



AUGUST 2023

RSPCA welfare standards
Beef cattle

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Contents

Introduction	4
Guide to the use of the RSPCA welfare standards	4
RSPCA Farm Animals Department	5
RSPCA Assured	5
Food and water	6
Food	6
Water	8
Environment	11
Buildings	11
Thermal environment and ventilation	12
Lying area/space allowance	15
Cubicle housing	16
Lighting	18
Calving accommodation	19
Pasture	19
Bull pens	22
Handling facilities	22
Fencing	23
Disposal of waste	23
Climate change and animal welfare	24
Management	25
Managers	25
Stock-keepers	26
Handling	27
Identification	28
Equipment	29
Inspection	29
Farm dogs	29
Protection from other animals	30
Sourcing of livestock	34
Health	36
Health and welfare monitoring	36
Bovine Tuberculosis	38
Lameness	39
Body condition scoring	41
Husbandry procedures	41
Breeding/calving	41
Medications/vaccinations	43
Recumbent/downer cattle	44
Casualty animals/emergency slaughter/killing	45

Welfare Outcome Assessment	47
Transport	49
Trading cattle	49
Casualty animals	49
Training	49
Handling/loading/unloading	50
Transport	51
Slaughter/killing	54
Training	54
Casualty animals	56
Closed circuit television	57
Lairage	58
Pre-slaughter handling	59
Slaughter equipment	59
Stunning	60
Slaughter/killing methods	62
Sticking	62
Slaughter of pregnant cattle	62
Specific standards and guidance for the rearing, growing and finishing of calves	64
Food and water	64
Food	64
Water	67
Environment	68
Lighting	69
Calf hutches	70
Management	71
Receiving new calves onto the unit	71
Handling facilities	71
Transport/marketing of calves	72
Health and welfare	73
Transport	75
Slaughter/killing	76
Slaughter/Killing on-farm	77

Appendix 1	78
Herd biosecurity	78
Appendix 2	79
Transport – standard operating and emergency procedure	79
Appendix 3	80
AHDB Dairy Mobility Scoring	80
Appendix 4	84
AssureWel Beef Assessment Protocol and Scoresheet	84
Index	91

Introduction

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

The standards are based upon the 'Five Freedoms' as defined by FAWC. 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/provide:

- **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

- The numbered requirements are the standards, all of which must be complied with.
- Boxed sections (indicated by ⓘ) give additional information, including: providing the reasoning behind a standard, expand on a standard, state how a standard can/will be assessed and/or highlight areas where the standards will be reviewed in the future.
- It is expected that all relevant UK legislation regarding farm animal husbandry and welfare on-farm, during transport, and at the abattoir, will be fully implemented in addition to the RSPCA welfare standards.
- **Farmers are required by law to have a thorough knowledge of the Defra *Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Cattle.***



RSPCA Farm Animals Department

The RSPCA's Farm Animals Department develops the RSPCA welfare standards for farm animals. These detailed documents are intended to represent 'best practice' in the care and welfare of farm animals.

The RSPCA works to continually develop and improve the welfare standards using a range of information, including the latest scientific research and practical farming experience. We regularly consult with other animal welfare and agricultural scientists, veterinary surgeons, and farming industry representatives. This helps to ensure that the RSPCA welfare standards continue to be at the forefront of farm animal care and welfare, and are also achievable on commercial farms.

We always value constructive feedback and ideas for improvement from those who are implementing the RSPCA welfare standards. Comments/feedback can be discussed with RSPCA Farm Animals Department scientific staff, by contacting them on the below details:

Address: Farm Animals Department
Parkside
Chart Way
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1XH

Phone: 0300 123 0183

Email: farm-animals@rspca.org.uk

The RSPCA does not approve equipment, but sets standards to ensure any equipment permitted for use is managed appropriately to safeguard the welfare of animals.



RSPCA Assured

RSPCA Assured is the RSPCA's farm assurance and food labelling scheme. RSPCA Assured assesses and approves farms, hauliers and abattoirs that meet all of the applicable RSPCA welfare standards. (Please note that RSPCA Assured does not approve equipment).

Products from animals reared, transported and slaughtered under the RSPCA Assured scheme can be labelled with the scheme's food label: 'RSPCA Assured'. Use of the RSPCA Assured name and mark are strictly subject to RSPCA Assured membership, traceability, licence fee and artwork approval.

Membership of the scheme is subject to an annual fee and successful assessment.

RSPCA Assured is a charity in its own right and not for profit. Any surplus income goes back into improving farm animal welfare.

Any queries relating to the operation of the RSPCA Assured scheme (e.g. administration, assessments etc.) should be directed to the RSPCA Assured office:

Phone: 01403 286170

Email: help@rspcaassured.org.uk

Food and water

Livestock need to have ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and promote a positive state of well-being.

Food

FW 1.1 Approved units must:

- a) have a nutrition plan
- b) review the nutrition plan at least twice yearly.

FW 1.2 **LEGAL** 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.



NEW Care should be taken to avoid the over-supplementation of minerals, particularly copper, to a level which may be toxic. Care should also be taken to avoid mineral deficiencies (see standard FW 1.13). Industry agreed standards state cattle should not be provided with diets that have a copper content exceeding 20 mg/kg DM.

FW 1.3 **LEGAL** Cattle must have access to food each day, except when required by the attending veterinary surgeon.

FW 1.4 **REVISED** For manufactured feed given to all cattle, whether purchased or home-produced, there must be a written record of:

- a) the constituents, and
- b) the nutritional value.

FW 1.4.1 **NEW** The information required under standard FW 1.4 must be used in the development of the nutrition plan (standard FW 1.1).



NEW The nutritional value of the food is the amount (%) of protein, dry matter, ash etc that the food contains, as well as the energy values. The constituents are the ingredients used to make up the feed.

It is recommended producers use forage analysis in the development of their nutrition plan. Forage analysis is readily available and may be offered free to some producers purchasing manufactured feeds or through their nutritionist. We recommend using companies signed up to the Forage Analytical Assurance Group.

Where producers have had problems with underweight or overweight cattle, it is expected that forage analysis is carried out and informs the development of their nutrition plan.

FW 1.5 **LEGAL** 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** Efforts must be made to avoid sudden changes in the type and quantity of food.
- FW 1.8** Cattle must be provided with fibre to allow them to ruminate, which must be of such quality and length as to help avoid acidosis.
- FW 1.9** Cattle must have no necessity to compete for food.
- FW 1.10** Fresh food must be kept within reach of cattle at all times.



In feed barrier systems, cattle can push food away from the barrier as they carry out their foraging behaviour. This feed then needs “pushing up”, i.e. moving back closer to the feed barrier, so the cattle can access it at all times.

- FW 1.11** Feeding space allowance must be as follows:

Weight (kg)	Minimum length mm/head	
	Rationed feeding	Ad. lib feeding
100	350	100
200	400	150
300	500	200
400	600	250
500	700	300
600	750	350



Troughs or feeding surfaces should have a smooth base to encourage exploration and foraging. Any edges of the feeders coming into contact with the cattle should be smooth.

- FW 1.12** Cattle must not be maintained in an environment which is likely to predispose them to nutrient deficiency.
- FW 1.13** Managers must:
- be aware of any mineral deficiencies on the farm
 - correct these as appropriate.
- FW 1.14** All food troughs and feeding equipment must be managed hygienically at all times.
- FW 1.15** **LEGAL** Feeding and watering equipment must be designed, constructed, placed and maintained so that potential contamination of any feed and water is minimised.
- FW 1.16** **LEGAL** Control practices must be in place to minimise access to poisonous plants and unsuitable feedstuffs.
- FW 1.17** **LEGAL** 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 standard FW 1.17 may include the use of lids on feed storage bins and food hoppers.

Water

FW 2.1 All animals 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 2.2 The drinking quality of non-mains water must be:

- independently tested
- tested frequently, and at least as frequently as required by the local authority for the testing of non-mains water for the purposes of human consumption
- tested at the source.

FW 2.3 The water quality test records to standard FW 2.2 must:

- clearly indicate whether the water tested is considered an acceptable source of drinking water for livestock, and
- be kept for at least 2 years.



It is important to stress that water quality may change over time and therefore one should not rely on past analysis. Although water testing should be conducted routinely under normal circumstances, any unusual situation such as changes in water smell, clarity, taste or changes in animals eating or drinking habits, loss of performance, or health problems should immediately trigger the need for testing.

FW 2.4 When cattle are housed, the flow rate of water delivery systems must allow 10% of the herd to drink at any one time.

FW 2.5 **REVISED** There must be sufficient drinking space for at least 10% of the herd to drink at the same time, using the following minimum figures per head:

Weight (kg)	Minimum length per head (mm)
From birth up to 200	300–400
201–350	401–500
351–500	501–600
501–700	601–700



NEW Regarding FW 2.5, animals at the upper end of the weight range are to be provided with the higher space allowance in the range.



Drinking space relating to standard FW 2.5 can either be in a linear trough or a round trough, using trough perimeter as the linear measurement.

The example below shows the minimum drinking space allowances to be provided for a herd of 100 cattle:

Average weight of cattle (kg)	Minimum effective drinking space (m)
50	3.0
200	4.0
275	4.5
425	5.5
600	6.5
700+	7.0

FW 2.5.1 Regarding standard FW 2.5, special attention must be given to horned/rare beef breeds.

FW 2.6 A sufficient number of drinking sites must be provided to prevent undue competition for water.



Each group of housed cattle should have access to drinking water at a minimum of two separate locations.

FW 2.7 If individual drinkers/bowls are used, there must be at least two individual drinkers/bowls for up to 10 cattle and one drinker/bowl per additional 10 cattle thereafter.



Cattle require the following volume of drinking water:

Stock type	Estimated drinking water allowance (l/head/day)
Early lactation suckler cows	50-70
Mid to late lactation suckler cows	40-60
Dry suckler cows	14-40
Stock bull	30-80
Growing cattle	15-50
Finishing cattle	25-75

Table taken from AHDB Beef and Lamb *BRP+ Better Cattle Housing Design* which can be downloaded from the website www.beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk. Note that quantities are dependent on moisture content of the ration and environment factors such as temperature.

FW 2.8 All drinking facilities must be:

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

FW 2.9 Water troughs must:

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



Ideally, the water troughs should be set into the bedded area with one side bordering the hard standing/ loafing area. 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 prevent cattle drinking from the bedded area and therefore help to prevent any poaching of the bedded area.

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

To maximise water intake cattle should not be expected to have to walk more than 250m to access water.

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 reduce poaching of the land.

FW 2.10 When cattle are kept extensively at grass, a supply of sufficient fresh, clean water must always be available.

FW 2.11 Where cattle have access to a natural open water source for drinking e.g. a stream, advice must be taken regarding any potential disease risk.



Natural open water sources, such as streams, are not recommended for the provision of drinking water.

FW 2.12 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 needs to 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 where appropriate.

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

E 1.2 **LEGAL** There must be nothing in the cattle's environment that is likely to cause injury or distress to the animals that can be avoided.



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.

E 1.3 **LEGAL** 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.



Indicators of a poor environment include:

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

Buildings

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

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

E 2.2 Regarding standard 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.



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

E 2.3 Smooth concrete floors must be grooved (9mm deep) or treated with a non-slip coating.

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 All electrical installations at mains voltage must be:

- a) inaccessible to cattle
- b) well insulated
- c) safeguarded from rodents
- d) properly earthed, and
- e) tested at least annually by a qualified or competent person.

i By law, electrical installations need to be tested every 3 years as part of the *Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)*. However, at least once a year, the 'trip switch' needs to be tested to ensure it is in correct working order.

E 2.5 Passages must be of such a design and width, and so constructed, to allow two animals to pass freely.

E 2.6 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 2.7 **LEGAL** Internal surfaces of housing and pens must be made of materials which can be readily cleansed and disinfected or be easily replaced when necessary.

E 2.8 Buildings must be of a height adequate to allow the normal expression of mounting behaviour.

E 2.9 Environmental enrichment must be provided for all cattle when housed.

i Examples of environmental enrichment include short lengths of chain securely attached to gates/pen sides and brushes.

i An indicative guide to cow brush numbers is one brush: 50 cattle.

Thermal environment and ventilation

E 3.1 The thermal environment must not be so hot or so cold as to significantly affect production or cause distress.

i As a guide, comfortable temperatures can range between -15°C to $+25^{\circ}\text{C}$ for healthy adult cattle. Air speed in the environment will affect this, for instance if air speed is high, the lower temperature for comfort will rise (i.e. the temperature at which a cow is comfortable in those conditions will be higher). For calves, the thermal environment should not have a temperature below $+7^{\circ}\text{C}$ (unless clean calf jackets are applied) or above $+25^{\circ}\text{C}$.

- E 3.2** For all cattle, an assessment of their surrounding environmental temperature and air movement (draught) must be undertaken, taking into account:
- breed hardiness
 - age of stock
 - foreseeable climatic conditions
 - natural shelter/shade.

- 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.



The prime concern of winter housing is to keep cattle out of wind, rain and snow which reduce 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 1m 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.

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



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** Ammonia, dust and relative humidity must be measured and recorded in each building:

- at least quarterly
- using meters or testing tubes (for ammonia, dust and relative humidity) or using sensory evaluation (for ammonia and dust only).

- E 3.6.1** If using sensory evaluation to assess ammonia/dust, the standardised protocol shown in the information box below must be used.



Whilst the use of calibrated meters is encouraged, the following air quality assessment protocol can be used instead:

Step 1: Using the chart below, assess ammonia and dust levels (at the animal's level) immediately upon entering the housing.

Step 2: Just prior to leaving the housing during that inspection, assess the air quality once again.

Step 3: Record the highest score from the two assessments.

Score	Description
0	Zero: odour and dust not noticeable; easy to breathe.
1	Weak: odour and dust hardly noticeable; can breathe without effort.
2	Moderate: odour and dust distinct; experience watery eyes and/or coughing.
3	Strong: odour and dust irritating; experience stinging eyes and/or mouth, and/or excessive coughing/sneezing.

E 3.7 When using sensory evaluation to assess air quality, scores of 2 and 3 indicate that ammonia and dust are excessive and air quality must be improved without delay.

E 3.8 When using meters or testing tubes to assess air quality:

- a) ammonia must not exceed 25ppm, and
- b) dust must not exceed 10mg/m³.

E 3.9 A building must provide adequate air space:

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

E 3.10 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 3.11 **LEGAL** When cattle are kept in partially roofed units they must be provided with:

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

E 3.12 Provisions must be made to protect cattle from heat stress.



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

E 3.13 **NEW** Steps must be taken to protect cattle from biting insects if trees are used by the cattle to seek shade, as a number of biting fly species can inhabit these areas (see standard E 8.4 d).

Lying area/space allowance

- E 4.1** **LEGAL** Cattle kept in straw yard accommodation must be kept on, or have access at all times to, a lying area which is:
- well-drained or well maintained with dry bedding, and
 - of sufficient size to accommodate all cattle lying down together in normal resting posture.

- E 4.2** The floor space allowances in straw yard accommodation must be as follows:

Weight of animal (kg)	Minimum bedded lying area (m ²)	Minimum non-bedded/loafing area (m ²)	Minimum total area per animal (m ²)
< 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** Cattle must be able to lie down in a normal position without undue risk of being trodden on or kicked by other cattle.
- E 4.4** Unbedded areas must be:
- slatted or of solid concrete, and
 - scraped at least twice daily.
- E 4.5** Slats must not result in injury to legs/feet.



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 4.5.1** Fully slatted systems without bedding are prohibited.
- E 4.6** Loose housed, growing cattle must be grouped according to size and age.
- E 4.7** The space allowance for cattle housed in groups must take account of the presence or absence of horns.
- E 4.8** When loose housed, polled and horned cattle must not be grouped together, except where a social group exists.
- E 4.9** Precautions must be taken to prevent injury through bullying.

