



Over 130 Years Of Providing The Humane Touch™

Guidelines For Dairy Cattle Standards

2008 Guidelines: Dairy Cattle Standards

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PREFACE

The American Humane Certified™ Program

Over 130 Years Of Providing The Humane Touch™

The American Humane Association has long recognized the tremendous connection we each share as living beings. And, beginning in 1877, we set out on a mission to raise the awareness and importance of welfare for both children and animals, becoming the first organization in America to champion the causes. Right from the start, we became the first and foremost advocate for farm animal welfare – including our early work with the Chicago Stockyards as well as our valiant efforts during World War I in rescuing animals on the battlefield through our Red Star Program.

Today, this proud heritage of animal welfare has grown to include American Humane Certified™, a revolutionary, science-based farm animal welfare program built around the most comprehensive set of standards and audits ever created. It is a program that has been developed by respected leaders within the scientific and agriculture communities. And it's all founded on the belief that humane welfare standards contribute to healthy, stress-free farm animals.

The American Humane Certified™ program continues to work with producers, veterinarians, animal research experts and handlers to ensure that new technology and knowledge are shared and best practices are adopted. American Humane Certified™ producers take pride in being a part of the original and most effective animal welfare certification program available – the program that is truly good for animals, good for people, good for business.

INTRODUCTION

The Certification Process

Licensing

Before products may claim to be American Humane Certified, producers become licensed to use the American Humane Certified name and logo. Producers stipulate and verify that all animal products that use the American Humane Certified name and label on their product packaging and promotional materials have come from American Humane Certified farms.

Registration

When applying for certification, each dairy provides accurate information regarding management, the number of animals and their physical environment. Dairy farms give the physical address along with the name of the farm manager (stockman) and detailed phone/email contact information. Dairy farms report annual number of milking cows, dry cows, heifers and calves along with monthly hundred-weights of milk sold. The American Humane Certified program keeps record of each dairy farm's animal housing system information and number of grazing acres. Dairy farms provide source information for replacement stock as well as the name of the animal welfare trained transport agent used when cattle are moved from the farm for any reason. Dairy farms report the name of their marketing or producer group and any other quality assurance programs to which they belong. The dairy farm reports any issues arising during the year that are cause for animal welfare action as well as bio-security and health related events.

Certification and Verification

Before becoming American Humane Certified™ each farm, ranch, or processing plant is assessed by a trained, independent auditor to ensure compliance with the program standards. Farms are reassessed and certified annually to ensure that humane husbandry is practiced daily and is a part of the overall farm management plan.

Stockmanship

Farm Animal Welfare

A high degree of caring and responsible management and stockmanship is vital to ensure good animal welfare practice. Where possible, managers adopt a **Zero Tolerance** policy for bad animal welfare performance. Managers ensure that all handlers have a copy of the American Humane *Welfare Standards Checklist and Standards Guidelines for Dairy Cattle* and that handlers can demonstrate they are familiar with and understand the content. A whistle blower policy is in place to protect employees who report animal welfare issues. Managers and handlers have access to an Animal Welfare Incident Report and are trained to fill it out when issues of animal welfare are brought forward.

Managers

Managers and stock-keepers are thoroughly trained, skilled, and competent in animal husbandry and welfare. They have a good working knowledge of their operating systems and the livestock under their care. Managers are responsible for providing information and training materials in the native languages that their employees may require. Dairy managers understand the circumstances on the farms under their control in which cattle can be prone to welfare problems and are able to demonstrate their competence in recognizing and dealing with welfare issues. Managers provide action plans, standard operating procedures for areas of welfare, out-of-compliance events and the foundations for the procedures taken to correct welfare issues as they arise. Employees are identified in welfare issues and the appropriate actions taken. Managers are aware of the welfare implications in all husbandry practices such as calving, injection, oral dosing, dehorning, identification procedures, castration and in all animal handling systems during the living process of the animals. Dairy managers are aware of welfare considerations during breeding, particularly the selection of suitable bulls, semen, and embryos for use in heifers.

Training

Managers develop and implement suitable training programs for stock-keepers, with regular updates and opportunities for continuing professional development. Managers are able to demonstrate that personnel with responsibilities for stock care have the relevant and necessary skills to perform their duties and, if necessary, are given the opportunity to participate in an appropriate training program.

