appropriate to the type, temperament and numbers of stock to be managed.
- M 4.10** Calving aids must only be used to assist a delivery and not to produce a calf as quickly as possible.
- M 4.11** Before any type of calving aid is used, the cow must be examined to ensure that the calf is properly presented and of a size where natural delivery can be reasonably expected, without causing undue pain and distress to either the dam or the offspring.
- M 4.12** Any recumbent (downer) animal must be examined by a veterinary surgeon before the farmer attempts to use lifting gear and, initially, the veterinary surgeon must supervise the operation.
- M 4.13** Whatever type of lifting gear is used, care must be taken not to cause unnecessary pain or distress to the animal.
- M 4.14 \*** All recumbent (downer) cattle must be treated without delay.

## Management

- M 4.15 \*** Where the prognosis for recovery of a recumbent (downer) cow is poor, early intervention by humanely destroying the animal on farm must be undertaken.

## Identification

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- M 5.1** Neckbands, tailbands or legbands must:
- only be used for identification purposes
  - be fitted with care and adjusted as required to avoid unnecessary pain or distress.
- M 5.2** The marking of cattle must be done with care by trained, competent operators so as to avoid unnecessary pain or distress to the animals.

**i** Acceptable methods of permanent on-farm marking include ear tagging as approved by DEFRA, tattooing, freeze-branding (in a manner which avoids unnecessary pain), or implanted electronic transponders, to be carried out by a trained stock-keeper.

- M 5.3** Aerosols or paints used for temporary marking must be non-toxic.

## Equipment

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- M 6.1** When equipment is installed which affects animal welfare, stock-keepers must be able to:
- demonstrate an ability to operate equipment
  - demonstrate the ability to carry out routine maintenance
  - recognise common signs of malfunction
  - demonstrate knowledge of action to be carried out in event of a failure.
- M 6.2** All automatic equipment must be thoroughly inspected by a stock-keeper, or other competent person, at least once per day, to check that there is no defect in it.
- M 6.3** Where a defect is found in the automatic equipment:
- the defect must be rectified immediately, or
  - if this is impracticable, such measures as are required to safeguard the livestock from suffering unnecessary pain or distress as a result of the defect must immediately be taken and maintained until the defect is rectified.
- M 6.4** Where the automatic equipment includes a ventilation system, the system must contain:
- an alarm which will give adequate warning of the failure of that system to function properly
  - an alarm which will operate even if the principal electricity supply to it has failed
  - additional equipment or means of ventilation (whether automatic or not) which, in the event of such a failure of the ventilation system, will provide adequate ventilation so as to prevent the livestock from suffering unnecessary distress as a result of the failure.

## Management

### Inspection

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- M 7.1** When cattle are housed, stock-keepers must inspect their livestock, and the equipment upon which such stock may depend, at least twice daily and record any observations and/or actions taken.
- M 7.2** On extensive beef units, inspection must take place as frequently as is necessary so that the risk from any potential problems which may be encountered under such systems is minimised.
- M 7.3 \*** Any welfare problems seen during an inspection by the stock-keeper/producer must be dealt with appropriately and without delay.

- \* **i** **Welfare problems of sufficient severity that they should have been noticed on previous inspections and dealt with, shall be taken by the Freedom Food Assessor or RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer as evidence of negligence of duties by the stock-keeper.**

### Farm dogs

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- M 8.1** Dogs, including working dogs, must:
- be properly trained
  - not cause injury or distress to cattle
  - be kept under control at all times.
- M 8.2** Producers must ensure that the dogs are well cared for, with suitable housing, feeding and proper attention to their health and welfare needs.
- M 8.3** All dogs must be treated regularly to eliminate endoparasites.

### \* Pests

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- M 9.1 \*** When developing and implementing farm pest and predator control plans, physical exclusion methods, and the removal of elements in the vicinity of livestock that might encourage the presence of pests and predators (see information box below), must be included.