- E 4.10** All cattle must at all times have:
- sufficient freedom of sideways movement to be able to groom themselves without difficulty, and
 - sufficient room to lie, freely stretch their limbs and to rise.
- E 4.11** Cattle must not be closely confined except in the following circumstances, and even then only for the shortest period of time necessary:
- for the duration of any examination, routine test, milking, blood sampling, veterinary treatment
 - while they are being fed on any particular occasion
 - for the purpose of marking, washing or weighing
 - while accommodation is being cleaned
 - during the procedure of artificial insemination
 - while they are awaiting loading for transportation.
- E 4.12** The use of housing systems in which cattle are tethered either for the whole, or part, of the housing period is prohibited.

Cubicle housing



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. We strongly recommend the following:

- cubicle dimensions should be suitable for the largest 10% of cows in the herd
- cubicle width should be at least 1.8 x hip width (measured as the distance between the pin bones)
- cubicle length depends on cubicle layout and size of the animal. AHDB Dairy's *Dairy Housing – a best practice guide* (which can be downloaded from the website www.dairy.ahdb.org.uk or requested by post through the website or by phone: 024 7647 8702) includes the following table as guidance:

Weight of cow (kg)	Total length of bed (m)		
	Open front	Closed front	Head to head
550	2.10	2.40	4.20
700	2.30	2.55	4.60
800	2.40	2.70	4.80

- E 5.1** For cubicle housing systems, animals must be provided with a minimum total social/loafing area (exclusive of cubicles) of 6m² per head.
- E 5.2** Cubicle housing must provide a clean, dry and comfortable bed, free from contamination.
- E 5.2.1** Recycled Manure Solids (RMS) are not permitted as bedding substrates.
- E 5.3** There must be a sufficient slope front to rear on concrete bases, to encourage free drainage.

- E 5.4 Adequate bedding must be provided on the cubicle base.
- E 5.5 Bedding must be managed to maximise cow comfort.
- E 5.6 Fouled bedding must be removed at least twice daily.
- E 5.7 Animals using cubicles must be able to stand with all four feet in the dry cubicle.
- E 5.8 In each cubicle, animals must be able to change position from standing to lying and vice versa in a normal manner without difficulty, hindrance or injury.
- E 5.8.1 To help achieve standard E 5.8, for each cubicle:
 - a) there must be a minimum of 0.7m provided for forward lunging and bobbing of the head,
 - b) where the 0.7m forward lunge space cannot be met it must be clearly demonstrated that the largest animals in the herd have sufficient, unobstructed space to rise and lie down without hindrance.



With reference to standard E 5.8.1, the following protocol shall be used to assess rising behaviour. Assess the largest 20% of animals in the group, or the largest 12 cattle, whichever is the greater number. Encourage each animal to rise and score its rising motion as follows (adapted from J. Huxley and H. Whay, 2006):

0	Unrestricted	Rises as if it were in an open space
1	Mild restriction	Rises smoothly and comfortably but with slight modification, e.g. a slight side lunge
2	Moderate restriction	Takes time to rise and/or makes contact with the cubicle structures whilst rising
3	Severe restriction	'Dog sits' to stand up or makes multiple attempts and shifts to rise.

If any of the animals assessed fall into category 2 or 3, then it will be concluded that the cattle do not have sufficient space to rise and lie down in a normal manner.

Source: Huxley, J. and Whay, H. R. (2006) Welfare: Cow based assessments Part 2: Rising restrictions and injuries associated with the lying surface, *Livestock*, 11 (4): 33–38.

- E 5.9 The cubicle must be constructed so that it prevents the animal from standing or lying so far forward that it either consistently soils the back of the cubicle or becomes unable to rise normally.
- E 5.10 Cubicle divisions must be designed to:
 - a) align a cow properly in her own cubicle
 - b) prevent interference with her neighbour, and
 - c) prevent injury to her neighbour or herself.
- E 5.11 Cubicle divisions must be constructed or adapted so that space sharing is possible.

- E 5.11.1** Where cubicles are narrower than the ideal, rigid lower horizontal rails must be removed and replaced by a flexible alternative.



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

- E 5.12** At least 5% more usable cubicles than animals must be provided and preferably 10 to 20%.



A usable cubicle is one that meets our space and comfort standards and is available for use by the animals (see standards E 5.2, E 5.3, E 5.6–E 5.10 inclusive).

- E 5.13** 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 5.14** The height of the step must not be such that it results in an increased incidence of concussion injuries to the soles.

- E 5.15** Heifers must be familiar with the cubicle environment prior to them calving.

- E 5.16** All flushing and automatic slurry systems must be designed and used so as not to compromise the health and welfare of the cattle.



For example, some automatic systems can damage cattle tails and teats if the animals are not lying in the cubicles properly.

Lighting

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



REVISED With reference to E 6.1, adequate lighting includes being able to inspect cattle clearly for injuries and allow farm workers to carry out their jobs effectively.

- E 6.2** Housed cows must have access for the normal period of daylight hours to an area lit to a level of 200 lux at cattle eye level.

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

Calving accommodation

- E 7.1** Where any cattle which are calving are kept in a building, they must be kept in a pen or a yard that is fully bedded.
- E 7.2** **LEGAL** 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** **LEGAL** Cattle that are calving must be kept separate from other livestock other than calving cows.
- E 7.4** Adequate provision for securing calving cattle must be provided.
- E 7.5** Depending on the calving pattern, a minimum of five 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** Calving cows and heifers must be inspected at least twice per day.
- E 7.8** Cows and heifers must be adequately prepared for calving.



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 7.9** If individual calving boxes are used:
- boxes must be at least 12m²
 - cows must not remain in a box for more than 48 hours, and
 - when in the box, cows must be able to see and hear other cows.
- E 7.10** Adequate provision for milking isolated cows must be provided.

Pasture

- E 8.1** **NEW** All cattle, except unweaned calves being fed by artificial means and calves being reared for veal, must have access to pasture:
- during the grass-growing season, and
 - for at least four hours per day.



NEW For animals being reared for veal, it should be noted they are required to be kept in fully bedded systems with environmental enrichment. See standards E(C) 1.4 and E(C) 1.9.

We strongly recommend that veal calves be provided access to pasture. The exception for veal calves will be reviewed in the next publication of these standards.


REVISED In relation to Standard E 8.1:

- Access to pasture may be provided at any time in a 24 hour period. Ideally, cattle should be given continuous free choice access to pasture and housing.
- Cattle are to be provided with sufficient access to a supplementary diet that can meet their nutritional and intake requirements, particularly suckler cows in late gestation and when freshly calved (see standard FW 1.2).
- Consideration should be given to reducing the risk of heat stress during periods where climatic conditions result in a risk of heat stress (see the information box below standard E 3.1). This may include putting cattle out to pasture at night, rather than during the day.
- The use of technology to more accurately assess the grass growth in individual paddocks, which may aid rotation planning and timing, is encouraged.

E 8.1.1 **NEW** Where the final finishing phase of cattle falls during the grass-growing season, cattle may be housed (according to standard E 4.2 or standard E(C) 1.9) for up to three months.

E 8.2 **NEW** A plan must be in place to specify how standard E 8.1 will be met, which includes:

- a) how many days the farm anticipates access to pasture will be possible (taking into account grass growth and weather conditions),
- b) the number and type of stock expected to be grazing (including anticipated bought-in stock and calved or in-calf cows)
- c) how pasture will be managed and rotated to ensure there is sufficient field space, grass growth and pasture recovery times between grazing periods, and
- d) what provisions will be made prior to turnout to ensure the risk of acidosis and bloat are minimised, e.g. provision of long fibre (see standard FW 1.8).

E 8.3 **NEW** Pasture must provide grass of a sufficient height and density to enable cattle to express grazing behaviour.

E 8.4 **LEGAL** Producers must ensure that the welfare of cattle is not compromised by providing access to pasture by ensuring:

- a) tracks used by cattle are designed to not risk damaging the animals' feet
- b) tracks used by cattle are maintained in a condition which does not damage the feet of the animals
- c) there is enough shade and shelter available for all animals to use at any one time, and
- d) animals are given sufficient protection from biting insects.



Tracks used by cattle should be wide enough for at least two animals to walk side by side and should not have tight corners or any bottleneck points. When cattle are frequently put out to pasture as a herd the following track widths from ADHB Dairy's *Cow Tracks* booklet should be used as a guide:

Number of cows in herd	Width of track (surfaced)
200	4m
300	5m
400	6m
500	7m

We would recommend obtaining and reading this booklet prior to building a track to ensure optimal design, which can be downloaded from www.dairy.ahdb.org.uk or requested by post either through their website or by calling 024 7647 8702.

Providing sufficient protection from biting insects involves treating both the animals and the shelters if possible. Animals should not be excessively annoyed by insects (i.e. repeated stamping, tail swishing and head swiping) and animals should be happy to use the shelter or shade supplied.

E 8.5 Pasture must be managed so that cattle are kept clean.



Stocking densities at pasture will vary. For pasture being used as an exercise area, or for rotational grazing, we would expect stocking densities of up to 10 to 12 cows per acre. However, for pasture being used for the purposes of extensive grazing, and as a significant source of nutrition, we would expect substantially lower stocking densities. Consideration should also be given to the soil type and rainfall of the area when deciding on an appropriate stocking density. At pasture, the stocking density should allow the animals to perform their natural behaviour without hindrance.

E 8.6 If cattle are outwintered, producers must ensure their contingency plans are made available on request.



Outwintering beef cattle is a system that can have health and welfare benefits if managed well and if robust contingency plans are in place. These should cover alternative arrangements should there be extreme weather conditions to ensure animals remain comfortable and are able to receive adequate food and water e.g. for land prone to flooding where there would be no dry lying area, an alternative site where cattle could be moved to should be named.

Bull pens

- E 9.1** Bull pens must be sited so as to allow the bull sight, sound and odour of other cattle and general farm activity.
- E 9.2** Bulls must be attended to at least twice daily by farm staff.
- E 9.3** Individual accommodation for an adult bull of average size must include a bedded sleeping area of not less than 16m².
- E 9.4** For very large bulls, the sleeping area must not be less than 1m² for each 60kg liveweight.
- E 9.5** An exercise and service area must:
- be provided
 - be no less than 25m² in total area.
- E 9.6** Bull pens must:
- be safe for the stock-keepers tending them
 - include adequate restraining facilities
 - include an escape route.

Handling facilities

- E 10.1** There must be appropriate holding and handling facilities on the site.
- E 10.1.1** All holding and handling facilities (whether indoors or outdoors) must minimise stress and prevent injury to the animals.
- E 10.2** Races and gates must be designed so that animals can move through them unhindered when required.
- E 10.3** When operating gates and catches, every effort must be made to reduce excessive noise that may cause distress to the animals.
- E 10.4** If a problem relating to standard E 10.3 is identified, noise reduction mechanisms must be fitted as necessary.
- E 10.5** Loading facilities must provide a ramp of no more than a 20% incline.
- E 10.6** **LEGAL REVISED** To prevent animals from slipping or falling off, all loading ramps and tail boards must be appropriately designed, including:
- fitted with side gates,
 - have foot battens that are suitably spaced, and
 - covered with straw or other suitable material.



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.

Fencing

- E 11.1** All fencing must be adequately inspected and maintained.
- E 11.2** 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 11.3** **NEW** Invisible “virtual” fencing and associated electric shock collars are prohibited.



NEW Virtual fencing is a relatively newly available technology on a commercial scale, which the RSPCA has concerns about. The lack of visual stimuli to mark the fenceline can be a concern, and the audible cue used to “train” the animals to the fenceline may stimulate a startle response, even without the electric shock. It is also unclear how producers would identify if a collar is malfunctioning and giving continual shocks, and there is the risk that cattle would be inspected less frequently due to the ability of stockmen to move the fences remotely via GPS. There is also an increased risk of predation since fences would only keep collared animals in, not predators out. Therefore, this is an area under review.

- E 11.4** The use of electric fences for self-feed silage systems is prohibited.
- E 11.5** 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

- E 12.1** Animal waste and effluents must be stored and disposed of in such a way as to:
- minimise the risk of spread of disease to other animals or humans
 - avoid polluting the environment.
- E 12.2** 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 12.3** Muckheaps in fields must be fenced off to prevent direct access by grazing livestock.

Climate change and animal welfare



The issues relating to climate change have the potential to significantly affect the welfare of farm animals. The RSPCA believes that it is now appropriate to react to, think ahead, and consider what can reasonably be done to mitigate any negative effects that adverse weather conditions may have/be having on the welfare of farm animals now, and in the future.

Examples of important considerations include:

- the need to ensure that the farm buildings can withstand more severe weather conditions
- ensuring ventilation systems are working efficiently
- in addition to ventilation systems, providing misters/showers in areas where cattle are gathered or handled, or above the feed line, to assist temperature regulation
- ensuring that drinking water systems are working efficiently (e.g. not leaking).

Management

A high degree of caring, responsible management and stockmanship is vital to ensure good animal welfare. Managers and stock-keepers need to 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 and other documentation that the *RSPCA welfare standards for beef cattle* require the producer to keep and maintain must be made available to the RSPCA Assured Assessor upon request.

Managers

- M 2.1** Personnel with responsibility for the management of approved establishments must be named and recorded.
- M 2.2** Managers must ensure that all stock-keepers:
- have access to a copy of the current version of the *RSPCA welfare standards for beef cattle*
 - are familiar with its content, and
 - understand and apply its content.
- M 2.3** Managers must:
- develop and implement a suitable training programme for stock-keepers with regular updates and opportunities for continuing professional development and keep records of such training within the VHWP (see standard H 1.1)
 - demonstrate the staff with responsibilities for stock care have the relevant and necessary skills to perform their duties
 - ensure that the VHWP is:
 - implemented
 - updated annually, and
 - that the required data is recorded appropriately
 - maintain records of production data and use of medication, which must include:
 - documentation on all incoming and outgoing stock on the farm, and
 - LEGAL** types and quantities of medicine used.
 - develop and implement a transport plan to an RSPCA Assured abattoir which:
 - includes a method of identification of animals (see standard M 5.2), and
 - minimises waiting time for the cattle.

- M 2.4** Managers must:
- a) develop and implement plans and precautions to prevent/cope with emergencies such as fire, flood, storm damage, breakdown of environmental control systems, or interruption of supplies. e.g. food, water, electricity
 - b) provide an emergency action board sited in a prominent position that is visible to all farm staff and the emergency services, which must include:
 - i. the procedures to be followed by those discovering an emergency, e.g. fire, flood, power failure
 - ii. the location of water sources for use by the fire services, and
 - iii. a map grid reference, GPS co-ordinates and postcode for the location of the unit
 - c) develop and implement a biosecurity plan to minimise the risk of introducing disease onto a site.
- M 2.5** Should an emergency require the removal of livestock to non-RSPCA Assured premises, RSPCA Assured must be informed immediately.
- M 2.6** Managers must:
- a) 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) (Available online)
 - b) have access to the Defra booklet, *Farm Fires: protecting farm animal welfare* (PB 9326, 2004)
 - c) be familiar with, and implement the relevant content from the publications cited in a) and b), above.

Stock-keepers

- M 3.1** **LEGAL** Prior to being given responsibility for the welfare of livestock, stock-keepers must be given appropriate verifiable training for their specific area/s of responsibility. Evidence of this must be provided on request.



Please note, all staff includes temporary staff.



Verifiable training can be obtained through attending a course run by Lantra, NPTC or a local college. A local veterinary practice may also run appropriate courses. A letter from the farm's veterinary surgeon detailing which procedures named members of staff are competent to undertake would also be acceptable.

- M 3.2** Prior to being given responsibility for high-risk procedures, stock-keepers must have passed a practical assessment. Evidence of this must be provided upon request.



High risk procedures are those laid out under standard M 3.6.

- M 3.3** All stock-keepers must:
- understand the times and circumstances where cattle are prone to welfare problems on their own unit
 - be able to demonstrate their competence in recognising and dealing with welfare problems relating to a)
 - have appropriate knowledge and understanding specific to their area of work and those areas listed under standard M 3.4
 - be able to recognise signs of normal behaviour, abnormal behaviour and fear, and
 - be able to recognise signs of common diseases and understand their prevention and control, and to know when to seek veterinary help.