Animal Handlers

Prior to being given responsibility for the welfare of livestock, handlers are trained and able to recognize signs of normal behavior, abnormal behavior, and fear. They recognize signs of common diseases, understand their prevention and control, and know when to seek veterinary help. Farm managers have a basic knowledge of what constitutes proper nutrition in cattle and are familiar with body condition scoring and locomotion scoring. They understand the anatomy, care and treatment of the normal foot, teat and udder. Managers and handlers understand and are prepared to demonstrate good parlor hygiene and milking machine maintenance. Managers and handlers are able to demonstrate competence in handling animals in a positive and compassionate manner. Handlers are able to demonstrate their proficiency in procedures which have the potential to cause suffering, such as injections, foot trimming, dehorning, castration, and marking. Cattle are handled quietly and firmly at all times, with care to avoid unnecessary pain or distress. Animal handlers understand how cattle react towards other cattle, man, strange noises, sights, sounds and smells; and are able to recognize the factors that will cause stress.

Emergency Action Plan

Managers develop and implement plans and precautions to cope with emergencies such as fire, flood, or interruption of supplies including water. Emergency contact numbers are posted by phones and entrances to buildings. An Emergency Action Plan is available and sited adjacent to telephones that highlights the procedures to be followed by those discovering an emergency such as fire, flood and power failure.

Animal Health Plan

Managers ensure that the Animal Health Plan is implemented and under the supervision and consult of a licensed veterinarian, regularly updated and recorded. The health plan includes as a minimum:

- bio-security policies on-farm and in transport;
- purchased stock procedures;
- specific disease programs, such as leptospirosis, Johne's disease, salmonella, BVD and Tuberculosis;
- vaccination policy and timing;
- isolation procedures;
- external and internal parasite control;
- lungworm control;
- lameness monitoring and foot care;
- routine procedures, such as ear tagging;
- mastitis control

Records include documentation on all incoming and outgoing stock on the farm, health treatments and verification types and quantities of medicines used. Records on all cull cows are kept documenting that the animals are fit for transport to their final destination. Records of all euthanized animals are kept and include the reason for euthanasia, date and disposal process. The managers and stockman are aware of the signs of ill-health in cattle, which include:

- Listlessness,
- Separation from the group;
- Unusual behavior;
- Loss of body condition;
- Loss of appetite;
- A sudden fall in milk yield;
- Constipation;
- scouring (diarrhea);
- Not cudging;
- Any discharge from the nostrils or eyes;
- producing more saliva than usual;
- Persistent coughing;
- Rapid or irregular breathing
- Abnormal resting behavior;
- Swollen joints;
- Lameness; and
- Mastitis.

Managers and stockman are able to anticipate problems or recognize them in their earliest stages. Managers always consider the possibility that cattle may be affected by an unidentified disease. If the cause is not obvious, or if immediate action is not effective, a veterinary surgeon or other expert is called. If the animal is in severe pain that cannot be controlled the animal is humanely euthanized immediately.

Identification

Neckbands, tail-bands, ear tags, or leg-bands used for identification purposes are fitted with care and adjusted as required to avoid unnecessary pain or distress. The marking of cattle is done with care by trained, competent operators to avoid unnecessary pain or distress to the animals. Markers used on livestock are non-toxic.

Equipment

When equipment is installed which affects animal welfare, managers are able to demonstrate an ability to operate the equipment, demonstrate the ability to carry out routine maintenance, recognize common signs of malfunction, and demonstrate knowledge of actions to be carried out in event of a failure. Automatic equipment is thoroughly inspected by a stockman or other competent person, not less than once each day to check that there are no defects. Where a defect is found in the automatic equipment the defect is rectified immediately; or measures are immediately taken and maintained until the defect is rectified to safeguard the livestock from suffering unnecessary pain or distress as a result of the defect. Automatic ventilation system contains an alarm which will give adequate warning of the failure and will operate even if the principal electricity supply to it has failed. A backup system for ventilation, whether automatic or manual, is in place to provide adequate ventilation if the automatic system fails. Managers

inspect their livestock and the equipment upon which such stock depend at least daily and record observations and action taken.

Dogs

Dogs, including working dogs, are properly trained, do not cause injury or distress to cattle, and are kept under control at all times. Dogs are not permitted in the milking parlor.