- \* **i** **Methods of physical exclusion and discouragement of pests and predators include:**
- **Construction/maintenance of fencing appropriate for excluding the pests/predators in question**
  - **Removal of shelter/cover (e.g. weeds) in the area surrounding livestock buildings**
  - **Removal/protection of obvious food sources**
  - **Maintenance/proofing of buildings against pests and predators.**

- M 9.2 \*** The farm pest control plan must include provisions that specifically exclude the snaring or gassing of animals.

### Sourcing of livestock

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**M 10.1 \*** All cattle presented for slaughter must have spent their entire lives on Freedom Food farms, except in the circumstances set out in T 1.3.

- \*  **Animals can still be transferred between farms, as long as all premises are Freedom Food accredited. If finishers have problems in sourcing Freedom Food stock, please contact the Freedom Food office where information on Freedom Food accredited cattle breeders is held.**

# Health

**Livestock must be protected from pain, injury and disease. The environment in which livestock are housed must be conducive to good health. All producers must develop a health plan in consultation with their veterinary surgeon.**

- H 1.1** All cattle units must have a written Veterinary Health Plan (VHP), drawn up and regularly updated by the producer in conjunction with the attending veterinary surgeon.
- H 1.2** Beef producers must arrange for at least 1 veterinary visit per year for finishing units and 2 per year for breeding units.
- H 1.3** The VHP (see H 1.1) must be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.
- H 1.4** Records must be kept in association with the VHP (see H 1.1).

\*  **The Veterinary Health Plan (VHP) forms a vitally important part of the RSPCA Welfare standards with regard to maintaining health and welfare of livestock on farm.**

**The RSPCA has developed guidance notes for producers and veterinary surgeons as to how the VHP should be formulated to ensure high standards of health are maintained. These guidance notes are available to Freedom Food producers and their veterinary surgeons from the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.**

**Should you or your veterinary surgeon require assistance with the formulation of your VHP, please refer to these guidance notes or talk to an RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer.**

- H 1.5** All sudden deaths, disease outbreaks and cattle humanely killed as unfit, must be:
- recorded
  - reported to the veterinary surgeon if appropriate.
- H 1.6** The outcome of any action relating to H 1.5 must be recorded.

## Health

**H 1.7** The herd must be continually monitored for herd performance including:

- a) production diseases
- b) infectious diseases
- c) injury as a result of housing/husbandry.



For example:

- **Metabolic disorders (hypocalcaemia, hypomagnesaemia, ketosis, displaced abomasum, laminitis, bloat, acidosis)**
- **Septicaemia**
- **Enteritis**
- **Problems at calving**
- **Repetitive physical injury**
- **Respiratory diseases**
- **Body condition**

**H 1.8** If any herd performance parameters fall below, or casualty and culled cattle numbers exceed, the tolerance limits established in the VHP (see H 1.1), the VHP must be revised in consultation with the veterinary surgeon in order to address any problems which have been identified.

**H 1.9** Provision must be made for the segregation and care of sick and injured animals.

**H 1.10** Any cattle suffering from illness or injury must be:

- a) segregated if necessary
- b) treated without delay.

**H 1.11** In relation to H 1.10, veterinary advice must be sought when needed or, if necessary, such animals must be humanely killed.

**H 1.12** Any replacement animals brought in from other sources must be quarantined and/or appropriately treated, e.g. for ecto-/endoparasite control, in accordance with the VHP (see H 1.1), before integration.

## Health

**H 1.13** If abnormal behavioural activities develop repeatedly in any particular animal(s), a programme of modification and enrichment must be:

- a) agreed together with the farm veterinary surgeon
- b) pursued until the problem is solved.