- M 3.4** All stock-keepers must have a knowledge of the following:
- what constitutes good nutrition in cattle
 - body condition scoring and locomotion scoring
 - the functional anatomy of the normal foot, its care and treatment
 - the functional anatomy of the normal teat and udder
 - breeding implications, particularly the selection of bulls for heifers
 - calving and the care of the new-born calf, including routine procedures such as castration and disbudding, and
 - administration of animal medicines, particularly orally and via injection.

- M 3.5** Stock-keepers must be able to demonstrate competence in handling animals in a positive and compassionate manner.

- M 3.6** **REVISED** Stock-keepers must be able to demonstrate their proficiency in procedures that have the potential to cause suffering, e.g. injections, oral dosing (including stomach tubing), intramammary applications, foot trimming, disbudding, castration, marking, calving, emergency slaughter/killing, and per rectum procedures, e.g. Artificial Insemination and Pregnancy Diagnosis.

- M 3.7** Staff must:
- be aware of water sources for use by the fire brigade, and
 - ensure access is available to them at all times.

Handling

- M 4.1** Cattle must be handled quietly and firmly at all times, with care to avoid unnecessary pain or distress.

- M 4.1.1** The behaviour of cattle must be taken into account when they are being moved, so as to avoid unnecessary fear or distress (see information box below).



- **Cattle have poor vision for distance and detail, so they should not be led into dark areas i.e. areas with poor lighting.**
- **Cattle are easily startled and so should not be subjected to sudden movement of nearby objects.**
- **Cattle have hearing that is similar to humans, so they should not be subjected to sudden loud noise.**
- **Cattle have a strong instinct to herd, so they should not be isolated.**

M 4.2 Animal handlers must:

- a) be trained
- b) understand the likely stress factors cattle may be subjected to, and
- c) appreciate how cattle react towards other cattle, towards man and to strange noises, sights, sounds and smells.



NEW Animal handling training may be delivered by a local university or college, via Lantra, City and Guilds or other providers. It may also be provided by suitably qualified members of the farm's staff.

M 4.3 Cattle must not be moved or loaded unless:

- a) the way forward for the lead animal is clear, and
- b) there is adequate space available for them to move into.

M 4.4 Cattle must not be rushed or run along tracks/races/passageways or through gateways.

M 4.5 No animal must be pulled or lifted by the tail, ears or limbs.

M 4.6 Sticks must not be used for hitting cattle.

M 4.7 Electric goads must not be present or used on any site.



Sticks or other benign handling aids may be used as extensions of the arms.

M 4.8 A cattle-handling unit must be available, comprising a collecting system and a method of restraint, appropriate to the type, temperament and numbers of stock to be managed.

Identification

M 5.1 Neckbands, tailbands or legbands must:

- a) only be used for identification purposes
- b) 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.



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. Unacceptable methods include brisket/dewlap tags (which are illegal).

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

Equipment

- 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** **LEGAL** All automatic equipment must be thoroughly inspected by a stock-keeper, or other competent person, at least once each day, to check that there is no defect in it.
- M 6.3** **LEGAL** 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** **LEGAL** 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.

Inspection

- 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
 - record any observations and/or actions taken.
- M 7.2** **LEGAL** 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 recorded and dealt with appropriately and without delay.



Welfare problems of sufficient severity that they should have been noticed on previous inspections and dealt with, shall be taken by the RSPCA Assured Assessor as evidence of negligence of duties by the stock-keeper.

Farm dogs

- 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 farm dogs must receive regular, appropriate vaccination and treatment of internal and external parasites with the date of administration and details of each treatment recorded within the VHWP.
- M 8.4** Farm dogs must not be allowed to scavenge on carcasses or animal parts, including placentae.



REVISED The parasite *Neospora caninum* is a problem in the cattle industry and can infect cattle (initially) through the ingestion of infected dog faeces. Infected cows can pass it on to their foetus if pregnant, or abort. Dogs can become infected via scavenging infected carcasses, placentae/aborted foetuses or potentially through a raw food diet. Bitches can also transmit the infection to puppies through the placenta and those puppies would then pass the organism in their faeces. All possible steps should be taken to avoid infection in the first place, including clearing up after any visitor dogs around the farm.

For those farms with public footpaths running through them, we recommend taking steps to inform dog walkers about the risks of neospora to your cattle and, where possible, placing fencing around the public footpath to ensure dogs cannot stray into the field.

- M 8.5** **NEW** Where farm dogs defecate in areas where cattle have access it must be promptly removed.

Protection from other animals

- M 9.1** A written Wild Animal Control Plan (WACP) must:
- be in place, and
 - be implemented on farm.

M 9.2 Levels of potentially harmful wild animals (e.g. rodents and birds) must be humanely managed to avoid:

- a) the risk of disease spread to livestock
- b) damage to livestock buildings and the services on which livestock depend, and
- c) contamination and spoilage of feed.



In England and Wales, the following legislation applies to the management of wildlife:

- **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**
- **Animal Welfare Act 2006**
- **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010**
- **Protection of Badgers Act 1992**
- **Pests Act 1954**
- **The Spring Traps Approval (England) Order 2012**
- **The Spring Traps Approval (Wales) Order 2012**
- **The Small Ground Vermin Traps Order 1958**
- **Food and Environment Protection Act 1985**
- **The Control of Pesticides Regulations (COPR) 1986**
- **Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962**

Equivalent legislation applies in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

M 9.3 The primary means of protecting livestock from wild animals, as documented in the WACP, must be by:

- a) physical exclusion methods
- b) the removal of elements in the vicinity of cattle that could encourage the presence of wild animals, and
- c) maintaining units in a condition which minimise the risk of wild animals gaining access to the unit.



Physical exclusion measures are the most humane and effective methods of providing protection from wild animals. Proofing measures should only be applied after the area has been checked and cleared as applying proofing can interfere with rodent behaviour and encourage them to spread to other areas. Methods of proofing and physical exclusion include:

- **construction/maintenance of fencing that is appropriate for excluding the wild animals in question**
- **removal of shelter/cover (e.g. weeds, heaps of rubble, broken equipment etc.) in the area surrounding livestock buildings**
- **removal/protection of obvious food sources**
- **maintenance of drains**
- **maintenance/proofing of buildings against wild animals**
- **storing bedding away from animals.**



Rodents are less likely to inhabit an area if there is no cover or food supply. Reduced food availability will also increase the likelihood of rodents consuming bait, where applied. When stores or livestock buildings are empty, the opportunity should be taken to check and maintain spaces and introduce any necessary controls before restocking.

- M 9.4** Where any lethal method of control is being considered, a site survey of the unit must be carried out before applying the control (i.e. bait or traps), identifying:
- the type, level and extent of the problem species
 - any non-target animals likely to be present, and
 - any housekeeping and proofing issues.
- M 9.5** Where any lethal method of control is used, its use must have taken into account the results of the site survey (standard M 9.4).
- M 9.6** The WACP must include provisions that specifically exclude the snaring or gassing of animals, and the use of glue traps.
- M 9.7** Long-term baiting must not be used as a routine rodent control measure.



Long-term baiting should not be necessary if bait or traps are applied effectively. Long-term baiting can also contribute to bait resistance in rodents.



The RSPCA is opposed to the use of poisons that cause animal suffering and it is important not to rely solely on the use of rodenticide. The RSPCA is concerned about the welfare of all animals that have the capacity to suffer, and therefore all alternative forms of humane deterrent should be exhausted before resorting to the use of poisons for rodents.



Any baiting programme should be considered carefully and justified in risk assessments for each location where used. Consideration should be given to using non-toxic baits in order to ascertain the presence of rodents, which may necessitate the use of rodenticide.

- M 9.8** When bait and/or traps are used, records of the use must be kept and:
- state the location of the bait/traps
 - state what bait/traps were used
 - state the volume/number of bait/traps placed
 - state the name of the person who placed the bait/trap, and
 - be retained for at least two years.
- M 9.9** Bait and traps must:
- be placed in suitable positions, and
 - be sufficiently protected to avoid harming non-target animals.



Site plans should highlight potential high risk areas for wild animal activity rather than permanent baiting locations.

M 9.10 Bait must be used according to the manufacturer's instruction for:

- a) storage
- b) usage, including areas of use and replenishment, and
- c) disposal.

M 9.11 Traps must be:

- a) used according to the manufacturer's instructions
- b) maintained in good order
- c) disposed of appropriately if no longer fit for purpose, e.g. have broken, and
- d) stored safely and securely.

M 9.12 Bait points must:

- a) be monitored regularly, and
- b) records of monitoring be kept including:
 - i. levels of activity at each bait point
 - ii. any missing or disturbed bait, and
 - iii. the name of the person responsible for monitoring the bait points.

M 9.13 Trap points must:

- a) be monitored at least twice a day, ideally at dawn and dusk, and
- b) records of monitoring be kept including:
 - i. level of activity at each trap
 - ii. any missing or disturbed traps, and
 - iii. the name of the person responsible for monitoring the traps.

M 9.14 Any injured, sick or dying wild animals found – that have been targeted for control – must be humanely dispatched immediately to prevent further suffering.



Regular replenishment of bait will help prevent sub-lethal doses, which can result in a build-up of resistance to the active ingredient.

M 9.15 Where bait is used, dead animals must be disposed of safely, in line with the manufacturer's product label.



Safe disposal of wild animals that have died as a result of poisoning reduces the risk of secondary poisoning in non-target species, such as domestic and other wild animals (including birds), that may consume the carcasses.

- M 9.16** Once treatment has finished, all traps and traces of bait must be:
- removed
 - disposed of according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- M 9.17** Domestic animals must not have access to the unit, other than farm dogs and cats.
- M 9.18** Farm cats must be:
- in a healthy condition, and
 - regularly wormed (record to be kept in medicine book).
- M 9.19** Wild animal control methods must be covered by the farm COSHH assessment, where required.
- M 9.20** Managers must ensure all stock-keepers:
- have access to a copy of the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use, *UK Code of Best Practice and Guidance for Rodent Control and the Safe Use of Rodenticides*
 - are familiar with its content, and
 - understand and apply its content



Producers are strongly encouraged to complete the free, self-study training course on rodent control available at: <http://rodentcontrolonfarms.co.uk/login/index.php>. The content of the course is based on a LANTRA course and is approved by the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use. Further information is also available in the AHDB document *Rodent Control on Farms: A practical guide to effective and responsible use of bait rodenticides*.

Sourcing of livestock

- M 10.1** All cattle presented for slaughter must have spent their entire lives on RSPCA Assured farms, except in the circumstances set out in standards M 10.2 and M 10.3.



Animals can still be transferred between farms, as long as all premises are RSPCA Assured approved. If finishers have problems in sourcing RSPCA Assured stock, please contact the RSPCA Assured office where information on RSPCA Assured approved cattle breeders is held.


- M 10.2** In the case of new members of the RSPCA Assured 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 RSPCA Assured farms from the date of accreditation before qualifying as RSPCA Assured animals for the purposes of labelling after slaughter.
 - b) If the animals are moved prior to the 120 days, they can still retain their RSPCA Assured status if they are moved to other RSPCA Assured approved farms using RSPCA Assured approved transport (including the producer's own transport), and the total dwell time on approved 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 RSPCA Assured label must be sourced from an RSPCA Assured approved farm.
 - d) Animals that have not completed the 120 day dwell time on RSPCA Assured farms may be registered on the store stock register as 'RSPCA Assured' provided that:
 - i. it is stated that they still have dwell days to serve on RSPCA Assured farms prior to slaughter, and
 - ii. the number of dwell days remaining is stated.
- M 10.3** Where RSPCA Assured producers source calves from non-RSPCA approved farms they must be no older than 65 days of age.
- M 10.3.1** When sourcing calves they must:
- a) be bought direct from the producer, and
 - b) not come via a livestock market or collection centre.



The aim of the RSPCA Assured 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.

Health and welfare monitoring

- H 1.1** **REVISED** All cattle units must have a written Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHWP) drawn up in consultation with the attending veterinary surgeon and other suitably qualified persons, for example nutritionists and/or person(s) responsible for the animals. This plan must include:
- a) the names and specific roles of all personnel involved with the care of livestock on the farm
 - b) an infectious disease and vaccination plan with details of any vaccines required to be used, target animals and boosters required
 - c) a parasite control plan that specifies strategies to prevent infestations and worming programmes, including target animals and medicines to be used
 - d) a biosecurity and infectious disease control policy for controlling the spread of infectious disease between stock, which must include disease investigation and surveillance, the introduction of incoming stock and the isolation of stock with infectious disease (see Appendix 1)
 - e) a protocol for bringing new animals on site, including hire bulls, and including health screening, quarantine, vaccination, parasite control and lameness control. The timing and mechanisms by which these will be achieved must be clearly laid out
 - f) procedures for the management of casualty animals and downer cattle, including methods for humane emergency slaughter/killing
 - g) an effective procedure for identifying animals that are undergoing/have undergone treatment, which is known to all farm staff, and
 - h) procedures for the safe disposal of pharmaceutical waste, needles and other sharps, in accordance with the relevant waste disposal regulations.
- H 1.1.1** **NEW** All plans and procedures relating to the VHWP (see standard H 1.1) must be implemented as written.
- H 1.2** **REVISED** Pain relief must be provided:
- a) when any procedure performed on the animal is likely to cause pain during and/or after the procedure, for example therapeutic foot trimming, and
 - b) when an animal is suffering from a condition which is likely to be painful, e.g. lameness.
- H 1.2.1** **NEW** All pain management provided to cattle must be recorded.
- H 1.3** **REVISED** The VHWP must be:
- a) reviewed at least annually, and
 - b) updated as required and in any case at least annually.
- H 1.3.1** Beef producers must arrange for at least one veterinary visit per year for finishing units and two per year for breeding units.

- H 1.4** The individual farm VHWP must:
- identify and list all the health and welfare conditions currently affecting and likely to affect the herd (see standard H 1.1)
 - document (i) how, (ii) when and (iii) how often each condition will be monitored
 - record the type of animal affected (i.e. age, stage of production etc.)
 - record the level of each condition for the herd
 - set a threshold limit for the level of each condition for the farm
 - monitor the level of each condition for the farm
 - for each condition, develop and implement a plan designed to prevent any increase in, and/or reduce the average level of, that condition for the farm (a prevention plan) including the method of control to be used, and
 - ensure a treatment plan is developed for the health and welfare conditions listed in standard H 1.5.
- H 1.4.1** If any condition exceeds the agreed threshold limit established in the VHWP, the threshold value must be reviewed and revised in consultation with the relevant advisor to address any problems which have been identified.
- H 1.5** The following health and welfare conditions, where applicable to the unit, must be listed in the VHWP (see standard H 1.4):
- metabolic disorders (bloat, acidosis, hypocalcaemia, hypomagnesaemia, ketosis)
 - problems at calving and abortions
 - injuries
 - body condition
 - incidence of lameness
 - incidence of mastitis
 - LEGAL** mortality – including sudden deaths and those humanely killed as unfit, and
 - the main disease problems known or suspected to be present on-farm, e.g. bTB, Johne's disease, BVD, IBR, Neospora, Fluke and many others.
-  **NEW** To reduce the time taken to complete the Welfare Outcome Assessment (WOA), and for consistency to allow year-on-year comparison, it is recommended that producers, their vets and other analysts looking at this data calculate H 1.5 d), e) and g) according to the guidance laid out in the WOA protocol in Appendix 4 (see Sections 1 (mobility), 3 (body condition), and 8 (mortality)). This guidance has been developed from currently used industry methods and recommendations.
- H 1.6** All sudden deaths, disease outbreaks and cattle killed as unfit must be reported to the veterinary surgeon, if appropriate.
- H 1.6.1** The outcome of any action relating to standard H 1.6 must be recorded.
- H 1.6.2** **NEW** For all sudden deaths and cattle killed as unfit, the following must be recorded:
- the date of death/killing
 - the known or suspected reason for death/killing.
- H 1.7** **LEGAL** Any cattle suffering from illness or injury must be:
- segregated if necessary, and
 - treated without delay.