Food and Water

Food

American Humane Certified dairy cattle have access to nutritious food that is appropriate to their age and in sufficient quantity to maintain health. The dairy has a documented nutrition plan approved and regularly updated by a qualified dairy nutrition specialist. The diet meets guidelines provided by the most recent National Research Council standards for dairy cattle. Managers provide American Humane Certified, the current records of the feed constituents, their inclusion rate of compound feeds and feed supplements. Adequate bunk space of at least 18" per cow or 1 headstall per 1.2 cows, is provided so that cattle do not need to compete for feed. All feed ingredients meet all USDA regulations and do not contain any banned ingredients. Feedstuffs do not contain ruminant-derived protein sources, with the exception of milk and milk products. Dairy cows are not treated with rBST. Cattle are not be implanted with any growth promoter, nor deliberately fed antibiotics to boost growth or feed efficiency. Antibiotics and anti-parasitic agents are only used therapeutically as prescribed by an attending veterinarian. Adult cattle and calves over 14 days of age are provided with fiber to allow rumination. Feed troughs, bunks and feed delivery systems are kept clean and any stale or moldy feed removed. Automatic feed delivery systems are maintained in good working order. Feeding and watering equipment is designed, constructed, placed, and maintained so that contamination of the animals' feed and water is minimized. Cattle are fed so that they sustain full health and normal reproduction capacity over their maximum foreseeable lifespan. Body condition change in cattle is monitored and maintained according to the stage of production. 98% of the herd has a body condition score between 2 and 4.5 on a 5 point scale excluding cattle under treatment in hospital pens. If an animal has less than a 1.5 body score, the animal is in the infirmary under individual treatment. (Reference: Edmondson et al. (1989). Body conditioning score. *Journal of Dairy Science*, 72(1), p.73.) Cows with body condition score of greater than 4.5 have a documented nutrition plan to bring them back into condition. Changes in the type and quantity of feed are introduced gradually. Where climatic regions where growing conditions determine that grass is not a relevant crop, cattle in free-stall buildings have voluntary access to the pasture, dry lot or exercise lot for at least 4 to 5 hours per day, weather permitting. Nutritional maintenance through feeding of quality forage and concentrate is provided.

Water

All cattle, including calves are provided with continuous access to clean drinking water each day. Automatic systems are checked daily to ensure that they are dispensing water. Water troughs do not leak resulting in wetting/fouling of the bedded areas. When cattle are kept primarily on pasture, clean fresh water is always available. When cattle are housed, water tanks, troughs, etc. are full when not being used. Water delivery is monitored to make sure water is provided at all times. Water system is able to meet the demands of the herd. No more than 3 cows stand in line waiting to drink at water stations. If waterers are used, at least one waterer per 10 head is provided (at least one waterer per 6 head when a high dry matter ration is used.) There is one waterer, or 2 ft. of tank perimeter, for every 10-20 cows. Formula used in the southwest for waterers: $(\text{group size}) \times (.15 \times 2) = (\text{tank perimeter needed in feet})$. Water troughs, waterers, and nipples are kept thoroughly cleaned and must be checked daily to ensure that they are dispensing water. In pasture, the area around the water troughs should be managed to avoid excessive accumulation of mud/moisture around the trough and, if necessary, troughs should be placed on concrete aprons. **Provisions are in place to ensure an emergency supply of suitable drinking water in case normal supplies fail. A written plan is in place that specifies water supply alternatives.**

Pasture Grazing

Where climate allows for quality grazing, dairy cattle are able to receive a large portion of their nutritional requirements by grazing pasture. In some climatic regions, growing conditions determine that grass is not a relevant crop. These cattle should have free, voluntary access to the pasture, or exercise lot for at least 4 to 5 hours per day, weather permitting. When pasture quality is poor, nutritional maintenance through feeding of quality forage and concentrate is appropriate. Control practices must be in place to minimize access to poisonous plants and unsuitable feedstuffs. Samples of water are taken and recorded periodically to ensure that water quality is acceptable for cattle and that water source does not contain contaminants such as elevated levels of nutrients. Local, state, and federal laws are followed regarding cattle access to running or still water resources.

Special Considerations for Calves

Calving

Farm managers have knowledge of calving and the care of newborn calves. Calving aids are only used to assist a delivery and not to produce a calf as quickly as possible. Before any type of calving aid is used, the cow is examined to ensure that the calf is of a size where natural delivery can be reasonably expected, without causing undue pain and distress to either the dam or the offspring.