**i** The repeated rubbing of brushes designed for the purpose should not be regarded as abnormal behaviour.

Likely possible abnormal behaviour patterns:

- Repeated rubbing in the absence of disease
- Tongue rolling/aerophagia
- Bar biting/chewing
- Pica (licking/chewing solid objects)
- Eating soil/sand/dirt
- Navel sucking
- Ear sucking
- Urine drinking

**H 1.14** All practical measures must be taken to prevent or control external and internal parasitic infestations.

**H 1.15** Close attention must be given to the condition of the feet.

**H 1.16** The feet of all cattle must be inspected for signs of abnormal wear, infection or excessive growth at least annually, by a competent foot trimmer.

**H 1.17** If a problem is identified, a foot care plan must be developed as part of the VHP (see H 1.1), using methods that are appropriate to the condition and the individual farm.

\* **i** As an aid to assessing the status of lameness in the herd, locomotion scoring may be done on a biannual basis.

Locomotion scores:

0	Sound
1	Abnormal gait/tender
2	Lame
3	Very lame

(Whay, 2001)

**H 1.18** Stock-keepers must:

- a) have access to a copy of the DEFRA (formerly MAFF) booklet, '*Lameness in Beef Cattle and Dairy Followers*' (PB 1151, 1992),
- b) be familiar with its content.

## Health

**H 1.19** Producers must be able to demonstrate their methods for the prevention and treatment of acute foot conditions.

**i** These methods may include footbathing in traditional footbaths, sponge baths or individual spray therapy.

**H 1.20** A footbathing facility must provide:

- a) a pre-treatment foot washing facility to remove excess dirt and organic matter
- b) a treatment bath containing an antibacterial agent at the appropriate concentration and which is regularly topped up or replaced
- c) a minimum depth of 75mm
- d) a non-slip entry and exit.

\* **i** Research commissioned by the RSPCA has shown that the use of analgesic drugs in the treatment of lameness and other conditions should be encouraged. The costs of these treatments are justified by the benefits to the cow in terms of improved animal welfare and reduced recovery time, whilst at the same time reducing economic losses through lost production. Cows treated with a nil milk withdrawal, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug can produce a milk yield around 5 litres per day higher than cows that have not been treated, according to some industry sources. The RSPCA believes that the use of analgesia needs to become a part of the routine treatment of these painful conditions.

**H 1.21** The only potentially injurious husbandry procedures permitted under the RSPCA Welfare standards are as follows (except those done for therapeutic reasons by a veterinary surgeon):

- a) removal of supernumerary teats using local anaesthetic up to 5 weeks of age.
- \* b) disbudding during the first 5 weeks of life, or as soon as a prominent bud has formed, using a hot iron under local anaesthesia.
- c) castration by the application of a rubber ring after 24 hours of age and before 7 days of age, or by Burdizzo clamp after 24 hours of age and up to 2 months of age.

**H 1.21.1** Procedures relating to H 1.21 must:

- \* a) not be performed on sick animals
- b) only be performed in a way which minimises suffering
- c) only be performed by a veterinary surgeon, or by trained and competent stock-keepers
- d) only be performed using appropriate, properly maintained equipment.

**H 1.22** The removal of horns from more mature cattle must:

- a) only be performed by a veterinary surgeon
- \* b) not be a routine procedure.

**H 1.23** Induction of parturition must never be used as a routine management procedure.

**H 1.24** Non-veterinarians performing per rectum ultrasound pregnancy detection must:

- a) have received appropriate training in the relevant techniques
- b) have reached a recognised standard.



## Health

- H 1.24.1\*** Embryo Transfer and Ovum Pick-up are not permitted except in exceptional circumstances. Requests for permission to perform these procedures must:
- be submitted in writing to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department by the producer in conjunction with the unit's veterinary surgeon
  - include the reasons for the request being made
  - include an indication of numbers involved.

\* **i** Embryo Transfer and Ovum Pick-up are invasive techniques and have been identified by the Banner Committee (1995, Report of the Committee to consider the Ethical Implications of Emerging Technologies in the breeding of Farm Animals) and the Farm Animal Welfare Council (1997) as posing a risk to animal welfare.