- H 1.7.1** **LEGAL** In relation to standard H 1.7, veterinary advice must be sought when needed, or if necessary, such animals must be humanely killed.
- H 1.8** Any replacement animals brought in from others sources must be quarantined and/or appropriately treated, e.g. for ecto-/endoparasite control, in accordance with the VHWP (see standard H 1.1), before integration.
- H 1.9** Measures must be in place to minimise the risk/incidence of dry cow (summer) mastitis.
- H 1.10** 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.



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

Bovine Tuberculosis

- H 2.1** The VHWP must include a Bovine Tuberculosis Management Plan, which must be implemented.
- H 2.2** The Bovine Tuberculosis Management Plan must include the following:
- a) the biosecurity measures in place to minimise the risk of introducing the disease onto the farm from:
 - i. other cattle
 - ii. environmental sources, including from other animals and vehicles
 - b) the biocontainment measures that will be put in place if reactors and inconclusives are found
 - c) what, if any, enhanced testing is being carried out and under what circumstances, i.e. routinely or during an outbreak, and
 - d) a contingency plan to ensure movement restrictions do not lead to a compromise in cattle welfare should a TB breakdown occur.



Current sources of information and advice to help develop the Bovine Tuberculosis Management Plan include:

- a farm's private veterinary surgeon
- the TB Advisory Service
- the local APHA veterinary surgeon
- TB Hub (www.tbhub.co.uk)

H 2.3 As part of the Bovine Tuberculosis Management Plan, the following measures must be taken:

- a) restricting badger access to:
 - i. feed stores
 - ii. water and feed troughs
 - iii. mineral licks
- b) not placing feed directly on the ground at pasture
- c) cleaning up feed spillages without delay
- d) boiling or pasteurising milk from the cows prior to feeding to the calves by artificial means
- e) putting effective physical barriers in place between neighbouring herds
- f) not sharing equipment or vehicles with other farms
- g) spreading manure on arable land or pasture at least two months prior to being grazed by cattle
- h) not using manure from other farms for spreading, and
- i) avoiding grazing practices that may increase the risk of cattle ingesting contaminated pasture.

Lameness

H 3.1 The VHWP must include a foot care plan, which must include:

- a) the identification of all conditions that could affect foot health on-farm and the specific methods of control to help prevent/reduce them
- b) the feet of all cattle to be inspected for signs of abnormal wear, infection or excessive growth at least annually, by a competent foot trimmer (see information box, below)
- c) regular footbathing to be implemented, if deemed necessary, and
- d) a target prevalence for lameness, tailored to the individual farm.



A competent foot trimmer is defined as a trimmer registered with the National Association of Cattle Foot Trimmers (NACFT) or the Cattle Hoofcare Standard Board (CHCSB) and having achieved at least the Dutch Diploma or NPTC Level 3.


H 3.2 Close attention must be given to the condition of the feet during daily inspections of the cattle.

H 3.3 Cattle with a lameness score:


- a) of 3 must receive immediate attention
- b) of 2 must receive attention as soon as possible and, if in an extensive system, at least within one week.

- H 3.4** Producers must have a plan addressing how they will achieve compliance with standard H 3.3. This must include a named member of staff, veterinary surgeon or foot trimmer, who has undergone recognised training in foot trimming, that will be called to come and examine and treat the animal.


 **Training in foot trimming must be provided by Lantra, a local veterinary practice or another designated course provider e.g. agricultural colleges.**

 **If the farm uses a contract foot trimmer then this person or company should also be named in the VHWP, alongside any qualified member/s of staff.**

- H 3.5** **REVISED** All cattle, excluding calves, must be mobility scored at least once a year and the results recorded in the VHWP.


 **The RSPCA recommends using the DairyCo Mobility Scoring system for the assessment of lameness in cattle (see Appendix 3). Although the DairyCo guide has been developed specifically for scoring dairy herds, the RSPCA believes that the principles of the guide can also be appropriate and useful for scoring beef cattle herds.**

- H 3.5.1** **REVISED** Where an animal with a mobility score 3 is identified, there must be a record of the treatment/s that the animal has had and is receiving, which must include the necessary pain relief provided and housing conditions, if applicable.

 **REVISED** **It is the RSPCA's belief that early detection and prompt, appropriate treatment can usually prevent the development of a score 3 lameness.**

- H 3.6** **REVISED** A footbathing facility must provide:

- a) a treatment containing an antibacterial agent at the appropriate concentration, which is regularly topped up or replaced
- b) foot dipping of the entire herd at intervals appropriate to the antibacterial agent in use
- c) a minimum fluid depth of 100 mm, maintained throughout the duration of footbathing (note that to maintain this level the fluid will need to be deeper than this at the start and/or the bath regularly topped up with solution at the appropriate concentration)
- d) a non-slip entry and exit surface.

 **A pre-treatment foot washing facility to remove excess dirt and organic matter is recommended if the treatment bath is shorter than 3.0m.**

- H 3.7** Antibiotic agents must not be used in footbaths.

Body condition scoring

- H 4.1** Body condition change in cattle must be carefully planned, maintained and recorded in the Veterinary Health & Welfare Plan (VHWP), according to the stage of production.



Body condition scoring guidance can be found on the AHDB Beef and Lamb website. To maintain good health and fertility, cows should not lose more than 0.5 of a body condition score during their production cycle. The following scores are the minimum acceptable ranges for various stage of the production cycle:

	Spring calvers	Autumn calvers
At calving	2.5–3.0	2.5
At service	2.5	2.5
At housing or weaning	3.0–3.5	2.5–3.0

Although these are minimum ranges, it should be noted that cattle should not be allowed to get excessively fat (BCS ≥ 4).

Husbandry procedures

- H 5.1** The removal of horns from mature cattle must:
- only be performed by a veterinary surgeon
 - not be a routine procedure.
- H 5.2** Practices or procedures which may be detrimental to welfare and have no purpose other than cosmetic enhancement are prohibited.

Breeding/calving

- H 6.1** Induction of parturition must never be used as a routine management procedure.
- H 6.1.1** Breeding must be planned in such a way that:
- caesarean sections, and
 - induced abortion of heifers
- do not become routine procedures.



NEW More than one caesarean section in a cow will be considered as caesarean sections becoming a routine procedure for that cow.

H 6.1.2 Breeders must not breed double muscled bulls with:

- a) double muscled cows, or
- b) heifers.



REVISED Double muscled bulls bred with any female with a narrow pelvic opening, e.g. heifers and double muscled cows, can often result in the need for routine caesarean section and therefore should be avoided.

H 6.2 **LEGAL** Non-veterinarians performing per rectum investigations or artificial inseminations must have achieved a recognised standard in the relevant techniques.



Alternatives to per rectum pregnancy diagnosis should be considered, for example:

- **blood testing for Pregnancy Associated Glycoproteins (PAGs).** Testing can occur from 60 days after calving and 28 days post-service and throughout the pregnancy. If PAGs are high during these periods then the animal is in calf.
- **blood testing for progesterone.** At 18–24 days post-service low levels indicate the animal is not in calf. At more than 24 days post-service high levels indicate pregnancy or could indicate a persistent Corpus Luteum without pregnancy.

H 6.3 Embryo Transfer and Ovum Pick-up are not permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where there will be an outcome that is demonstrably beneficial to animal welfare. Requests for permission to perform these procedures must:

- a) be submitted in writing to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department by the producer in conjunction with the unit's veterinary surgeon
- b) include the reasons for the request being made, and
- c) include an indication of numbers involved.



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 Committee (2012) as posing a risk to animal welfare.

H 6.3.1 **LEGAL** The use of genetically modified and/or cloned animals, and their offspring, is prohibited.

H 6.4 Calving aids must only be used to assist a delivery and not to produce a calf as quickly as possible.

H 6.5 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.

Medications/vaccinations

- H 7.1** Medicines must be:
- clearly labelled, and
 - stored in accordance with the label instructions.
- H 7.2** Medicines must be kept in a secure, lockable store which is safe from animals, children and birds.
- H 7.3** The medicine store must be separate from food producing areas.
- H 7.4** A nominated person must:
- be responsible for the management of the medicine store, and
 - keep appropriate records for stock control purposes.
- H 7.5** **LEGAL** Any medicines used must be:
- licensed for use in the UK, and
 - applied in accordance with UK and EU legislation.



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 Cattle Production*, issued by the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) Alliance (www.ruma.org.uk).

- H 7.6** Antibiotics must only be used when necessary, and always used responsibly.



REVISED Prevention is better than cure, and it is the implementation of prevention strategies alongside the adoption of farming practices that prioritise and promote animal welfare that are key to reducing antibiotic use.

For more information on this issue, please see our information sheet available on our website www.rspca.org.uk.

- H 7.7** **NEW** The prophylactic use of antibiotics is not permitted.



NEW Prophylactic treatment is intended to prevent sickness or disease developing in a group of healthy animals where a veterinary surgeon has identified that there could be a high risk of bacterial infection. We believe that, in ruminants, there should be no need for the prophylactic use of antibiotics when following these standards. However, we acknowledge there may be very exceptional circumstances, e.g in the case of an emergency, such as a transport accident, where a veterinary surgeon may feel it is in the best interests of the affected animal's welfare for antibiotics to be given preventatively. We would expect these occasions to be extremely rare and limited to only a few animals.

Metaphylactic treatment is intended to control disease spreading in groups of animals where some are already showing clinical signs of disease and is not covered by standard H 7.7.

- H 7.8** The use of antibiotics on-farm must be reviewed annually and this review must form part of the VHWP.
- H 7.8.1** In light of the findings of the antibiotic use review (see standard H 7.8) an action plan must be drawn up aimed at reducing the use of antibiotics on the farm through improvements in animal husbandry.
- H 7.8.2** **NEW** When reviewing the use of antibiotics on-farm, the following must be included in the plan (see standard H 7.8.1):
- a) the different classes of antibiotic drug used,
 - b) which group/s* of animals were treated, and for which condition/s,
 - c) the number of animals treated per occasion,
 - d) the total amount of each individual drug within a class that was used (in mg/kg or mg/pcu) per occasion
 - e) a specific section covering all the above for 'Critically Important Antibiotics' (CIAs).

*A group of animals refers to animals of a similar age and/or stage of production.



REVISED This review is intended to highlight which groups of animals are suffering from particular diseases and therefore aid the development and implementation of targeted prevention strategies.

Recumbent/downer cattle

- H 8.1** 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.
- H 8.1.1** Whatever type of lifting gear is used, care must be taken not to cause unnecessary pain or distress to the animal.
- H 8.1.2** Animals must only be lifted if there is full body support.
- H 8.1.3** If animals must be moved, they must not be dragged.



Possible injury-free methods of moving recumbent cattle are as follows:

- on a piece of plywood covered with a good layer of bedding
- on a spare gate, covered in tarpaulin/sheeting and a good layer of bedding
- along a path constructed of deep straw, whilst laid on a tarpaulin/piece of sheeting
- in a foreloader bucket deeply lined with straw.

- H 8.2** All recumbent (downer) cattle must be treated without delay.
- H 8.3** Where the prognosis for recovery of a recumbent (downer) cow is poor, early intervention by humanely destroying the animal on farm must be undertaken.

Casualty animals/emergency slaughter/killing

- H 9.1** **REVISED** Each farm must have the provision for the prompt, humane slaughter/killing of emergency/casualty cattle.
- H 9.1.1** **NEW** Emergency slaughter/killing must be carried out by either:
- a) a named, trained, competent member of staff, or
 - b) a licensed slaughterman.
- H 9.1.2** Where provisions relating to standard H 9.1 are not possible, a veterinary surgeon must be called out to carry out the procedure.
- H 9.1.3** Names and contact details of staff that are trained in humane slaughter/killing, and a slaughterman, must be in the VHWP (see standard H 1.1) and must be available to all staff members.



Members of staff trained in humane slaughter/killing or external slaughtermen named in the VHWP should have read the relevant HSA guidelines, available online at www.hsa.org.uk/publications/online-guides, including:

- **emergency slaughter**
- **humane killing of livestock using firearms**
- **captive bolt stunning of livestock.**

- H 9.1.4** **REVISED** Equipment for the slaughter/killing of animals must be:
- a) maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions
 - b) easily accessible to the relevant member of staff, and
 - c) checked at least monthly, and immediately prior to first use of the day, to ensure it is in good working order.
- H 9.1.5** **NEW** A named member of staff responsible for checking the equipment for emergency slaughter/killing (see standard H 9.1.4), must be included in the management plan for downer/casualty animals (see standard H 1.1 f)).
- H 9.1.6** **NEW** A log book must be kept of the equipment checks (see standard H 9.1.4 c) including:
- a) who carried out the checks
 - b) the date the checks were carried out
 - c) any problems identified
 - d) the actions taken to rectify any problems identified.
- H 9.2** **REVISED** If there is any doubt as to how to proceed in the management of casualty cattle, the veterinary surgeon must be called at an early stage to advise whether treatment is possible or whether humane slaughter/killing is required to prevent suffering.

H 9.3 **REVISED** If an animal is in severe pain that is uncontrollable, then the animal must be promptly and humanely slaughtered/killed.



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

H 9.4 **LEGAL** Cattle must only be slaughtered/killed on-farm using one of the following methods:

- a) shot gun
- b) free bullet
- c) captive bolt followed by bleeding or pithing
- d) chemical euthanasia by overdose of an anaesthetic drug (carried out by veterinary surgeon).

H 9.5 **NEW** Cows in the last third of their gestation period (i.e. 27 weeks pregnant or more) requiring emergency/casualty slaughter must be processed:

- a) according to standards S 10.5, 10.6 and 10.7, and
- b) under veterinary guidance.

H 9.6 **LEGAL** All carcasses must be disposed of strictly according to current legislation.

H 9.7 A record must be kept of how and where all such carcasses are disposed of.

Welfare Outcome Assessment

Welfare standards for farm animals are primarily based on 'inputs', i.e. they describe what must be provided to the animals in terms of certain resources, such as housing, space, feed, veterinary care and management practices. However, it is important to know what effect these inputs are having on the welfare of the animals and therefore look at the 'outcomes' of these inputs, i.e. the impact of these inputs on the health, physical condition and behaviour of the animals themselves. This practice is known as 'Welfare Outcome Assessment'.

i RSPCA Welfare Outcome Assessment has been developed for beef cattle and offers a practical and scientifically informed method to provide a more objective, animal-focussed picture of the level of welfare being achieved on-farm for certain key welfare measures. The welfare measures selected for assessment are listed in Appendix 4.

i The following information is applicable to RSPCA Assured members only:

Members of the RSPCA Assured scheme will receive a Welfare Outcome Assessment as part of their routine RSPCA Assured farm assessment visits. Additional Welfare Outcome Assessments may also be undertaken by RSPCA staff as part of the RSPCA Assured certification process.

WA 1.1 It must be ensured that a Welfare Outcome Assessment is conducted:

- a) according to the protocol in Appendix 4,
- b) using the assessment form in Appendix 4 or, in the case of RSPCA Assured scheme members, the scheme's equivalent current Welfare Outcome Assessment form must be used;
- c) on a regular basis or, for RSPCA Assured scheme members, during each scheme assessment visit, and
- d) by
 - i. a suitably competent person that is independent from the direct management of the farm, and
 - ii. in the case of RSPCA Assured scheme members, by the relevant scheme personnel.

i With reference to standard WA 1.1 c), Welfare Outcome Assessments should be carried out approximately every 12 months.

i With reference to standard WA 1.1 d) i) a suitable person to conduct the assessment would be a qualified vet; a relevant, independent consultant with a good knowledge of beef cattle welfare and production; a Farm Assurance Scheme Assessor; or the company fieldsman (or, if the company does not have a Fieldsman, someone with an equivalent role within the company).