Calving environment

Where calving cows are kept confined in a building, they are provided a bedded area that is equipped with a means of restraint to permit a person to safely attend the cows and their calves if necessary. Water is available. Cows are clean at calving, paying particular attention to udders and teats. The close-up cows or springers are kept separate from other cattle or other species of livestock. Insulation, heating and ventilation of the building ensures that the air circulation, dust level, temperature, relative humidity, and gas concentrations are kept within limits which are not harmful to calves. These are verified by no evidence of condensation, no order issues and no visible dust levels. Temperatures are monitored and recorded. Cows calve in clean, dry areas separated from the rest of the herd with free access to water. When calving pens are used, animals calve in individual clean and bedded stalls. Internal walls of calving pens and hospital boxes are of materials which are easily cleaned and disinfected. Facilities for restraining cows such as a stanchion or holding gate are provided. Provisions are made for milking isolated cows.

Food Provisions for Calves

Calves are fed an appropriate diet, which meets or exceeds the National Research Council (NRC) requirements for their age, weight, and behavioral needs. Antibiotics and anti-parasitic agents are used only as prescribed by an attending veterinarian. Newborn calves receive adequate, quality colostrum from their dams, or from other fresh cows, within the first 6 to 8 hours of life. When nursing is not possible, 2-4 quarts of colostrum is administered by bottle or stomach tube during the first 8 hours to both heifer and bull calves. All calves receive milk or milk replacer daily through the first five weeks of life. If a teat system of calf feeding is used, teats are arranged so that a calf's neck is positioned at least horizontally or with a slight upward tilt. Calves are not weaned until they are eating at least 1.5 lbs per calf, per day of a calf starter ration. Un-weaned calves still on milk or milk replacer have unlimited access to palatable starter and fresh clean water after day 8. Calves must not be weaned before 5 weeks of age. Calves more than 14 days old have daily access to feed or forage material such as high quality hay containing sufficient digestible fiber to stimulate the development of rumen. Removal of calves from pens into social groups does not coincide with weaning. The group socialization of calves is completed by 8 weeks of age. When calves are in group pens, appropriate devices are available for calves to reduce inappropriate sucking behavior. Calves are not muzzled or physically altered to prevent suckling. Alternative devices are available such as artificial nipples and plastic nose clips that are designed in such a manner that leave no sores or signs of irritation of the nostrils. Purchased calves travel direct from the farm of birth or are acquired through an American Humane Certified accredited calf cooperative. Purchased calves have received colostrum as described above. Calves are moved off the farm before 5 days of age unless the calf is being transported directly to a specialized calf rearing facility on the farm.

Calf Hutches

Calf hutches are sized appropriate for the age, size, and breed of the animal. The calves are able to stand up, turn a round, lie down, rest, and groom themselves without hindrance. Calves are not kept in total darkness. Appropriate natural or artificial lighting is provided; if the latter, it functions for a period at least equivalent to the period of natural light normally available between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Suitable lighting, fixed or portable, strong enough to allow the calves to be inspected at any time is available. Hutches are constructed to eliminate drafts but maintain constant air circulation to help dissipate excess humidity, ammonia and condensation. Hutches are placed on a free draining base and affixed to the ground to prevent movement in high winds, when necessary. Hutches are sited at a sheltered location, away from prevailing weather. Calves have access to a dry bed at all times. There is enough bedding in the hutch to prevent drafts. Hutches are arranged so that calves see and hear other calves in neighboring hutches. Hutches are made of materials that are constructed to facilitate cleaning and disinfection. Hutches are constructed of materials that minimize heat stress and wide temperature fluctuations. Waste feed and water are disposed and stored at a site away from the calves.

Special Handling for New Calves

While healthy young calves can tolerate low air temperatures, newborn animals, calves that have been transported or deprived of food, and sick calves, are particularly susceptible to hypothermia. Managers take proper precautions to prevent and manage hypothermia in young calves. Hypothermia and additional stress are avoided in unheated buildings by using thick, dry bedding. Sick calves are provided artificial heat when necessary. Where there is a high risk of infectious disease, calves are quarantined for the initial rearing period up to 5 weeks. Location or placement of individual calf pens used for quarantine must be such that each calf has an opportunity to see and hear other calves.

Environment

Bio-security

Bio-security means reducing the risk of disease occurring or spreading to other animals.

Good bio-security is obtained through:

- good management/husbandry;
- good hygiene;
- reducing stress on the herd;
- effective disease control systems such as vaccination and worming programs.

Bio-security results in:

- farm units being more secure from the introduction of new infectious diseases; and
- the spread of any diseases on the unit itself being kept to a minimum.