**H 1.24.2\*** The use of genetically modified and/or cloned animals, and their offspring, is prohibited.

**H 1.24.3\*** Caesarean section must not be a routine procedure.

**H 1.25** Written procedures must be in place, and must be followed at all times, for the safe disposal of pharmaceutical waste, needles and other sharps.

**H 1.26** Procedures relating to H 1.25 must be in strict accordance with the relevant waste disposal regulations.

**H 1.27** Medicines must be:

- clearly labelled
- stored in accordance with the label instructions.

**H 1.28** Medicines must be kept in a secure, lockable store, which is safe from animals, children and birds.

**H 1.29** The medicine store must be separate from food producing areas.

**H 1.30** A nominated person must:

- be responsible for the management of the medicine store
- keep appropriate records for stock control purposes.

**H 1.31** Any medicines used must be:

- licensed for use in the UK
- applied in accordance with UK and EU legislation.

\* **i** It is recommended that producers obtain, read, and where appropriate apply, the advice contained with the latest version of the '*Guidelines on Responsible Use of Antimicrobials in Dairy and Beef Cattle Production*', issued by the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) alliance (RUMA, Acorn House, 25 Mardley Hill, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 0TT; [www.ruma.org.uk](http://www.ruma.org.uk))

**H 1.32** All personnel involved in the administration of animal medicines must be competent to do so.

## **Casualty animals**

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- H 2.1** Each farm must have provisions for the prompt, humane slaughter of emergency/casualty cattle, carried out by a named, trained, competent member of staff or a licensed slaughterman.
- H 2.2** Where provisions relating to H 2.1 are not possible, a veterinary surgeon must be called out to carry out the procedure.
- H 2.3** If there is any doubt as to how to proceed, the veterinary surgeon must be called at an early stage to advise whether treatment is possible or whether humane slaughter is required to prevent suffering.
- H 2.4** If an animal is in severe pain that is uncontrollable, then the animal must be promptly and humanely slaughtered.

**i** It is not illegal to slaughter an animal to prevent further severe suffering if a method of humane slaughter is available on the premises and there is someone competent to undertake the procedure. However, for non-emergency casualty slaughter, a slaughterman's licence is required if a captive bolt pistol is used.

- H 2.5 \*** All carcasses must be disposed of according to current legislation.
- H 2.6 \*** A record must be kept of how and where all carcasses are disposed of.

# Transport

**Animal transport systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress or discomfort. The transport and handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in transport must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.**

## Livestock markets

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**T 1.1** Cattle must not be presented for sale at livestock markets.

**i** Cattle presented for sale at livestock markets will automatically lose their Freedom Food status.

**T 1.2 \*** All cattle presented for slaughter must have spent their entire lives on Freedom Food farms, except in the circumstances set out in T 1.3.

**T 1.3 \*** In the case of new members of the Freedom Food scheme only:

- a) All stock on the farm at the time of accreditation must subsequently have a dwell period of at least 120 days on Freedom Food farms from the date of accreditation before qualifying as Freedom Food animals for the purposes of labelling after slaughter.
- b) If the animals are moved prior to the 120 days, they can still retain their Freedom Food status if they are moved to other Freedom Food accredited farms using Freedom Food accredited transport (including the producer's own transport), and the total dwell time on accredited farms totals 120 days before slaughter.
- c) From the accreditation date onwards, any store animals brought onto the farm and intended for the food chain under the Freedom Food label must be sourced from a Freedom Food accredited farm.
- d) Animals that have not completed the 120 day dwell time on Freedom Food farms may be registered on the store stock register as 'Freedom Food' provided that:
  - it is stated that they still have dwell days to serve on Freedom Food farms prior to slaughter, and
  - the number of dwell days remaining is stated.

**\* i** Animals can still be transferred between farms, as long as all premises are Freedom Food accredited. If finishers have problems in sourcing Freedom Food stock, please contact the Freedom Food office where information on Freedom Food accredited cattle breeders is held.