- WA 1.2** A completed copy of the Welfare Outcome Assessment form (see standard WA 1.1 b)) or a record of the results must be kept:
- a) on farm, and
 - b) for a minimum of five years.
- WA 1.3** With regards to standard WA 1.2, the document left on farm must include the following information:
- a) the date of the audit
 - b) the group audited
 - c) the name, organisation and job title of the person who undertook the assessment
 - d) the age of the herd at the time of the assessment
 - e) any action to be taken (see standard WA 1.4), and
 - f) the signature of the person undertaking the audit.
- WA 1.4** Any health/welfare issue identified as an area of concern must be included within the VHWP (see standard H 1.1).



The Welfare Outcome Assessment will not always provide a definitive farm level prevalence of welfare for the measures assessed. The assessment has been designed to identify areas of welfare concern that are likely to be more wide-spread on the farm and therefore warrant further investigation and careful monitoring. Welfare Outcome Assessments can also indicate areas where welfare is being safeguarded.

Transport

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

Trading cattle

- T 1.1** Cattle must not:
- be sold at livestock markets, or
 - pass through collection centres.
- T 1.2** Cattle, including calves, must not be exported live overseas, either directly from the farm of origin, or indirectly via a third party.
- T 1.3** Producers must be able to provide verification of compliance with standard T 1.2 on request.
- T 1.4** Producers must notify any auction markets they use that the animals they sell are not for export.

Casualty animals

- T 2.1** **LEGAL** **REVISED** A sick or injured animal may only be transported if:
- it is being taken for veterinary treatment under veterinary advice, or
 - a veterinary surgeon has certified it suitable for loading, travelling and unloading.

Training

- T 3.1** **LEGAL** 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.
- T 3.2** The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) has developed a training programme (*'The Road Ahead – livestock welfare in transit'*) for use by hauliers. This must be utilised as part of the staff training programme.
- T 3.3** **REVISED** Hauliers must:
- have access to a copy of the current version of the *RSPCA welfare standards for beef cattle*
 - be familiar with its relevant content, and
 - understand and apply the content.

T 3.4 **REVISED** Animal handlers and hauliers must be trained to:

- a) understand the stress factors cattle are likely to encounter
- b) appreciate how cattle react to other cattle
- c) appreciate how cattle react to humans
- d) appreciate how cattle react to strange noises, sights, sounds and smells
- e) appreciate how driving style impacts the animals in transit.

T 3.5 The behaviour of cattle must be taken into account when they are being moved, so as to avoid unnecessary fear or distress.



- **Cattle have poor vision for distance and detail, so they should not be led into dark areas, i.e. areas with poor lighting.**
- **Cattle are easily startled and so should not be subjected to sudden movement of nearby objects.**
- **Cattle have hearing that is similar to humans, so they should not be subjected to sudden loud noise.**
- **Cattle have a strong instinct to herd, so they should not be isolated.**

Handling/loading/unloading

T 4.1 Sticks must not be used for hitting cattle.

T 4.2 The presence and use of electric goads is not permitted on any vehicle or unit.



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

T 4.3 Races and gates must be designed and operated 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 relating to standard T 4.4 is identified, noise reduction mechanisms must be fitted as necessary.

T 4.6 Cattle must not be moved or loaded unless:

- a) the way forward is clear, and
- b) 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.

- T 4.8** **LEGAL REVISED** To prevent animals from falling off, jumping off or slipping, all loading ramps and tail boards must be appropriately designed, including:
- fitted with side gates,
 - have foot battens that are suitably spaced, and
 - covered with straw or an alternative suitable material.
- T 4.9** If a loading ramp is to be modified or newly installed, a reverse ramp must be provided.



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

- T 5.1** **LEGAL** 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 the 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 or widespread injuries must be recorded and reported to:
- the driver
 - the haulier
 - the slaughterhouse manager
 - 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 and kept within the VHWP.
- T 5.8** All incidents relating to standard T 5.7 must be investigated and the outcome recorded.
- T 5.9** Where causes of incidents of death and serious injury relating to standard T 5.7 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.



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.
- 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** **LEGAL** The following space allowances must be provided during transport:

	Cattle weight (kg)	Area per head (m ²)
Small calves	50	0.3 to 0.39
Medium calves	110	0.4 to 0.69
Heavy calves	200	0.7 to 0.94
Medium cattle	325	0.95 to 1.29
Heavy cattle	550	1.30 to 1.59
Very heavy cattle	> 700	> 1.60

- T 5.14** Appropriate lighting, whether natural or artificial, must be available when loading and unloading cattle and to enable cattle to be thoroughly inspected at any time.
- T 5.15** There must be no sharp edges or protrusions on any vehicle, internally or externally, that are likely to cause injury or distress to an animal.
- T 5.16** Air quality and air flow must be maintained on vehicles in a way that does not negatively affect the welfare of the animals.
- T 5.17** **REVISED** Any cow in the last third of her gestation period (i.e. 27 weeks pregnant and more) must not be transported off the farm, except as a last resort when being sent to slaughter for disease control purposes.



NEW The RSPCA is very concerned about the welfare of heavily pregnant cattle during transport and at slaughter. There are situations where, legally, a producer is obliged to send a heavily pregnant animal to slaughter (if she is not over 90% of her gestation), e.g. if she has been found to be bTB positive. In cases of emergency/casualty slaughter, we require heavily pregnant cattle to be slaughtered on-farm.

Standard T 5.17 does not prevent producers from moving such animals between farm holdings for management purposes.

T 5.17.1 **NEW** Cows and heifers that are at high risk of undetected pregnancy must undergo either:

- a) a blood test for Pregnancy Associated Glycoproteins (PAGs) prior to transport, or
- b) a pregnancy diagnosis per rectum carried out by a veterinary surgeon.



NEW The RSPCA takes very seriously the risk of heavily pregnant animals being sent for slaughter and believes we can reach a situation where this never occurs. There are accurate, quick blood tests that can be used to detect pregnancy prior to transport. Cows and heifers deemed high risk are those:

- marked as barren that have been with a bull within the last nine months
- that have been reared with steers castrated with rubber rings within the last nine months
- that are suspected to be barren being sent to slaughter from a farm that has previously sent a heavily pregnant animal to slaughter.

T 5.17.2 In relation to T 5.17.1 any animal identified as pregnant must be seen by a veterinary surgeon to establish the approximate age of the foetus before being moved off the farm.

T 5.18 All hauliers must have a written Standard Operating and Emergency Procedure to implement during transportation (see Appendix 2).

Slaughter/killing

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

- S 1.1** **NEW** Cattle being sourced for slaughter must:
- have come direct from the farm
 - not have come via a livestock market or collection centre.

Training

- S 2.1** Managers must develop and implement an animal welfare policy.
- S 2.1.1** The animal welfare policy (see standard S 2.1) must include written procedures regarding:
- maintaining animal welfare in the abattoir
 - the responsibilities and duties of staff, and
 - emergency procedures, including for escaped, trapped or injured livestock.
- S 2.2** The animal welfare policy must be reviewed at least annually and updated where necessary.
- S 2.3** **LEGAL** Managers must appoint at least one trained Animal Welfare Officer (AWO), who is responsible for the implementation of the animal welfare policy.
- S 2.3.1** **LEGAL** All AWOs must:
- hold a certificate of competence for all operations they are responsible for overseeing
 - have attended the Bristol University Animal Welfare Officer training programme, or other similar recognised, named, validated course on animal welfare at abattoirs
 - keep a record of actions taken to improve animal welfare in the abattoir for which they are responsible.
- S 2.4** Managers, in conjunction with the AWO must:
- develop and implement a training programme for all staff involved in the handling and slaughtering/killing of cattle, and
 - ensure that these staff are trained and competent to carry out their duties.



For staff undertaking the following operations, a certificate of competence in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009¹ can be used to demonstrate compliance with standard S 2.4 b):

- the handling and care of animals before they are restrained;
- the restraint of animals for the purpose of stunning or killing;
- the stunning of animals;
- the assessment of effective stunning;
- the shackling or hoisting of live animals, and
- the bleeding of live animals.

¹Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing, Article 7, Paragraph 2.

S 2.5 When developing the staff training programme (see standard S 2.4 a)) the following areas must be included, as appropriate:

- a) cattle welfare
- b) cattle behaviour
- c) handling and movement of cattle
- d) lairage, including lairage conditions and care of cattle during lairage
- e) restraint of cattle
- f) slaughter/killing method/s, including emergency back-up methods
- g) assessment of an effective stun/kill, and
- h) bleeding.



In relation to S 2.5, The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) *Humane Slaughter – Taking Responsibility* training package can be used to help inform the content of the training programme. Other relevant HSA online guides can also be used, for example:

- Captive bolt stunning of livestock, and
- Electrical stunning of red meat animals.

S 2.6 **LEGAL** An AWO must:

- a) be present on the site at all times whilst slaughter is being carried out
- b) make frequent and thorough checks throughout the day to ensure that animals are being effectively stunned and are insensible throughout the slaughter operation.

S 2.7 **LEGAL** Where it is suspected that animals are not being effectively stunned, the slaughter line must be stopped and immediate remedial action taken.

S 2.8 The managers, AWOs and all slaughter staff must:

- a) have access to a copy of the current *Defra Codes of Practice* relating to slaughter (available online)
- b) have access to a copy of the current *RSPCA welfare standards for beef cattle*, and
- c) be familiar with and implement their relevant content.

- S 2.9** The AWO must ensure that animal welfare during the slaughter process is not compromised by operator fatigue.
- S 2.10** To reduce the likelihood of operator fatigue, managers must ensure that rotation of staff is practised as necessary, and recorded.
- S 2.11** Noise must be kept to a minimum at all times in all areas of the abattoir, both from staff and equipment.
- S 2.11.1** Noise levels must be monitored by the manager or AWO.
- S 2.11.2** When acceptable noise levels are exceeded, the causes must be investigated and addressed.



Maximum decibel levels may be set in the future. Unacceptable noise levels are those which are causing fear and distress in the animals, such as startle responses or reluctance to move through the handling system.

Casualty animals

- S 3.1** **LEGAL** Except in exceptional circumstances, cattle that are unable to walk must be slaughtered:
- without delay
 - without the animal being moved, i.e. on the lorry or in the lairage pen, and
 - using humane casualty slaughter equipment and procedures.



Delay in killing cattle unable to walk can only be justified in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when the welfare of other animals would otherwise be adversely affected.

- S 3.1.1** Appropriate, well-maintained slaughter/killing equipment must be easily accessible for use in emergencies.
- S 3.2** Casualty animals must be killed in accordance with methods outlined in standard 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.
- S 3.3** A member of staff must be present to check animals on arrival and must:
- have access to a copy of the Defra booklet *Welfare of Animals During Transport – Guidance Notes: Part 2a, Fitness to Transport*,
 - be familiar with its content, and
 - implement its recommendations.

Closed circuit television



NEW The RSPCA is reviewing the use of Intelligent Camera Surveillance systems in slaughter plants. These systems can alert relevant slaughter plant staff to potential welfare concerns in real time, allowing situations to be dealt with quickly and efficiently. They can also be used to identify areas where staff require additional training or where staff safety is at risk. It is strongly recommended that abattoirs adopt such technologies to improve animal welfare in their plant.



The use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in areas where live animals are present can assist those responsible for monitoring and enforcing animal welfare within the abattoir in ensuring that standards are maintained. It is recommended that CCTV footage is also used for in-house training programmes and to provide an additional level of security at the abattoir.

- S(TV) 1.1** **LEGAL** A functional CCTV system must be installed and operational to monitor animals undergoing the following processes at the abattoir:
- a) unloading from vehicles into the lairage
 - b) lairaging, including the movement of animals out of the lairage towards the stun point
 - c) stunning, including animals approaching the stun area
 - d) shackling, and
 - e) sticking.
- S(TV) 1.2** **LEGAL** CCTV cameras must be positioned to ensure a clear view of the processes being monitored is achieved at all times.
- S(TV) 1.3** **LEGAL** It must be possible to observe clearly the view from each camera at all times via one or more monitors.
- S(TV) 1.4** **LEGAL** CCTV footage must be recorded at all times where animals are undergoing any of the processes listed under standard S(TV) 1.1.
- S(TV) 1.5** **LEGAL** **REVISED** The recorded CCTV footage must be:
- a) retained by the abattoir for a period of at least three months, and
 - b) available for viewing on site upon request.



Where possible it may be useful for managers to retain CCTV footage for longer than the three months specified in standard S(TV) 1.5, for their own monitoring and security purposes.

Lairage

S 4.1 **LEGAL** Slaughterhouse managers must ensure that the premises are constructed and maintained so as to prevent any injury being caused to animals confined there.

S 4.2 **LEGAL** 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 standard S 4.4)
- c) is of adequate size and construction for the number of animals confined there (see standard S 4.4)
- 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.



Food of a suitable quality for animals in lairage should be provided in sufficient quantity twice daily.

S 4.3 **LEGAL** 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 4.4 When cattle are kept in a lairage, the following stocking densities must apply:

Weight (kg)	Minimum bedded lying area (m ²)
< 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



Where animals are to be housed overnight in a lairage, then fully bedded pens without any hard standings are acceptable.

S 4.5 Isolation pens must be available for use at all times.

S 4.6 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).

S 4.7 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.

Pre-slaughter handling

- S 5.1** Cattle must be handled calmly and quietly, with care to avoid unnecessary excitement or distress.
- S 5.2** 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.



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

- S 5.2.1** Race design must include emergency release gates that allow livestock back to the lairage.
- S 5.3** 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 5.4** **LEGAL** Flooring throughout the slaughterhouse must be non-slip.
- S 5.5** The presence and use of electric goads is prohibited in any abattoir.
- S 5.6** Animals must be slaughtered within 12 hours of their last feed.
- S 5.7** If cattle require cleaning and/or clipping prior to slaughter this must be carried out by competent staff.
- S 5.7.1** If washing cattle, the following must be observed:
- a pressure washer must not be used
 - the water stream is not directed at sensitive areas (e.g. the head, groin and udder)
 - the water is at a suitable temperature, and
 - the process is stopped immediately if the animal shows signs of distress or an unreasonable level of restraint is required.

Slaughter equipment

- S 6.1** 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 6.2** All slaughter equipment must be thoroughly and appropriately cleaned after use.
- S 6.3** 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 6.3.1** Stun and slaughter equipment must be tested to ensure it is in correct working order prior to the first use of the day.

S 6.4 A record of the check on slaughter equipment must be made.

S 6.5 **LEGAL** Reserve equipment for the stunning and killing of animals must be:

- a) kept at the place of stun/killing for use in an emergency, and
- b) tested at least once daily by an AWO to ensure it is in correct working order and a good state of repair.

S 6.5.1 A record of the check on reserve equipment must be made.

Stunning

S 7.1 All cattle must be stunned prior to slaughter using a permitted method which renders them instantaneously unconscious and insensitive to pain and maintains that state until the point of death.

S 7.1.1 **REVISED** Permitted methods of stunning include:

- a) free bullet (stun-kill)
- b) penetrative concussion, e.g. captive bolt
- c) electrical stunning (head only).



Signs of effective captive bolt stunning include:

- animal collapses
- no rhythmic breathing
- fixed, fully dilated pupils
- no corneal reflex (i.e. no blink reaction when the surface of the eyeball is lightly touched)
- relaxed jaw
- tongue hanging out.

Deviation from the above may be an indication that the stun has been ineffective or that animals are beginning to recover from the stun.

S 7.1.2 Contact triggered captive bolt devices are only permitted on animals when sufficient head restraint is used.



Sufficient restraint in relation to S 7.1.2 may involve the following:

- a head shelf resulting in passive restraint, and
- a head yoke resulting in active restraint.

It should be noted that passive restraint is preferable for the welfare of the cattle. A head yoke combined with a chin lift can result in strong aversive behaviour in cattle and should be avoided.

S 7.1.3 **NEW** **LEGAL** Where electrical stunning is used to stun adult cattle, the electrodes must be placed so that they span the brain, enabling a current of 1.28 amps to pass through it for a time period sufficient to cause unconsciousness that lasts until death.