American Humane Certified managers are careful when moving livestock onto a farm, and within the farm (particularly if the farm is on more than one site). This greatly reduces the chances of a major outbreak of disease. For example, cattle are only transported in vehicles that have been properly cleansed and disinfected. AHC managers ask vendors to provide information on the health of the herd, such as routine vaccination and worming procedures, so their suitability for the herd can be assessed and, where necessary, appropriate treatments and vaccinations administered. Isolation facilities are provided to observe and test new animals for an appropriate period before they join the rest of the herd. Hired bulls are only used when no alternative is available. The potential disease status of the hired bull is carefully considered prior to its introduction.

Physical Environment

There are no physical features of the environment which cause recurring injuries to cattle. Excessive occurrence of the following may be indicators of a poor environment: neck calluses, knee, hock, swellings/callus, teat/udder injuries, broken tails, hematomas, chronic scar tissue, soft feet, interdigital infections, laminitis, abscesses, bruised soles.

Space and Design Requirements

Key points relating to welfare are recorded in the building log book or on the farm site plan including total square feet available to livestock, number of free-stalls or bedded (loafing) area, and the capacity in relation to age, weight, feeding, drinking and bedding area. Buildings are of a height adequate to allow the normal expression of mounting behavior in estrus. The interior of any building, including the floor and all internal fittings/surfaces to which livestock have access, is designed, constructed, maintained, and regularly inspected to ensure that there are no sharp edges or protrusions likely to cause injury or distress to the animal. This includes the provisions of adequate and safe holding and handling facilities, whether indoors or outdoors, and is safe and adequate to serve the number of animals that will be using them at any given time. Passages are wide enough and constructed to allow animals to pass freely. Care is taken to minimize, and ideally exclude, the number of blind alleyways in the buildings, in order to avoid the incidences of bullying by dominant animals.

Building Surfaces

Internal surfaces of housing and pens are made of materials which can readily be cleansed and disinfected or easily be replaced when necessary. Except where preservatives with an insecticidal role are used, cattle or calves do not come into contact with toxic fumes from chemicals. Creosote treated wood and lead based paint is not used.

Flooring

Floors are made of non-slip material or maintained so as to reduce the risk of slipping using sand, mats or other material applied as necessary. Floors are not so rough as to cause hoof damage nor so smooth as to result in slipping. Smooth concrete floors are grooved approximately 1/3" - 1/2" or treated with a non-slip coating/belting. Farm alleyways are maintained in order to prevent damage to the animals' hooves.

Lighting and Electrical

Cows housed indoors are provided with lighting equal in intensity to natural light during the normal period of daylight hours. Where cows are housed, adequate lighting, whether fixed or portable, is available to enable them to be thoroughly inspected at any time. Electrical installations are inaccessible to cattle, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents, properly grounded, and regularly tested.

Ventilation & Thermal Environment

The buildings the thermal environment is not so hot or so cold as to cause distress. Effective ventilation of building, permitting air movement at low velocity while avoiding drafts and ingress of rain and snow, is provided. When cattle are housed, aerial contaminants do not reach a level at which they are noticeably unpleasant to a human observer as specified by OSHA. Ammonia levels are measured and recorded regularly, and do not exceed 25 ppm. Building ventilation achieves a relative humidity below 80% when ambient conditions allow. The system provides an adequate volume of air and high ventilation rate to remove the moisture produced by the stock and to reduce the number of airborne pathogens being passed from animal to animal. The ventilation system includes sufficient and correctly positioned air inlets and outlets and correct air inlet-outlet height differential. Professional advice is sought if ventilation problems are encountered. When cattle are kept confined in partially roofed units they are provided with effective protection from the wind and a comfortable dry lying area. In conditions where the Temperature/Humidity Index is above 72 degrees F. a shaded area is accessible to the cows. Shade and misting or sprinkling systems are provided when these conditions prevail. Shade structures are designed to accommodate all animals together. Examples: allow the animals back into the buildings or utilize natural shade.