## Casualty animals

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**T 2.1** A sick or injured animal must not be transported unless it is being taken for veterinary treatment or it is being taken to the nearest available place for humane slaughter, and then only if the said animal is suitable for loading, travelling and unloading.

### Training

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- T 3.1** Personnel in charge of cattle transporters must:
- have completed an approved training course, preferably validated
  - be able to demonstrate competence in handling cattle when loading and unloading them, and while in transit.

**i** The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) has developed a training video ('*The Road Ahead – livestock welfare in transit*') for use by hauliers. It is strongly recommended that hauliers obtain a copy of this and utilise it as part of the staff training programme.

- T 3.2** Animal handlers must be trained to:
- understand the likely stress factors cattle may be subject to
  - appreciate how cattle react to other cattle
  - appreciate how cattle react to man
  - appreciate how cattle react to strange noises, sights, sounds and smells.

**i** Cattle have the following behaviour characteristics which must be taken into account when being moved (see M 4.2):

- They have poor vision for distance and detail; therefore they must not be led into shadowy areas.
- They must not be subjected to sudden movement of nearby objects.
- Their hearing is similar to humans so they must not be subjected to sudden loud noise.
- Their instinct to herd is strong so they must not be isolated.

### Handling/loading/unloading

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**T 4.1** Sticks must not be used for hitting cattle.

**T 4.2** Electric goads must not be used.

**i** Sticks and benign handling aids may be used as extensions of the arms.

**T 4.3** Races and gates must be designed so that animals can move through them unhindered when required.

**T 4.4** When operating gates and catches, every effort must be made to reduce excessive noise which may cause distress to the animals.

**T 4.5** If a problem is identified, noise reduction mechanisms must be fitted as necessary.

**T 4.6** Cattle must not be moved or loaded unless the way forward is clear, and there is adequate space available for them to move into.

**T 4.7** Loading facilities must provide a ramp of no more than a 20% incline.

## Transport

- T 4.8** Both loading ramps and tailboards must be appropriately designed and covered with litter, to prevent animals from falling off or slipping.
- T 4.9** All tailboards must be fitted with foot battens.
- T 4.10** If a loading ramp is to be modified or newly installed, a reverse ramp must be provided.

**i** When a 'reverse ramp' is installed, it is the vehicle that negotiates the incline until the tail gate is level with the ground and animals walk straight into or out of the vehicle on the level or slight gradient.

## Transport

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- T 5.1** The timing of transport for any purpose must be planned between haulier and producer(s), and slaughterhouse, if applicable, to minimise travelling and waiting time for the cattle.
- T 5.2** Cattle must be unloaded immediately at a slaughterhouse.
- T 5.3** Cattle, including calves, must not be transported for more than 8 hours (from loading of first animal to unloading of the last).
- T 5.4** Cattle, including calves, must have access to water up to the point of transport.
- T 5.5** Cattle must have access to food up to at least 4 hours before loading onto the lorry.
- T 5.6** All deaths and serious widespread injuries must be recorded and reported to:
- a) the driver
  - b) the haulier
  - c) the slaughterhouse manager
  - d) the farm manager
- before the next consignment from the same source is collected.
- T 5.7** An on-farm record must be maintained of all incidents during transit.
- T 5.8** All incidents during transit must be investigated and the results of the investigation recorded.
- T 5.9** Where causes of incidents of death and serious injury in transit have been identified, prompt action must be taken to prevent further deaths and suffering occurring.
- T 5.10** All transporters must have a 'livestock capacity document' on board at all times.

**i** The 'livestock capacity document' will give data on the size of transporter and the carrying capacity for different livestock species under different climatic conditions.

- T 5.11** Transporters must provide minimum headroom, when standing in a natural position, of:
- Calves – 10cm above highest point of animal
  - Cattle – 20 cm above highest point of animal.