- S 7.1.4** **LEGAL** Where animals are electrically stunned, the apparatus must:
- incorporate a device which measures the impedance of the load and prevents operation of the apparatus if the minimum required current cannot be passed
 - incorporate an audible or visual device indicating the length of time of its application to an animal in each cycle of application, and
 - be connected to a device indicating the applied current, positioned so as to be clearly visible to the operator.
- S 7.1.5** **NEW** Where cattle are electrically stunned techniques must be used to lower the resistance of the cattle to the electrical current. See information box below standard S(C) 1.3.
- S 7.1.6** If there is any indication that a stun has not been effective, or that animals are displaying signs of recovery from a stun, re-stunning must take place immediately.
- S 7.2** **LEGAL** Cattle must not be allowed into the slaughter box unless the slaughterman is ready to immediately stun the animal.
- S 7.3** **LEGAL** All stunning pens for cattle must be constructed to:
- restrict backwards, forwards or sideways movement
 - allow the slaughterman free access to the animal's forehead while it is restrained, and
 - allow release of the animal's head as soon as the animal has been stunned.
- S 7.4** **LEGAL** Cattle must be effectively stunned before being released from the stunning pen.
- S 7.5** **LEGAL** Cattle must only be stunned when they can be stuck immediately afterwards with a stun-to-stick interval of no more than 60 seconds.
- S 7.6** The effectiveness of stunning must be recorded for at least 10 animals:
- at the very start of each day's killing, and
 - at least every 2 hours.



When fewer than 10 animals are being stunned all animals must be assessed.

- S 7.6.1** **LEGAL** The records of checks on the effectiveness of stunning must include:
- the name of the person undertaking the checks
 - the number of cattle assessed
 - the date and time of the assessments
 - the number of cattle not effectively stunned, and
 - the action taken to correct ineffective stunning.

Slaughter/killing methods

- S 8.1** **REVISED** Cattle must be slaughtered/killed by one of the following methods:
- bleeding out (sticking) following an effective stun. See standard S 7.1.1,
 - free bullet, or
 - electrical stun-kill.
- S 8.2** **NEW** Where an electrical stun-kill is used to kill adult cattle it must be ensured that the animal is effectively stunned, via application of the electrodes to the head, prior to killing, via application of the electrode to the heart.

Sticking

- S 9.1** Cattle must be stuck using a sharp knife at least 15cm/6 inches long.
- S 9.2** **LEGAL** 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 9.3** Two knives must be used; the first to open the skin and the second to sever the arteries.
- S 9.4** **LEGAL** 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 9.5** **LEGAL** 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.

Slaughter of pregnant cattle

- S 10.1** **REVISED** Abattoirs must have a written protocol in place for dealing with cows in the last third of their gestation period (i.e. 27 weeks pregnant and more).
- S 10.2** There must be a named person, such as the Animal Welfare Officer (AWO), that is responsible for ensuring that the animals are treated according to the relevant standards within this document.
- S 10.3** **REVISED** Cows in the last third of their gestation period (i.e. 27 weeks pregnant and more) must not be sent for slaughter, except as a last resort for disease control purposes.
- S 10.4** Producers sending pregnant animals to slaughter (see standard S 10.3) must inform the slaughterhouse of the impending arrivals of animals that may be, or are suspected to be, in the last third of gestation.
- S 10.5** **REVISED** Any cow in her last third of pregnancy (i.e. 27 weeks pregnant and more), or suspected of being in her last third of pregnancy, must not be sent for any further processing (including removal of the foetus) until at least 15-20 minutes after sticking (to ensure the foetus is not alive).



The RSPCA welfare standards for beef cattle do not allow the slaughter of any animal in the last trimester of pregnancy, except as a last resort in the case of emergency slaughter/killing or for disease control purposes.

Suffering occurs when an animal is both sentient (i.e. neurologically mature) and conscious. Research suggests that the neurological connections required for an animal to be considered sentient are established after the foetus has completed about 75% of its gestation time (i.e. 30 weeks gestation) prior to which the neurological connections are not considered compatible with sentience. Further, an animal that is not conscious does not experience pain and so cannot suffer. If a mature foetus successfully takes in air, consciousness, and thus the capacity to suffer, can ensue. Therefore, it is required to leave the foetus for at least 15-20 minutes to ensure it is dead prior to removal from the cow.

The foetus may show involuntary movements similar to those seen in an effectively stunned animal, which can give the impression that the animal is suffering whilst it dies. However, whilst a lack of consciousness is maintained, suffering will not occur at this time.

Further information on this issue can be found in the following:

Mellor, D.J. Guidelines for the humane slaughter of the foetuses of pregnant ruminants. *Surveillance* 30(3), pp.26-28. 2003

Mellor, D.J. Galloping Colts, Fetal Feelings and Reassuring Regulations: Putting Animal-welfare Science into Action. *Journal of Veterinary Medicine Education*, 37(1), pp. 94-100. 2010

OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code Article 7.5.5

S 10.6 **REVISED** Revival of the foetus must not be attempted under any circumstances.



Foetal resuscitation can seriously compromise the welfare of the foetus as it carries a high risk of injury, as well as being extremely distressing. It is unlikely to be successful due to the calf's prematurity, lack of colostrum and unsuitable environment as well as any injuries sustained during resuscitation.

S 10.7 If, for any reason, a foetus is found to be showing signs of life, it must be humanely killed immediately by use of an appropriate captive bolt followed by bleeding or pithing.

Specific standards and guidance for the rearing, growing and finishing of calves

The below standards must be read in conjunction with, and are in addition to, those within the main body of this document.

'Calf' is taken to be any animal under 6 months of age with the exception of calves being reared for the production of veal, which are covered by these standards until slaughter.

Food and water

Food

- FW(C) 1.1** Calves must be fed a wholesome diet which:
- is appropriate for their age, weight and digestive system
 - is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and promote a positive state of wellbeing, and
 - fully satisfies their nutritional needs, including their mineral requirements.
- FW(C) 1.2** Calves must have daily access to food, except when required not to, as part of any therapy prescribed by the attending veterinary surgeon.
- FW(C) 1.3** Every newborn calf must:
- LEGAL** receive adequate colostrum from its dam (at least 3 litres), or from another source, as soon as possible after it is born and certainly within the first six hours of life
 - continue to suckle for the first 24 hours:
 - from its dam, or where this is not physically possible,
 - via an artificial teat, or where there is a biological necessity,
 - via stomach tubing.



Adequate colostrum is considered to be approximately 10% of birth body weight in the first 6 hours and totals about 20% birth body weight in the first 24 hours.

Colostrum quality is also important and colostrum should have at least 50g IgG per litre to ensure sufficient passive transfer.

Some producers may find it necessary to carefully stomach tube any calves which may be unable to achieve the required intake of colostrum within the first 24 hours.

The RSPCA preferred method of feeding is from the cow, then by teat feeder then, where there is a biological necessity (e.g. the calf is not expressing the suckling reflex), by stomach tubing.

FW(C) 1.3.1 **REVISED** In relation to standard FW(C) 1.3, after the first 24 hours, calves no longer with their dam must be maintained at a healthy body weight and:

- a) offered sufficient access to pasteurised whole milk or transition milk to ensure they are consuming at least eight litres of milk per day (or 15% of their bodyweight, whichever is the most), or
- b) fed at least 900g of good quality artificial calf milk replacer powder per day, mixed according to manufacturer's instructions, and
- c) fed the required volume of milk across at least two feeds per day for the first 42 days of life.



NEW Those producers carrying out gradual weaning may start to reduce the volume of milk/milk replacer no more than 14 days prior to stopping milk feeds (see standard FW(C) 1.1). Gradual weaning has been shown to be of benefit to calves and should be considered (see the information box below standard FW(C) 1.6).



Producers should ensure that bought in calves have received colostrum as set out in standards FW(C) 1.3 and FW(C) 1.3.1.

FW(C) 1.4 Specific management practices for new-born calves with respect to reducing the risk of conditions such as Johne's disease developing must be recorded in the VHWP (see standard H(C) 1.1).



Due to the problems associated with Johne's disease and newly born calves, it is strongly recommended that when there is an identified risk of the disease on the unit, veterinary advice is taken with regard to the management of new-borns, 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 for beef cattle.

FW(C) 1.5 Milk substitute must be mixed according to the manufacturer's instructions unless prescribed otherwise by the attending veterinary surgeon.

FW(C) 1.6 Efforts must be made to avoid sudden dietary changes.



REVISED Evidence shows that gradual weaning (by gradually decreasing the volume of milk fed over a period of at least 10–14 days) results in better dry matter intake post-weaning and is less stressful for calves, thus has positive welfare implications. Calves should therefore be gradually weaned where possible.

FW(C) 1.7 **REVISED** All non-suckled calves must receive liquid food daily:

- a) at least for the first eight weeks of life, and
- b) until they are eating adequate quantities of suitable solid food, at least 1.5kg dry matter per day of a calf starter ration.

FW(C) 1.7.1 **NEW** Abrupt weaning (where the full volume or weight of milk powder required in FW(C) 1.3.1 is suddenly stopped) is not permitted.

FW(C) 1.8 Calves must not be weaned before 8 weeks of age, unless on veterinary advice.

FW(C) 1.9 If the calf is more than 8 days old, to enable appropriate rumen development, it must have access each day to dried feed or forage material containing sufficient digestible fibre which shall be not less than 100 to 250g daily depending on the age of the animal.

FW(C) 1.10 Roughage must be supplied separately to bedding material and must be available to the calves at all times.

FW(C) 1.11 **REVISED** Starter roughage for calves must be good quality long fibre.



REVISED The objective of standard FW(C) 1.11 is to encourage rumen development. High dry matter big bale silage/haylage, or good quality hay or straw are all acceptable forms of long fibre.

FW(C) 1.12 Wet acidic silages below pH 4.0 must be avoided.

FW(C) 1.13 The calves' diet must prevent anaemia and any mineral and vitamin deficiency.

FW(C) 1.14 The iron content in the diet must be sufficient to maintain a blood haemoglobin level of 9g/dl (decilitre).

FW(C) 1.15 If blood haemoglobin levels in a significant number of calves in a batch (>25%) at slaughter are below 9g/dl, a full investigation must be made to establish the potential cause and any necessary remedial action taken for the next batch of calves.



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 heart rate
- lethargy, inactivity and weakness.

FW(C) 1.16 The results of any blood tests must be made available upon request.



Testing for blood haemoglobin levels should be limited to the slaughter plant once it has been established that a system can consistently produce well grown healthy calves.

FW(C) 1.17 Calves must have no necessity to compete for food.

FW(C) 1.17.1 Where calves are fed by an ad-lib automated system, the producer must be able to demonstrate that there is no competition between calves which may result in limiting their intake.

FW(C) 1.18 If a teat feeding system is being used, the position of the teats must be arranged so that the calves can drink in a natural position.

FW(C) 1.19 Where calves are bucket fed, each calf must have access to an individual bucket.

FW(C) 1.20 Where milk is delivered into a trough, there must be sufficient space for all calves to drink without hindrance at the same time.



Some recommendations give trough frontages of 350 mm per calf for individually fed calves. Other guides suggest 3 calves per linear metre or 1.1 times the shoulder width of the animal.

FW(C) 1.21 Where calves are rationed through the use of a transponder, the feed station must be designed to allow all calves to drink without hindrance.

FW(C) 1.22 **LEGAL** All feeding equipment and utensils must be managed in a hygienic manner, in order to minimise the risk of disease challenge.

FW(C) 1.23 Calves must not be muzzled.

Water

FW(C) 2.1 All calves must have continuous access to an ad-lib clean fresh water supply.

FW(C) 2.2 There must be at least one drinking space per 10 calves unless they are on an ad-lib milk feeding system.

FW(C) 2.3 All water troughs/bowls must be capable of delivering water in sufficient quantities at all times.

FW(C) 2.4 **LEGAL** All drinking vessels/facilities must be managed and maintained in a hygienic manner.

FW(C) 2.5 Water trough/bowls must not result in undue wetting/fouling of the bedded areas of the calves.

Environment

E(C) 1.1 Any adjacent dairy unit associated with the calf rearing facility, must fulfil the requirements of the recognised national dairy farm assurance scheme as a minimum.

E(C) 1.2 **LEGAL** There must be nothing in the environment, such as sharp edges or draughty conditions which have the potential to cause the calves injury or distress.

E(C) 1.3 **LEGAL** Internal surfaces of the housing and calf pens must be made of materials which can be readily cleansed and disinfected, or be easily replaced when necessary.

E(C) 1.4 Environmental enrichment must be provided for calves from 6 weeks of age onwards.



Examples of environmental enrichment are securely attached short lengths of chain, brushes or hayballs.

E(C) 1.5 Where high levels of abnormal sucking behaviour is seen in bucket-fed calves, calves must be transferred to a teat feeding system.

E(C) 1.6 Ventilation systems, natural or forced, must be designed and managed to maintain air quality (see standard E 3.4 and 3.8).

E(C) 1.7 Calves must have access at all times to a lying area which is:

- a) **LEGAL** well drained and/or well maintained with dry bedding
- b) of a sufficient size to allow all calves to lie down at the same time in a normal resting posture without hindrance, and
- c) **LEGAL** of a sufficient size to allow all calves to stand up, turn around, lie down, rest and groom themselves without hindrance.

E(C) 1.8 Calf pens must be of a size that is appropriate for the age, size and breed of the animal.



It may be favourable for calf socialisation that grouping calves occurs at least one week before weaning (see standard FW(C) 1.8)

E(C) 1.9 In systems designed for rearing dairy breed bull calves where the animals are fully housed with no hard standing, the minimum total area allowance must be as follows:

Liveweight (kgs)	Minimum total area (m ²)
< 100	2.0
101–200	3.5
201–250	4.0
251–300	4.5
301–350	5.5

E(C) 1.9.1 **NEW** For liveweights over 350kg, standard E 4.2 must be met.

E(C) 1.10 The floor must not be slatted.

E(C) 1.11 **NEW** Calves must not be housed individually after three weeks of age, except in the circumstances outlined in E(C) 1.11.1 below.



NEW Calves may benefit from being grouped earlier than three weeks of age depending on the management system. We strongly recommend grouping calves from one week of age and this may become a requirement in future revisions of this standard.

E(C) 1.11.1 **NEW** Where calves under eight weeks of age are brought onto the farm they may be housed individually for up to one week to allow for close monitoring during their adjustment period.

E(C) 1.11.2 **NEW** In relation to E(C) 1.11.1, the removal of calves from individual pens into social groups must:

- a) not coincide with weaning, and
- b) occur by the time the calves reach eight weeks of age.



NEW It is favourable for calf socialisation that grouping calves occurs before weaning (see standard FW(C) 1.8). We recommend that calves are therefore grouped at least one week prior to weaning.

Lighting

E(C) 2.1 Calves must not be subjected to 24 hour lighting periods.

E(C) 2.1.1 **LEGAL** Calves must not be kept permanently in darkness.

E(C) 2.2 **LEGAL** There must be adequate fixed or portable lighting to enable the calves to be inspected at all times.



There should be light levels of 100–200 lux at calf level to aid inspection of calves.

E(C) 2.3 To meet their behavioural and physiological needs, appropriate natural or artificial lighting must be provided.

E(C) 2.4 **LEGAL** Artificial lighting must function for a period at least equivalent to the period of natural light normally available between 9am and 5pm.

E(C) 2.5 **LEGAL** Low level lighting/dark periods must be provided to promote resting behaviour.

Calf hutches



Some scientific evidence suggests that early small grouped housing can be beneficial for calf welfare. We will be monitoring further research into this issue and exploring whether it informs in a meaningful way future editions of the RSPCA welfare standards.

- E(C) 3.1 Hutches must be made of a material which minimises heat stress and wide temperature fluctuations.
- E(C) 3.2 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(C) 3.3 Tethering of calves is prohibited.
- E(C) 3.4 Hutches must be placed on a free draining base and affixed to the ground to prevent movement in high winds.
- E(C) 3.5 Hutches must be sited in a sheltered spot, away from prevailing weather.
- E(C) 3.6 There must be enough bedding in the hutch to exclude any draughts.
- E(C) 3.7 **LEGAL** Calves must have access to a dry bed at all times.
- E(C) 3.8 Hutches must be of a size appropriate to the age and breed of the animal.
- E(C) 3.9 Each calf hutch must provide a sheltered, dry bedded area equivalent to the “minimum bedded lying area” requirements laid out in standard E 4.2, to satisfy the number of calves kept within the pen.
- E(C) 3.10 **LEGAL** Hutches must be arranged so that calves can see, hear and touch other calves in neighbouring hutches.