Freestall Housing

Freestall housing provides a clean, dry and comfortable bed, free from contamination with feces or urine. Stocking densities do not exceed 110% of the number of available freestalls. A “loafing” area is provided. Unbedded areas are slatted or of solid concrete and scraped at least daily. Slats do not result in injury to feet. The slope from rear to front is approximately 4%. Adequate clean bedding is provided to a minimum depth of 3 inches. Cow mattresses (not the solid type) are used with an adequate layer of bedding to prevent damage and swelling of the cows legs. Cows are able to lie down in a normal position without risk of being walked on, stepped on, or kicked by other cows. The stall is constructed so that it prevents the animal from standing so far forward that it consistently soils the back of the stall. Cows are able to change position from standing to lying and vice versa in a normal manner without difficulty or injury, and with adequate space to allow the normal forward lunging motion during this maneuver. When lying, all of the cow’s body is on the bed including the hocks and the udder. Freestalls are designed to align a cow properly, and must prevent interference with or injury to her neighbor or herself. The step between the Freestall bed and the dung passage helps avoid slurry being pushed into the bed during scraping and encourages cows to enter the cubicle head first. The height of the step is not such that it results in an increased incidence of concussion injuries to the hooves. Professional advice is sought to help address design problems such as animals rejecting, becoming stuck in, or lying half-in and half-out of stalls, or recurring injury.

Bull Pens

Bull pens are sited to allow the bull sight, sound, and odor of other cattle and general farm activity. They are monitored daily by farm staff. Individual accommodation for an adult bull of average size includes a bedded sleeping area of not less than 144 sq. ft (12ft x 12ft). For very large bulls, the sleeping area is not less than 9 sq. ft. for each 132 lbs. live weight. The service area of the bull pen has a non-slip surface. Bull pens are safe for the stockman tending them. Adequate restraining facilities and an escape route are provided.

Handling

All personnel are trained in the handling and treatment of animals under their care, including but not limited to the following: Cattle are moved at their own pace, without being hurried by stockman, vehicles or dogs. Cattle are encouraged gently especially around corners and where it is slippery underfoot. Excessive noise, excitement and force are avoided. Stockpersons do not put pressure or strike at any particularly sensitive part of the body (such as the head or udder). Sticks are used only to guide the animals and do not have a sharp or pointed end. The use of electric prods on adult cattle is avoided as far as possible. Electric current is used only for the purposes of immobilization and no electric prod is used on cattle of six months or under.

Facilities

All handling facilities such as veterinary pens, loading ramps and milking barns have non-slip flooring. Alleyways and gates are designed and operated so as not to impede the movement of cows. Effort has been made to reduce excessive noise which may cause distress to the animals. Noise reduction mechanisms have been fitted to gates. Noise reduction mechanisms should be fitted to gates and catches as necessary. Loading bays and ramps are well lit and enable animals to walk straight into or out of the vehicle at level or gradient of no more than 20% incline. Loading ramps and tail boards are fitted with means of preventing the cows from slipping or falling off.

Fencing

All fencing has been adequately inspected and maintained so that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the cattle.

Milking Barn

Milking Barn Hygiene

The high standards of hygiene are practiced in the milking barn to reduce the risk of infection. Udder, teats, and flanks are clean, dry and free from sores on entry to the parlor. Parlor staff has clean hands when handling teats. Clean rubber gloves are used. Multi-use udder cloths are not used multiple times on different cows. All teats are treated with an approved teat disinfectant. An emollient is used when teats are dry, chapped, or cracked. Following completion of milking, cows are encouraged to remain standing for approximately half an hour to allow the teat canal sphincter to close before returning cows to their housing area.

Mastitis

All cases of mastitis are treated promptly and underlying predisposing factors corrected. When the mastitis rate exceeds the target figure over a 2-month period, the specific organisms involved are identified, per the animal health plan. Cows with mastitis are identified, segregated and milked separately. Herd somatic cell counts are monitored and recorded. Individual clinical cases of mastitis and mastitis tube usage are recorded. Records are kept of all medications used and withdrawal times noted. Measures are in place to minimize the risk/incidence of mastitis in dry cows.

Milking Equipment

Milking machinery is properly maintained and milking system has a documented routine maintenance plan. Under and over milking is avoided. Teat cup liners are checked daily and damaged or rough teat liners are replaced. Liners are exchanged according to manufacturer's recommendations. Pulsation rate and release/squeeze ratio are checked and corrected regularly. The vacuum regulation is functioning correctly and preventing vacuum fluctuation. The dairy meets all local, state and federal regulations.

Health

Livestock are protected from pain, injury, and disease. The environment in which livestock are housed is conducive to good health. Producers have developed a health plan in consultation with their veterinarian.

Animal Health Plan Requirements

Dairies develop an Animal Health Plan (AHP) in collaboration with a veterinarian of record with which the dairy has a valid veterinarian client-patient relationship. The Animal Health Plan is regularly updated. Health records are kept and include vaccination protocol, mortality, disease outbreaks, treatment records. Sudden deaths, disease outbreaks, and cattle humanely killed, are recorded, investigated when appropriate, and the outcome and any action recorded.