## Transport

**T 5.12** The floors of all vehicles must be covered with sufficient bedding in order to provide comfort and reduce the likelihood of injury.

**T 5.13** The following space allowances must be provided during transport:

	<b>Weight (kg)</b>	<b>Area per head (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>
Small calves	50	0.3 to 0.4
Medium calves	110	0.4 to 0.7
Heavy calves	200	0.7 to 0.95
Medium cattle	325	0.95 to 1.30
Heavy cattle	550	1.30 to 1.60
Very heavy cattle	>770	>1.60


**T 5.14** All hauliers must have a written Standard Operating and Emergency Procedure to implement during transportation (see Appendix 2).

# Slaughter

**All slaughter/killing systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress or discomfort. The pre-slaughter handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in the slaughter must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.**

## Training

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- S 1.1** Managers must develop and implement an animal welfare policy.
- S 1.1.1** The animal welfare policy (see S 1.1) must include written procedures regarding:
- maintaining animal welfare in the abattoir
  - the responsibilities and duties of staff
  - emergency procedures.
- S 1.2** The animal welfare policy must be regularly reviewed and updated.
- S 1.3** Managers must appoint at least 1 trained Animal Welfare Officer (AWO), who is responsible for the implementation of the animal welfare policy.
- S 1.3.1 \*** All AWOs must have attended the Bristol University Animal Welfare Officer training programme, or other recognised, named, validated course on animal welfare at abattoirs.
- S 1.4** Managers, in conjunctions with the AWO, must develop and implement:
- implement a training programme for all staff handling and slaughtering animals
  - ensure that staff are properly trained to carry out their duties and be competent to perform them
  - implement written procedures with regard to ensuring the welfare of the animals is maintained, which must include procedures for emergencies such as escaped, trapped or injured livestock.
-  **Where possible, training related to S 1.4 should be validated.**
- S 1.5** The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) has developed a training programme (Humane Slaughter – Taking Responsibility) for use in abattoirs. Managers must obtain a copy of this and utilise it as part of the staff training programme.
- S 1.6** An AWO must:
- be present on the site at all times whilst slaughter is being carried out
  - make frequent and thorough checks throughout the day to ensure that animals are being effectively stunned and are insensible throughout the slaughter operation.
- S 1.7** Where it is suspected or found that animals are not being effectively stunned, the slaughter line must be stopped and immediate remedial action taken.
- S 1.8** The managers, AWOs and all slaughter staff must have access to a copy of the current DEFRA Codes of Practice relating to slaughter and be familiar with their content.

## Slaughter

### Casualty animals

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- S 2.1** Cattle which are unable to walk must be slaughtered without being moved, i.e. on the lorry or in the lairage pen, using humane casualty slaughter equipment and procedures.
- S 2.2** Casualty animals must be killed in accordance with methods outlined in S 7.1 or, alternatively, injection of an overdose of a drug with anaesthetic properties which causes immediate loss of consciousness and then death, to be administered by a veterinary surgeon, may be used.

### Lairage

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- S 3.1** Slaughterhouse managers must ensure that the premises are constructed and maintained so as to prevent any injury being caused to animals confined there.
- S 3.2** The slaughterhouse must provide a lairage facility which:
- a) is constructed so as to provide shelter from direct sunlight and adverse weather conditions
  - b) provides animals with a dry lying area (see S 3.4 below)
  - c) is of adequate size and construction for the number of animals confined there (see S 3.4 below)
  - d) provides adequate draught free ventilation
  - e) is properly lit to permit animals to be inspected
  - f) has drainage facilities for faeces and urine
  - g) is able to be thoroughly cleaned between batches of animals
  - h) provides easy access to adequate water, which must be available at all times, and to food, if necessary.
- S 3.3** The lairage facility must have isolation pens available, in which sick or injured animals can be isolated and, if necessary, humanely slaughtered, located close to the unloading area and within easy access of the stunning area.
- S 3.4** When cattle are kept in a lairage, the following stocking densities must apply:

Weight (kg)	Minimum bedded lying area (m <sup>2</sup> )
< 100	1.5
101 to 250	2.5
251 to 350	3.5
351 to 450	4.5
451 to 550	5.0
551 to 600	5.5
601 to 650	6.0
651 to 700	6.25
> 700	6.5

- S 3.5** Isolation pens must be available for use at all times.
- S 3.6** Where animals are to be housed overnight in a lairage, then fully bedded pens without any hard standings are acceptable.
- S 3.7** Cattle which, because of their sex, age or origin, are likely to be aggressive, must be separated from each other at lairage and must stay in on-farm groups (or be sub-divided).



## Slaughter

- S 3.8** Cattle in lairage pens must not be exposed to bright artificial light or direct sunlight except during antemortem inspection, which must be carried out in a minimum of 220 lux illumination.

**i** A number of abattoirs have installed closed circuit television (CCTV) monitors within the pre-slaughter handling and slaughter areas. This allows those responsible for animal welfare within the abattoir to ensure that welfare standards are maintained. The installation of CCTV systems is recommended by the RSPCA.

### Pre-slaughter handling

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- S 4.1** Cattle must be handled calmly and quietly, with care to avoid unnecessary excitement or distress.
- S 4.2** Race design and construction must encourage cattle to move forward, with:
- as few right angled bends as possible
  - no projections and obstructions in the races and passageway
  - appropriate lighting.

**i** Solid, high sides to races and passageways, and avoidance of projections, obstructions and sharply angled bends, will facilitate this requirement.

- S 4.3** Cattle must not be moved or loaded unless the way forward for the lead animal is clear, and there is adequate space available for them to move forward.
- S 4.4** Flooring must be non-slip in races and passageways.
- S 4.5** Electric goads must not be used.

### Slaughter equipment

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- S 5.1** The equipment used for the stunning and killing of animals, including the stunning pen and/or restraint devices, must be designed, manufactured and maintained to ensure rapid and effective stunning or killing.
- S 5.2** All slaughter equipment must be thoroughly and appropriately cleaned after use.
- S 5.3** Slaughter equipment must be checked at least once daily by an AWO to ensure it is in working order and in a good state of repair.
- S 5.4** A record of the check on slaughter equipment must be made.
- S 5.5** Reserve equipment for the stunning and killing of animals must be kept at the place of slaughter for use in an emergency.
- S 5.6** Reserve equipment must be checked at least once weekly by an AWO to ensure it is in working order and a good state of repair.
- S 5.7** A record of the check on reserve equipment must be made.

## Slaughter

### Stunning

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- S 6.1** Cattle must be stunned prior to slaughter by means of a stunning system which renders them instantaneously unconscious and insensitive to pain and maintains that state until the point of death.
- S 6.2** Cattle must not be allowed into the slaughter box unless the slaughterman is ready to immediately stun the animal.
- S 6.3** Cattle must be fully in the stunning pen before the floor is dropped.
- S 6.4** All stunning pens for cattle must be constructed to:
- restrict backwards, forwards or sideways movement
  - allow release of the animal's head as soon as the stunning has been completed
  - allow the slaughterman free access to the animal's forehead while it is restrained.
- S 6.5** Cattle must only be stunned when they can be stuck immediately afterwards with a stun-to-stick interval of no more than 60 seconds.