Management

Receiving new calves onto the unit

- M(C) 1.1** **LEGAL** Movement of calves on or off farm must not occur at less than 7 days of age unless required for veterinary purposes.

i **Mixing calves from different sources should be avoided. However, it is acknowledged that this is not always possible for veal producers when sourcing black and white bull calves from multiple farms.**

- M(C) 1.2** All calves coming onto the unit must be the appropriate weight for their age.

i **A 10 day old black and white bull calf should weigh at least 50kgs.**
Producers should ensure that bought in calves have received colostrum as set out in standards FW(C) 1.3 and FW(C) 1.3.1.

- M(C) 1.3** On arrival, calves must be allowed to rest for 1–2 hours and assessed for general health and hydration status before further handling/feeding.

- M(C) 1.4** After being rested, calves showing signs of disease or dehydration must receive a minimum of 2.5 litres of a proprietary electrolyte solution, with a second feed to be repeated according to manufacturers or veterinary recommendations at an appropriate time.

i **If the calves have come from the same source and have travelled for less than 1 hour, consideration can be given to feeding them the same milk based feed that they have been accustomed to at their previous location, provided there are no apparent signs of ill health.**

- M(C) 1.5** The Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHWP) (see standard H(C) 1.1) must clearly identify the potential disease risks associated with mixing calves from different sources and the actions which have to be taken to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks from happening, including the provision of appropriate quarantine measure for new calves.

- M(C) 1.6** Where RSPCA Assured producers source calves from non-RSPCA Assured farms they must be no older than 65 days of age.

- M(C) 1.6.1** When sourcing calves they must:
- be bought direct from the producer, and
 - not come via a livestock market or collection centre.

Handling facilities

- M(C) 2.1** There must be a suitable handling system in place which allows the animals to be loaded and examined/treated as necessary.

Transport/marketing of calves

M(C) 3.1 **LEGAL** Movement of bought in calves must not occur at less than 7 days of age.

M(C) 3.2 Calves from RSPCA Assured approved herds must not be exported live from the UK, either directly from the farm of origin, or indirectly via a third party.



M(C) 3.2 can be achieved by:

- a) retaining the calves on the farm of birth
- b) selling to other producers who are rearing the animals within the UK (you must be able to supply the RSPCA Assured Assessor with evidence of this), and
- c) any other method that can be verified to the satisfaction of the RSPCA and RSPCA Assured as avoiding live export of the calves.

M(C) 3.3 Producers must be able to provide verification of compliance with standard M(C) 3.2 upon request.



Evidence that could verify compliance with standard M(C) 3.3 includes:

- ear tag information (e.g. purchase receipts and record)
- movement book and passport information
- data on number of calves born, number killed on-farm and number sold/moved off farm.

M(C) 3.4 Producers must register with any auction markets they use, the requirement that calves they sell are not for export.



Producers are encouraged to move towards reducing the distance travelled by calves they sell, by identifying and using more local outlets whenever possible. Moves towards increasing the proportion of calves moved directly from farm-to-farm should also be pursued in order to reduce the risk of associated welfare issues.

Health and welfare

H(C) 1.1 All units must have a bespoke Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHWP) drawn up in consultation with the attending veterinary surgeon, covering the issues as set out in the main health section of the *RSPCA welfare standards for beef cattle*.

H(C) 1.2 The VHWP must:

- a) include the vaccine, biosecurity and hygiene protocols of the unit
- b) identify and document the potential disease risks associated with mixing calves from different sources, and the actions taken to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks happening
- c) contain target levels for diseases present on farms and plans to achieve these, and
- d) be made available upon request.

H(C) 1.2.1 In relation to standard H(C) 1.2 b) prophylactic dosing of calves with an antibiotic is not permitted. (metaphylactic treatment is permissible).



Prophylactic treatment is intended to prevent sickness or disease developing in a group of healthy animals where a veterinary surgeon has identified there could be a high risk of bacterial infection. Metaphylactic treatment is intended to control disease spreading in groups of animals where some are already sick.

H(C) 1.3 The following health records for each batch of calves must be kept as part of the VHWP and must be made available upon request:

- a) calf mortality (including dead on arrivals)
- b) scouring/digestive upsets
- c) respiratory ailments, and
- d) abnormal oral behaviours.



Calf mortality records should include the date calves died and suspected reason, or known reason when a post-mortem has determined cause of death.



Abnormal oral behaviours include cross-sucking the ears/sheath/navel sucking, tongue rolling and excessive licking. Animals showing such behaviours should be provided with environmental enrichment to help direct these behaviours. If abnormal oral behaviours are a problem in several animals, a teat feeding system should be provided if not currently being used. If being used, then consideration should be given to the speed with which milk flows through the teats and to the use of slower flowing teats.

H(C) 1.4 The unit must have the facility to segregate sick animals as required by the attending veterinary surgeon.

H(C) 1.5 Sick individuals must be provided with a source of artificial heat where necessary.

H(C) 1.6 Individual quarantine accommodation for calves must be of minimum dimensions 1.0m x 1.8m providing a minimum floor space of 1.8m².

- H(C) 1.7** 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.
- H(C) 1.8** The only potentially injurious husbandry procedures permitted are as follows (except those carried out 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:
 - i. by the application of a rubber ring after 24 hours of age and before 7 days of age,
 - ii. by Burdizzo clamp after 24 hours of age and up to 2 months of age,
 - iii. by surgical castration, carried out by a veterinary surgeon after 24 hours of age and up to 2 months of age under local anaesthesia.
- H(C) 1.8.1** Regarding H(C) 1.8 c) iii) in extensive suckler herds, surgical castration may occur at an older age so long as it is carried out at the earliest opportunity and before sexual maturity is reached.



Regarding H(C) 1.8.1 it is the producers' responsibility to be aware of the earliest age sexual maturity may occur in the breed of cattle they keep and ensure that their bull calves are castrated before this age. We would not expect cattle to be castrated past the age of 5–6 months.

- H(C) 1.8.2** Procedures relating to standard H(C) 1.8 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, and
 - d) only be performed using appropriate, properly maintained equipment.



Potentially injurious husbandry procedures should not be carried out at the time of weaning or grouping of calves, as increased stress at these times can lead to increased disease susceptibility. Ideally, at least two weeks should be left between weaning and disbudding or castration. This 2 week period could take place either before or after weaning.

- H(C) 1.8.3** A long-acting pain-relieving drug, such as a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, must be administered at the time of the procedures detailed in standard H(C) 1.8.

Transport

T(C) 1.1 Calves must have access to food and water up to the point of transport.

T(C) 1.2 Transporters must provide minimum headroom, when standing in a natural position, of 10cm above highest point of animal.

T(C) 1.3 The following space allowances must be provided during transport:

	Weight (kg)	Area per head (m²)
Small calves	50	0.3 to 0.4
Medium calves	110	0.4 to 0.7
Heavy calves	200	0.7 to 0.95

Slaughter/killing

The slaughter of calves is to be conducted in a manner that ensures a high level of welfare is achieved and takes into account practices and procedures specific to calves' unique needs.

S(C) 1.1 Slaughter operators must be able to demonstrate that particular attention is given to the considerate handling of calves.

S(C) 1.2 Calves must be stunned using:

- a) one of the methods in S 7.1.1, or
- b) head-only electrical stunning.

S(C) 1.2.1 In the case of head-only electrical stunning:

- a) it must be ensured that electrical stunning equipment delivers the appropriate current (see standard S(C) 1.2.2)
- b) the current must be checked at the start of the killing process for each batch of animals using a 'tester' that can simulate the resistance offered by the calves and can check the current and amperage outputs at the tongs, and
- c) the outcome of each check referred to in b) must be recorded.

S(C) 1.2.2 In the case of head-only electrical stunning, the minimum current level during stunning must:

- a) be no less than 1.25 amps for animals younger than 6 months, and no less than 1.28 amps for animals over 6 months
- b) be attained within 1 second, and
- c) be maintained for at least 3 seconds.



Signs of effective head-only electrical stunning include:

a) Tonic phase

- animal collapses and becomes rigid
- no rhythmic breathing
- head is raised
- forelegs extended and hind legs flexed into the body

b) Clonic phase

- gradual relaxation of muscles
- paddling or involuntary kicking (can be severe)
- downward movement of eyeballs
- urination and/or defecation

Deviation from the signs outlined above may be an indication that the stun has been ineffective or that animals are beginning to recover from the stun.

S(C) 1.3 Techniques to lower the resistance of the calves to the electrical current must be used.



Resistance to current flow may vary depending on the condition of the electrodes, the site of contact with the calf's head, and the quality of the connection with the calf's head. The efficiency of current flow can be improved by regular decarbonising and cleaning of electrodes (when dry) with a wire brush.

Slaughter/Killing on-farm

S(C) 2.1 Killing/slaughter of calves on-farm must be carried out by a trained, competent member of staff or a non-staff member, such as a veterinary surgeon or other suitably trained individual, who is named in the VHWP.

S(C) 2.2 Personnel that are responsible for calf slaughter/killing must have read, understood and apply the recommendations of the publication *Humane Dispatch and Disposal of Infant Calves* by the Humane Slaughter Association.

S(C) 2.3 Calves must only be slaughtered/killed on-farm using one of the following methods:

- a) shot gun
- b) free bullet
- c) captive bolt followed by bleeding or pithing
- d) chemical euthanasia by overdose of an anaesthetic drug (carried out by a veterinary surgeon).

S(C) 2.4 Calves that are non-viable or unfit must be slaughtered/killed without delay.

S(C) 2.5 **REVISED** Prior to slaughter/killing, all calves on-farm must be cared for in line with all relevant standards.



In some cases, unwanted or unviable animals may be kept in sub-standard conditions until such a time as they are slaughtered/killed. All animals are to be treated the same until the point of death regardless of their financial value.

Appendix 1

Herd biosecurity

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 Veterinary Health and Welfare 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 2007. Exceptions are acceptable only under veterinary direction.

The written policy must include procedures for wild animal control (see standards M 9.1 – M 9.20).

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 wild animals 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

Items to be included:

1. Out of hours telephone numbers and emergency procedure.
2. Accident procedure.
3. Certificate of motor insurance.
4. Tyres – punctures – codes of practice.
5. Mobile phones or other communication equipment (and procedures for use).
6. Guidelines on correct environmental conditions during the journey, depending on length of journey and ambient temperature.
7. RSPCA welfare standards relating to transport of beef cattle and calves.
8. Procedure for loading/unloading of cattle delivery vehicles.
9. Procedure for delivery of cattle to customer sites.
10. FTA – the current version (2017 at the time of printing) of *'The Driver's Handbook'* including Tachograph Regulations.
11. Fire extinguishers.
12. Operating procedures for roadside checks.
13. List of good hygiene measures, including procedure for cleaning of lorries prior to collection of cattle.
14. The relevant sections of *'Guidance on keeping cattle, bison and buffalo in Great Britain'* (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-on-keeping-cattle-bison-and-buffalo-in-great-britain>)
15. Daily journey sheets.
16. Torch.

Appendix 3

Please note: The AHDB Mobility Scoring guide below has been developed specifically for scoring dairy herds. However, the RSPCA believes that the principles of the guide can also be appropriate and useful for scoring beef cattle herds.

AHDB Dairy Mobility Scoring

How to score your herd

If you haven't scored your herd for a while, information and film clips can be viewed on the AHDB Dairy website: dairy.ahdb.org.uk/mobility

In general:

1. Check your herd ideally at least once a month.
2. Choose a time and a place which will allow you to observe cows, ideally on a hard (i.e. concrete), non-slip surface. Monitor each cow individually allowing them to make between 6–10 uninterrupted strides. Watch the cow from the side and the rear, and if possible ensure the cow turns a corner as part of her test.
3. Record the identities of cows scoring 2 or 3 and schedule treatment within 48 hours for score 2 cows and without delay for score 3 cows. Check regularly to ensure treatment is working.
4. Keep a tally of cows that are score 0 and 1.
5. If you are uncertain about the exact score of a cow, make repeat observations. If you are still unsure, examine her feet.





Key benefits of scoring

1. Every cow is regularly assessed for the early signs of poor mobility prompting foot trimming and action lists.
2. Mobility trends can be monitored to identify new problems at an early stage.
3. Provision of figures for benchmarking performance.
4. General foot health awareness is increased.
5. Motivates farm staff to improve herd mobility and therefore overall herd health.

For further information on using the mobility score contact your local Knowledge Exchange Officer or AHDB Dairy on 024 7669 2051.



AHDB Dairy Mobility Score

Category of score	Score	Description of cow behaviour	Suggested action
Good mobility 	0	<p>Walks with even weight bearing and rhythm on all four feet, with a flat back.</p> <p>Long, fluid strides possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action needed • Routine (preventative) foot trimming when/if required • Record mobility at next scoring session.
Imperfect mobility 	1	<p>Steps uneven (rhythm or weight bearing) or strides shortened; affected limb or limbs not immediately identifiable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could benefit from routine (preventative) foot trimming when/if required • Further observation recommended.
Impaired mobility 	2	<p>Uneven weight bearing on a limb that is immediately identifiable and/or obviously shortened strides (usually with an arch to the centre of the back).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lamé and likely to benefit from treatment • Foot should be lifted to establish the cause of lameness before treatment • Should be attended to as soon as practically possible.
Severely impaired mobility 	3	<p>Unable to walk as fast as a brisk human pace (cannot keep up with the healthy herd).</p> <p>Lamé leg easy to identify – limping; may barely stand on lamé leg/s; back arched when standing and walking.</p> <p>Very lamé.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This cow is very lamé and requires urgent attention, nursing and further professional advice • Examine as soon as possible • Cow will benefit from treatment • Cow should not be made to walk far and kept on a straw yard or at grass • In the most severe cases, culling may be the only possible solution.



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Mobility Score



Farm: _____

Date: _____

Scorer: _____

Total number of cows scored: _____

Score 0 and 1 Acceptable mobility	Score 2 Likely to benefit from treatment	Score 3 Very lame. Treatment urgently required
Tally the number of cows	Record the ID's of any cows showing signs of Score 2	Record the ID's of any cows showing signs of Score 3
Group 1		
Number of cows:	Number of cows:	Number of cows:
Group 2		
Number of cows:	Number of cows:	Number of cows:
Group 3		
Number of cows:	Number of cows:	Number of cows:
Group 4		
Number of cows:	Number of cows:	Number of cows:
Total cows: %	Total cows: %	Total cows: %
Mobility index		
% of cows in the herd scoring 0 and 1		%

www.dairy.ahdb.org.uk/healthyfeet



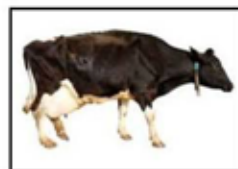
Appendix 4

AssureWel Beef Assessment Protocol and Scoresheet

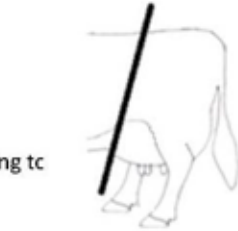

Beef Cattle
Assessment protocol




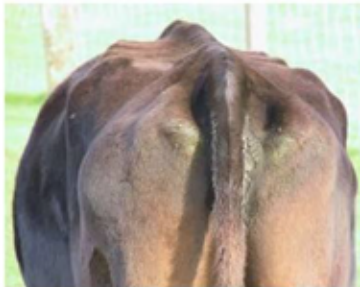

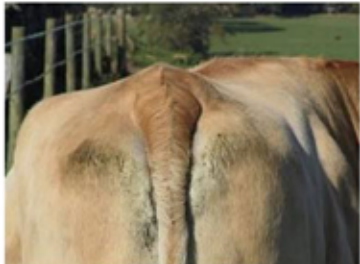
Individual measures	Guidance on sampling
<p>1. Mobility 2. Cleanliness 3a. Body Condition (adult cattle only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed on 20 randomly selected animals from the beef herd. Individual measures do not need to be assessed on the same animals. If the herd is made up of more than one group (e.g. suckler cows and fattening animals) sample animals proportionally across groups. Selected animals may be of any sex or age. 3 or more cattle out of the 20 to be assessed jointly with the stockperson (record assessor's score only). In addition to the 20 cattle sample assess all breeding bulls within the herd. Care should be taken when assessing breeding bulls. Scoring should be based on visual assessment only from a safe distance. Do not touch the bulls or try to encourage them to walk.
Herd measures	
<p>4. Hair loss, lesions and swellings 5a. Animals with respiratory signs 6. Cattle needing further care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed across all groups on farm, including cows, calves, fattening animals, bulls, the hospital pen and animals due to leave the farm. Tally the number of animals affected.
Records measures	
<p>3b. Caesarean and assisted calving's 5b. Pneumonia treatments 7. Disbudding, dehorning and castration 8. Mortality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From records (including herd health plan and annual health and performance review) and discussions with the farmer.