Herd Monitoring

The herd must be continually monitored for herd performance including: production diseases, infectious diseases, and injury as a result of housing, husbandry, or handling. If any herd performance parameters fall below the tolerance limits identified by the producer and the herd veterinarian, the veterinarian is informed and management practices adjusted to try to resolve the problem. Practical measures are taken to prevent or control external and internal parasitic infestations as set forth in the Animal Health Plan.

Foot Conditions

Close attention is given to the condition of the feet. Methods for the prevention of acute foot conditions are addressed in the AHP. The feet of all cattle are inspected for signs of abnormal wear, infection, or excessive growth at least annually, or as required by a competent foot trimmer. If a problem is identified, a foot care plan is added to the AHP using methods appropriate to the condition and the individual farm. Handlers demonstrate their knowledge of common acute foot conditions along with methods of prevention and treatment.

Care and Handling of Sick and Injured Cattle

Efforts are made to ensure a rapid and proper diagnosis/treatment of a sick or injured animal. Any cow suffering from illness or injury is segregated, treated without delay, and veterinary advice sought when needed or, if necessary, is humanely killed. Hospital pens are sized appropriate for the age, size, and breed of the animal. The animal is able to stand up, turn around, lie down, rest, and groom itself without hindrance. Water and feed is readily accessible even to non-ambulatory animals. Urine and dung from hospital pens for sick and injured animals are disposed of without the risk of spreading infection to other stock. Pens are constructed to facilitate effective cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and the possible removal of a carcass from the area. When lifting gear is used on a recumbent animal, care is taken to not cause unnecessary pain or distress to the animal. Stockpersons do not hoist cattle by chains, drag, lift without complete body support, or use other means that can cause further physical damage. Hip-lifters are used only for emergency, short-term assistance. Cattle are not left unattended when hip-lifters are in use. Hind-leg hobbles are used when necessary to prevent cattle from becoming non-ambulatory. If an animal does not respond to treatment, it is humanely euthanized immediately. No live animals leave the farm if they cannot walk unassisted unless they are being humanely transported to a treatment facility.

Replacement Animals

Replacement animals brought in from other sources are quarantined, appropriately vaccinated, and treated in accordance with the AHP before integration into the herd. Animals are isolated for a minimum of two weeks before mixed with other animals on farm or by instruction of the herd veterinarian.

Abnormal Behaviors

Possible repetitive abnormal behavioral patterns may include repeated rubbing in the absence of disease, tongue rolling/aerophagia, bar biting/chewing, licking/chewing solid objects, eating soil/sand/dirt, navel sucking, ear sucking, and urine drinking. If abnormal behavioral activities develop repeatedly and inhibit normal functioning of the animal in any particular pen, a program of modification and enrichment is agreed upon together with the farm veterinarian and the American Humane Certified Assessor and pursued until the problem is overcome. This excludes the repeated rubbing of brushes designed for that purpose.

Husbandry Procedures

The only potentially injurious husbandry procedures accepted under the American Humane Standards are as follows (except those done for therapeutic reasons by a veterinarian):

- Removal of supernumerary teats is performed within 6 months. Older calves or heifers have teats removed under local anesthesia by a veterinarian.
- Disbudding is performed during the first 4 months of life using a hot iron with or without local anesthesia. After 4 months of age, a local anesthesia is required for disbudding. Cautery paste and scoop methods of dehorning are not used as routine practices. If scoop dehorning is necessary on an animal older than 4 months, it is done by a veterinarian with local anesthesia.
- Calves are castrated at the earliest possible age. Castration is accomplished by the application of a band (rubber ring) after 24 hours of age and before 7 days of age, or Burdizzo clamp or surgical castration after 24 hours of age and up to 2 months of age. Calves older than 2 months of age receive local anesthetic for surgical castration or spermatic cord crush (burdizzo, emasculator). For older heavier bulls, castration is done under local anesthesia and provisions are made to control bleeding.
- Tail docking is not performed. Switch trimming is performed as necessary.
- All of these practices are performed in a way which minimizes suffering and by trained and competent Managers.
- Induction of parturition is not used as a routine management procedure, but is performed per a veterinarians' recommendation. Non-veterinarians performing per rectum pregnancy detection have received appropriate training.
- There is a minimum dry period of 25 days. Every animal is inspected at drying-off.