### Slaughter/killing methods

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- S 7.1** Cattle must only be slaughtered/killed using one of the following methods:
- Free bullet (stun-kill)
- or
- concussion (only for cattle over 8 months of age)
  - captive bolt
  - electronarcosis (calves only)
- which renders the animal instantaneously insensible and insensitive to pain, followed by bleeding.
- S 7.1.1** In the case of electronarcosis (i.e. electrodes spanning the brain), the minimum current level during stunning must:
- be no less than 1 amp
  - be attained within 1 second
  - be maintained for at least 3 seconds.
- S 7.1.2** Electrocutation may be used to stun-kill adult cattle.
- S 7.2** Where electrocution is used to stun-kill adult cattle, the electrodes must be placed so that they span:
- the brain, enabling the current to pass through it for a period of at least 1 second, using a 50 to 1500 Hz alternating, clipped or rectified sine wave or square wave, immediately followed by placing of the electrodes so that they span the heart for a period of at least 3 seconds to cause a cardiac arrest, using a current frequency of less than 100 Hz alternating, clipped or rectified sine wave or square wave, or
  - the brain and the heart for a period of at least 3 seconds to cause a cardiac arrest, using a current frequency of less than 100 Hz alternating, clipped or rectified sine wave or square wave.
- S 7.3** The minimum current to be used for adult cattle for the periods mentioned in S 7.2 must be 1.2 amps.

## **Slaughter**

- S 7.4** Where animals are killed individually, the apparatus must:
- a) incorporate a device which measures the impedance of the load and prevents operation of the apparatus if the minimum required current cannot be passed
  - b) incorporate an audible or visual device indicating the length of time of its application to an animal in each cycle of application
  - c) be connected to a device indicating the applied current, positioned so as to be clearly visible to the operator.

## **Sticking**

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- S 8.1** Cattle must be stuck using a sharp knife.
- S 8.2** An incision must be made in the jugular furrow at the base of the neck, directing the knife towards the entrance to the chest to sever the major blood vessels.
- S 8.3** Two knives must be used; the first to open the skin and the second to sever the arteries.
- S 8.4** After incision of the blood vessels, there must be no further dressing procedure performed on the animal for at least 30 seconds, and in any case until all brain-stem reflexes have ceased.
- S 8.5** Where one person is responsible for the stunning, shackling, hoisting and bleeding of cattle, they must complete all these operations on each individual animal in turn.

# Appendix 1

## Herd biosecurity

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All approved units must have a written plan describing precautions to limit the introduction of and/or spread of disease onto and within the unit (this could be considered as part of the Health Plan). Herd health is important from financial, welfare and food safety perspectives.

The written policy must include procedures for cleaning and disinfection of buildings and equipment, specifying the approved dilutions at which chemicals are to be used.

All such chemicals must be on the approved DEFRA list for the purposes of the Diseases of Animals (Approved Disinfectants) (Amendment) (England) Order 2003. Exceptions are acceptable only under veterinary direction.

The written policy must include procedures for pest control.

Units must have written waste management procedures (manure, slurry, all farm waste and general rubbish). Waste materials of any nature must not be a risk to animal health or compromise the control of pests.

Domestic animals must not have access to the unit, other than farm dogs and cats, which must be in a clean, healthy condition and regularly wormed (recorded in Medicine book).

Domestic pets, birds, and pests must not have access to carcasses.

Feed stores, offices, toilets, etc., must be maintained in a clean, hygienic condition.

## Appendix 2

### Transport – standard operating and emergency procedure

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#### Items to be included

1. RSPCA welfare standards relating to transport of cattle.
2. Procedure for loading/unloading of cattle delivery vehicles.
3. Procedure for delivery of cattle to customer sites.
4. Daily journey sheets.
5. List of good hygiene measures, including procedure for cleaning of lorries prior to collection of cattle.
6. Total Quality Management leaflet – if appropriate.
7. Operating procedures for roadside checks.
8. Accident procedure.
9. Out of hours telephone numbers and 'emergency procedure'.
10. Mobile phones or other communication equipment (and procedures for use).
11. Fire extinguishers.
12. Tyres – punctures – codes of practice.
- \* 13. FTA – *'The Driver's Handbook'* (2006) including Tachograph Regulations.
14. Certificate of motor insurance.
15. Guidelines on correct environmental conditions during the journey, depending on length of journey and ambient temperature.
- \* 16. British Cattle Movement Service booklet: *'Cattle keeper's handbook'* (Version two, February 2007)

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