1. Mobility	Individual measure
Sample: 20 animals selected at random (3 or more assessed jointly with stockperson) plus all breeding bulls	
Assess using the AHDB Dairy mobility scoring method. Observe animals individually, ideally allowing them to make between 6-10 uninterrupted strides. Watch from the side and/or the rear.	
Scoring:	
<p>0/1 = Good/Imperfect mobility Walks with even weight bearing and rhythm on all four feet, with a flat back; long fluid strides possible; or steps uneven (rhythm or weight bearing) or strides shortened; affected limb/s not immediately identifiable</p>	
<p>2 = Impaired mobility Uneven weight bearing on a limb that is immediately identifiable and/or obviously shortened stride (usually with an arch to the centre of the back)</p>	
<p>3 = Severely impaired mobility Unable to walk as fast as a brisk human pace (cannot keep up with the healthy herd) and signs of impaired mobility (score 2)</p>	


Images kindly supplied by AHDB Dairy

2. Cleanliness	Individual measure
Sample: 20 animals selected at random (3 or more assessed jointly with stockperson) plus all breeding bulls	
Visually assess one randomly selected <u>side</u> of the animal <u>and behind</u> , only including the hind quarters to coronary band and udder (or equivalent area on male animals):	
Scoring:	
<p>0 = Clean No dirt or only minor splashing present</p>	
<p>2 = Very Dirty An area of dirtiness (i.e. layer or plaques of fresh or dried/old dirt) amounting to forearm length (40 cm) in any dimension. Do not include staining to the coat.</p>	
	

Images kindly supplied by Food Standards Agency

3a. Body condition	Individual measure	
<p>Sample: up to 20 <u>adult</u> animals selected at random (3 or more assessed jointly with stockperson) plus all breeding bulls</p>		
<p>Visually assess the tail head and loin area of cattle based on the Defra condition scoring method, viewing the animal from behind and from the side. Manual assessment can help distinguish borderline scores but is not expected.</p>		
<p>Scoring:</p>		
<p>Thin = Defra score 1 or 2</p>		
<p>Tail head</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep cavity with no fatty tissue under skin or shallow cavity with some fat under skin but pin bones prominent • Skin supple/fairly supple and coat condition may be rough. 		
<p>Loin</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spine prominent. Vertebra may be identified individually • Horizontal processes can be indentified individually with either sharp or rounded ends. 		
<p>The following list should assist in making a confident decision with cows in BCS 1/2:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal processes give a prominent shelf-like appearance to the loin • Outline of the hook bone is prominent with no or only some fat padding • Outline of the pin bone is prominent with no or only some fat padding • There are folds of skin in the depression between the tail head and pin bone • Thurl is sunken and curved in. 		
		<p>Images kindly supplied by NADIS</p>
<p>Moderate = Defra score 2.5 to 3.5</p>		
<p>Fat = Defra score 4 or 5</p>		
<p>Tail head</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely filled and folds and patches of fat evident or almost buried in fatty tissue. 		
<p>Loin</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot see horizontal processes and the loin area, has a completely rounded appearance. 		
<p>The following list should assist in making a confident decision with cows in BCS 4/5:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back is solid and straight • Hook bones are rounded with obvious fat padding or bones are/may not be visible because they are buried in fat • Pin bones are rounded with obvious fat padding or bones are/may not be visible because they are buried in fat • Ribs are covered with a thick layer of fat • Thurl is filled in. 		
		<p>Images kindly supplied by NADIS</p>

3b. Caesareans and assisted calvings	Records
Record the number of caesarean births and assisted calvings in the previous 12 months.	
Record the total number of cows calved in the previous 12 months	

4. Hair loss, lesions and swellings	Herd measure
Assess the whole herd and tally the number of animals seen with	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hairless patches (bald area/bare skin visible) $\geq 2\text{cm}$ diameter or • Lesions (areas of skin damage e.g. wound or scab) $\geq 2\text{cm}$ diameter or • Swellings (abnormal enlargement which is a prominent / pronounced extension away from the body) $\geq 5\text{cm}$ in diameter anywhere on the body. 	
Comment if hair loss, lesions or swellings are occurring on a particular area of the body within a group and identify which group. Visually assess from a distance not exceeding 2 m.	
	
<p>Hairless patch $\geq 2\text{ cm}$ diameter Lesion $\geq 2\text{ cm}$ diameter Swellings $\geq 5\text{ cm}$ in diameter</p>	

5a. Animals with respiratory signs	Herd measure
Assess the whole herd and tally the number of animals with nasal and/or ocular discharge that are also seen/heard coughing or to be in respiratory distress (e.g. laboured breathing).	
Record which group.	
5b. Pneumonia treatments	Records
Record the number of recorded treatments for Pneumonia in the previous 12 months (refer to the Red Tractor Annual Health and Performance Review sheet if available).	

6. Cattle needing further care	Herd measure
Assess the whole herd. Tally and comment on the number of any sick or injured animals that would benefit from further intervention. Further interventions could include further treatment, hospitalisation (i.e. removal from the main herd) or culling. Do not include sick or injured animals already receiving suitable care.	

7. Disbudding, dehorning and castration	Records
Record the proportion of non-polled animals that are disbudded or dehorned, the age at disbudding/dehorning and the use of analgesia and anaesthesia.	
Record the proportion of male animals that are castrated, the age of castration and the use of analgesia and anaesthesia.	

8. Mortality		Records
Record mortality over the previous 12 months for the following groups (refer to the Red Tractor Annual Health and Performance Review sheet if available):		
	Tally	Comments
Stillborn – 24 hours		
24 hours – 10 days		
10 days – weaning		
Weaning – first calving /point of sale		
Less than 30 months		
30 months +		
Total		
Record the number of cows (including heifers put to the bull), unweaned animals, weaned animals and breeding bulls on the farm over the previous 12 months. This may need to be an average if animals have been bought and sold over that time.		
Record the average weaning age.		



Farm name		Type(s) of cattle present on farm	Total number of animals (including any to be culled)	Current housing 1 = housed 2 = at pasture 3 = part pasture	Predominant breed or crossbreed
FF registration number		Adult breeding cows (including in-calf heifers)			
Assessment date		Breeding bulls			Other breeds / crossbreeds
Assessor		Unweaned cattle			
		Weaned fattening cattle (including replacement heifers not yet in calf)			
		Others (please list):			

Individual measures

Assess these measures on 20 randomly selected animals, sampled proportionally from all groups of cattle present on the farm. The measures do not need to be assessed on the same animals and the selected animals can be of any age or sex. In addition, assess all breeding bulls within the herd. Record the animals' ID only if it is possible to do so.

	Mobility		Cleanliness		Body condition - adult cattle only i.e. breeding cows including in-calf heifers & breeding bulls only. Record non adults as N/A	
	0/1 = good/imperfect 2 = impaired 3 = severely impaired		0 = clean (clean/minor splashing) 2 = very dirty (area of dirtiness ≥40cm)		Thin = BCS 1 or 2 Moderate = BCS 2.5 - 3.5 Fat = BCS 4 or 5	
	Animal ID	Score	Animal ID	Score	Animal ID	Score
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
Bull						
Bull						
Bull						
Total scores:	Mobility score	20 animals	Bulls	Cleanliness score	20 animals	Bulls
	0/1			0		
	2			2		
	3					
	BCS	20 animals	Bulls	Thin		
				Moderate		
				Fat		
				N/A		

If unable to assess individual measures, please provide reason:

Herd measures

Assess these measures in all groups of cattle present on the farm. Tally the number of affected animals seen.

Hair loss ≥2cm	Lesions ≥2cm	Swellings ≥5cm
Group ID of affected animals (e.g. suckler cows):		
Comments (e.g. location on body, details of treatment/action being taken):		
If unable to assess, please provide reason:		
<p style="text-align: center;">Animals with respiratory symptoms Animals with nasal and/or ocular discharge also seen/heard coughing or in respiratory distress</p>		
Group ID of affected animals (e.g. suckler cows):		
Comments (e.g. details of treatment/action being taken):		
If unable to assess, please provide reason:		
<p style="text-align: center;">Cattle needing further care</p>		
Group ID of affected animals (e.g. suckler cows):		
Comments (e.g. details of treatment/action being taken):		
If unable to assess, please provide reason:		

General comments									
Records measures		Disbudding				Castration			
Horn type (please circle one):	Cattle are polled (born without horns)	Cattle are horned (born with horns)	Mixed: some cattle are polled & others are horned		What % of male cattle get castrated?	%	At what age are the male cattle castrated?		
What % of the horned cattle get disbudded?	%	At what age are the cattle disbudded?			Pain management during castration (please circle all that apply):				
Pain management during disbudding (please circle all that apply):				N/A	None	Anaesthesia	Analgesia		
Or, if not known, please provide reason:									
Dehorning				Average weaning age:					
What % of the horned cattle get dehorned?	%	At what age are cattle dehorned?			Number of recorded treatments for pneumonia over the previous 12 months:				
Pain management during dehorning (please circle all that apply):				Caesareans and assisted calvings					
N/A	None	Anaesthesia	Analgesia			Number of cows calved over the previous 12 months			
Or, if not known, please provide reason:				Number of caesarean births over the previous 12 months					
				Number of assisted calvings over the previous 12 months					
Mortality over the previous 12 months	Tally figure Refer to the farm's Red Tractor Health & Performance Review Sheet, for these figures, if available	Reasons				Number of animals on the farm over the previous 12 months This can be an average, if animals have been bought in and sold during this time			
Stillborn - 24 hours						Adult breeding cows (including in calf heifers)			
24 hours - 10 days						Breeding bulls			
10 days - weaning						Unweaned cattle			
Weaning - first calving / point of sale						Weaned cattle			
Less than 30 months									
30 months+									
Total									
Changes									
What changes to improve welfare (in resources, management or livestock) has the farmer made in the last 12 months?									
What changes to improve welfare (in resources, management or livestock) does the farmer intend to make in the next 12 months?									
Non-compliance									
Were any related non-compliances issued? (please circle one)	YES	NO	if yes, please provide the relevant standard number(s):						
Further advice and support									
Your RSPCA Assured assessor can provide you with help and advice in relation to your assessment. Additional advice and support, in relation to any aspect of the welfare outcome assessment and your assessment results, can be provided by the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.									
Would the farmer like to be contacted to discuss their welfare outcome assessment results? (please circle one)	YES	NO	if yes, please provide the farmer's preferred contact details:						
This form must be kept a) on the farm where this assessment was carried out b) for a minimum of five years. Please keep this form with your results. It will be required at future RSPCA Assured assessments and RSPCA monitoring visits									
Carried out and signed by:					Title and affiliation:				
www.assurewel.org/beef/cattle					Beef WOA Scoresheet_RSPCAAssured_Sept2017				

Index

Air quality parameters - E 3.8	14	Electric goads - M 4.7	28
Air quality testing - E 3.6	13	Electrical installations - E 2.4	12
Air space - E 3.9	14	Emergencies - M 2.4	26
Animal Welfare Officer - S 2.3	54	Emergency slaughter methods - H 9.4	46
Animal Welfare Policy - S 2.1.1	54	Enrichment - E(C) 1.4	68
Antibiotic use - H 7.6	43	Equipment check - S 6.3	59
Antibiotic use - H(C) 1.2.1	73	Equipment inspection - M 6.2	29
Antibiotic use review - H 7.8	44	Extensive beef units - M 7.2	29
Automatic equipment - M 6.1	29	Farm dogs parasites - M 8.3	30
Bovine tuberculosis - H 2.1	38	Feed availability - FW 1.10	7
Bull pen bedded area - E 9.3	22	Feed restriction - T 5.5	51
Bull pen exercise area - E 9.5	22	Feed restriction - T(C) 1.1	75
Caesarean sections - H 6.1.1	41	Feed space – FW 1.11	7
Calving aid use - H 6.4, H 6.5	42	Fibre requirement - FW(C) 1.9	66
Calving space - E 7.5	19	Fire - M 3.7	27
Castration - H(C) 1.8, H(C) 1.8.1	74	Food restriction - S 5.6	59
Cattle lifting gear - H 8.1.2	44	Foot care plan - H 3.1	39
Cattle tracks - E 8.4	20	Grouping calves - E(C) 1.11	69
Close confinement - E 4.11	16	Handling facilities - E 10.1	22
Collection centres - T 1.1	49	Headroom - T 5.11	52
Colostrum timing - FW(C) 1.3	64	Heat stress – E 3.12	14
Colostrum volume - FW(C) 1.3	64	High-risk procedures - M 3.2	26
Concrete flooring - E 2.3	12	Housed cattle inspection - M 7.1	29
Cubicle design - E 5.12	18	Hutch size - E(C) 3.8	70
Cubicle numbers - E 5.12	18	Individual calving pens - E 7.9	19
Dehorning - H 5.1	41	Insect control - E 8.4	20
Dietary fibre - FW 1.8	7	Lighting level - E 6.2	18
Disbudding - H(C) 1.8	74	Lighting period - E 6.3	18
Double muscling - H 6.1.2	42	Lighting period - E(C) 2.4	69
Dwell time - M 10.2	35	Live exports - T 1.2	49
Electric fences - E 11.2	23	Livestock markets - T 1.1	49

Loading ramp - E 10.5	22	Sourcing calves - M 10.3, M 10.3.1	35
Loading ramp - T 4.7	50	Space allowance - E 4.2	15
Lunge space - E 5.8.1	17	Space allowance - E(C) 1.9	68
Managers responsibilities - M 2.3	25	Space allowances - T 5.13	52
Marking cattle - M 5.1	28	Staff training - S 2.5	55
Milk feed frequency - FW(C) 1.3.1	65	Stock-keeper knowledge - M 3.4	27
Mobility score 3 inspection - H 3.3	39	Stock-keeper responsibilities - M 3.3	27
Mobility score 3 treatment - H 3.5.1	40	Stock-keeper training - M 3.1	26
Mobility scoring frequency - H 3.5	40	Stunning - S 7.1	60
Outwintering - E 8.6	21	Stunning inspection - S 7.6	61
Pain relief - H(C) 1.8.3	74	Stunning methods - S 7.1.1	60
Partially roofed units - E 3.11	14	Transport time - T 5.3	51
Poisonous plants - FW 1.16	7	VHWP conditions - H 1.5	37
Recycled manure solids - E 5.2.1	16	VHWP structure - H 1.4	37
Relative humidity - E 3.5	13	VHWP updates - H 1.3	36
Shelter provision - E 8.4	20	Washing cattle - S 5.7.1	59
Slat specifications - E 4.5	15	Water quality - FW 2.3	8
Slatted flooring - E(C) 1.10	68	Water restriction - T 5.4	51
Slatted flooring area - E 4.5.1	15	Water testing frequency - FW 2.2	8
Slaughter methods - S 8.1	62	Weaning - FW(C) 1.9	65
Social/loafing area - E 5.1	16		



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