Euthanasia and Casualty Animals

Each farm has provisions for timely and humane euthanasia of casualty cattle. Euthanasia is performed on-farm by a named, trained, competent member of staff, a slaughter-man, or a veterinarian. The methods of euthanasia comply with American Veterinary Medical Association. The methods of euthanasia used for each age group of animals are specified in the Animal Health Plan. If there is any doubt as to how to proceed regarding illness or injury, the veterinarian is called at an early stage to advise whether treatment is possible or whether humane slaughter is required to prevent suffering. If an animal is in severe pain that is uncontrollable, the animal is promptly euthanized. Nothing stated here is intended to discourage the prompt diagnosis and appropriate treatment of any ill or injured animal. Disposal of carcasses meets local requirements and regulations.

Handling and Transport

All transportation is provided by those trained in the humane treatment of animals.

Moving Cattle

Cattle are not driven unless the exit or the path forward for the lead cow is clear. The animals are not rushed or run along alleyways, passageways, or through gateways. Tails may be used to gently direct the animals. A tail broken high on the tail is unacceptable. Sticks and flags may be used as benign handling aids such as extensions of the arm. Sticks must not be used for hitting cattle. The use of electric prods is prohibited except where animal and human safety is in jeopardy and it is the means of last resort. A cattle handling unit must be available, comprised of a collecting system and a method of restraint, appropriate to the type, environment, and numbers of stock to be managed.

Handling and Transport of Downed Cattle

Medical breakthroughs in the treatment of dairy cows have made it possible to assist downer dairy cattle to regain health and productivity. American Humane and the American Humane Certified program continue to watch for new technological and medical breakthroughs in the care of dairy animals. The American Humane Certified cattle which are destined to a medical facility for medical treatment may be humanely transported from the farm to a veterinary facility for treatment. The transportation and treatment of the cow is documented in the health care records in the American Humane Certified farm manual. If the animal goes down in transport and cannot be successfully treated, it is humanely euthanized on the spot or at the medical facility. The transportation and treatment of the cow is documented in the health care records.

Loading of Animals

Cattle are loaded and unloaded using suitable ramps, bridges, gangways or mechanical lifting gear, operated so as to prevent injury or unnecessary suffering to any animal. Flooring of loading equipment is constructed to prevent slipping. Ramps, bridges, gangways and loading platforms have protection on each side that is of sufficient strength, length and height to prevent any animal from falling or escaping; and is positioned so that it will not result in injury. An animal is only loaded or unloaded by means of manual lifting or carrying if the animal is of a size that it can easily be lifted by not more than two persons, and the operation is carried out without causing injury or unnecessary suffering to the animal. Managers have the facilities on-farm to load and unload cattle onto and from a vehicle, with as little stress as possible. Stock-keepers know how to handle animals during loading and unloading, including:

- using visual fields (i.e. cattle have a wide field of vision but have a blind spot behind them, which handlers avoid entering) and flight zones (an imaginary area which if handlers enter makes the animal want to move away. Handlers control animal movement by understanding the flight zone).
- lighting (as cattle prefer to move from the dark into the light); and
- when and how to use such things as sticks and other implements.

Humane Slaughter Practices

American Humane Certified program adheres to the [Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide](#) published by the American Meat Institute Foundation for humane slaughtering and processing practices. Managers should be familiar with the AMI Guidelines for Transportation and Slaughter of Farm Animals.

Exit Interview

Any identified welfare issues are discussed in the exit interview by the manager and auditor. Welfare concerns are described in a **Non-Conformance Report** which is signed by both the manager and auditor. All issues agreed upon at the exit interview must be corrected.

A **Correction Action Plan** is submitted to American Humane within 7 days of the Non-Conformance Report date. The Correction Action Plan describes the items identified through the audit process and the corrective actions that will be taken by the producer.

The Corrective Action Plan is completed within 90 days and a **Corrective Action Completion** form is submitted with supporting documentation. Producers are subject to a re-audit at the discretion of American Humane Certified after plan completion. Variances are permitted through submission to American Humane Certified and upon approval. Producers are encouraged to report to American Humane Certified on their progress on corrective actions throughout the correction period.

AHC farms are expected to maintain high welfare standards throughout the term of their certification. If it is determined after an audit that an AHC farm has fallen out of compliance the farm is immediately suspended from the program. Suspended farms are asked to verify correction of the practices and undergo complete re-assessment process before being reinstated.

American Humane Certified reserves the right to perform spot checks at anytime during the certification period.