



Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.

Guide to the Humane Care, Handling and Transportation of Beef and Dairy Cattle





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Handling and
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Beef and
Dairy Cattle



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PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLICATION

The industry's interests, as well as the animal's, are best served when producers make sound and humane decisions regarding handling of cattle. It is unacceptable and illegal for unfit animals – those that are sick, injured or would suffer unduly if not handled properly – to be transported to market.

Federal law states that “*whoever loads or causes to be loaded*” is responsible for the well being of an animal in transport, in other words the shipper and/or the truck driver and/or the transport company may be held liable and charged under humane transport laws if there are problems with the transported animals. Knowing when an animal is unfit for transportation, marketing or slaughter is important for each person involved in the industry so that inhumane/illegal incidents do not happen.

Responsible animal care decisions must be made, particularly in situations where animals become injured or diseased. Producers need to identify conditions early when they are less severe, so that animals can be treated or shipped; minimizing pain and discomfort.

Producers and Shippers must not tender unfit animals for transport or for sale at an auction market. Producers should work with their veterinarian for decisions on cull animals, where there is any question if the animal is fit for transport.

Auction market personnel must not accept unfit animals for sale.

Truckers must not accept unfit animals for transport and should know the regulations, to back up their decision.

Veterinarians must advise in assessing whether questionable animals should be treated, sent direct to slaughter, slaughtered on site or euthanized.

Enforcement personnel e.g. CFIA, is responsible for ensuring the regulations are adhered to, educate where possible, and enforce when necessary.

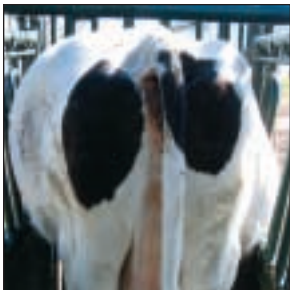
Saskatchewan livestock producers have made proper care for their cattle an industry priority. **DO NOT ship animals which may be classified as unfit to undergo transport.**

Use this booklet to help determine whether an animal is unfit for transport. This handbook provides standards of what are acceptable practices to help producers make the right decisions and ensure due diligence. **If you are in doubt about any of the conditions listed in this book, we recommend you contact your veterinarian.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. would like to acknowledge and thank Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC), Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Milk and Western Dairy Science Inc, whose publications Humane Handling of Beef Cattle and Humane Handling of Dairy Cattle form the basis of this publication.

BLOAT



Trapped gas in rumen causes left side to distend. Animal may have difficulty breathing or walking and grind teeth in pain.

Management Options

- Do NOT transport;
- Consult veterinarian;
- Treat if in time;
- Emergency slaughter if salvageable;
- Euthanize.

BRISKET FLUID



Congestive Heart Failure, a common heart disorder (and sequel to hardware disease) appears as fluid (edema) buildup in the jowls, neck and brisket. It is not treatable. If there is any fluid in the tissues, the animal

should NOT be slaughtered for human consumption.

Management Options

- Consult veterinarian;
- Do not transport advanced stage (emaciated, weak);
- Euthanize if necessary.

BROKEN LEG



An obvious fractured or displaced leg is easy to diagnose. Some are more difficult. If the animal will not put weight on the leg and shows signs of pain such as trembling or grinding teeth, then a break or dislocation is likely.

Management Options

- Do NOT lift or drag a conscious animal;
- Do NOT transport;
- Consult veterinarian;
- Emergency on site slaughter;
- Euthanize.

BULLER STEER SYNDROME



The affected steer is mounted repeatedly and becomes exhausted, often showing loss of hair, swelling and trauma on the rump and tail head. Buller steers cannot be penned at a packing plant with other cattle as harassment can cause severe bruising, and “dark cutters” in the affected animal and pen mates.

Management Options

- Rail for slaughter;
- Do NOT off load and mix with other animals before slaughter. Pen separately prior to slaughter.

CANCER EYE



Do not confuse with “pinkeye”. Cancer Eye is an obvious growth on the eyeball or eyelid of older animals. It weeps fluid and smells rotten. In the early stage when the lesion is small, within the orbit of the eye and the animal can still

see, the animal may be treatable by removal of the eye or be salvaged. In advanced stages, when the growth has obscured and blinded the eye, the animal will be condemned as unfit for human consumption.

Management Options

- **Early stages** – Consult veterinarian;
- Ship promptly and directly to slaughter. Do NOT ship to an auction market;
- **Advances stages** – Do NOT transport. Euthanize.

DISPLACED ABOMASUM

Occurs more frequently in high-producing, heavily fed dairy cattle, usually within 30 days of freshening. One of the chief symptoms is a sudden or gradual decrease in appetite. Cows have scanty bowel movements, soft and discolored with some occasional diarrhea. It is treatable by surgery and preventable by dietary adjustment.

Management Options

- Consult veterinarian;
- Treatable by surgery;
- Ship directly to nearest suitable abattoir;
- Call ahead to ensure prompt slaughter;
- Transport in separate compartment, adequate bedding;
- Do NOT transport to auction.

DOWNERS



Downer or non-ambulatory cattle (Lameness Classes 4 and 5) cannot rise, remain standing or walk without assistance. May show signs of pain. May be from an obvious physical problem such as a broken leg or from weakness caused by

emaciation, dehydration, exhaustion or disease.

Downer cattle over 30 months of age are part of the "4D" group of cattle (deads, downers, diseased and dying) which CFIA needs to test for BSE surveillance.

Long or extended journeys may cause lactating or poorer body conditioned dairy cows to go down in transit. Animals at risk of becoming non-ambulatory in transport should be assessed before loading and shipped to the nearest suitable abattoir.

Management Options

- Consult veterinarian;
- Do NOT lift or drag a conscious animal;
- Do NOT transport;
- Contact CFIA if over 30 months, submit head for testing;
- Emergency on-site slaughter if salvageable;
- Euthanize.

LACTATING COWS



All cull dairy cows entering an auction market to be sold for meat should be dried off and their udders dried up. Cows dripping milk at an auction are a public concern because further drying off may not be monitored properly or complications treated.

Lactating cull dairy cows should be shipped directly for immediate slaughter.

Management Options

- Do NOT ship cows (or ANY animal) treated with antibiotics prior to withdrawal time stated on the label;
- Do NOT ship cows from a warm barn in very cold weather unless it's a very short haul (under 30 minutes) to nearest abattoir;
- Transport lactating cows direct to slaughter by short haul (under four hours);
- Consult a veterinarian if there are complicating factors.

LAMENESS



Although lameness can occur in beef animals, it is an important and common problem and reason for culling in dairy cows.

Lameness can be caused by many factors including foot rot, claw horn problems, swollen arthritic joints, abscess, frozen feet, founder or disease.

Try to determine any obvious cause of lameness, though hip or shoulder problems are difficult to assess visually.

A lame animal can only be transported if it can rise, stand and walk under its own power. Founder cattle, identifiable by long toes, mainly on the front feet and a "paddle" gait because of tender feet, may go down on a long trip because it is too painful to stand.

Infectious arthritis in two or more joints will result in a condemned carcass. Assess the whole animal. It may be slightly lame but if in poor condition or with other problems may still be condemned so should be euthanized on farm.

Management Options

- An animal which can rise and walk but has a hard time keeping up to the herd (Lameness Class 2) can be transported to slaughter or to a veterinary clinic in a small trailer or rear compartment of commercial trailer with ample bedding;
- An animal which requires assistance to rise but can walk (Lameness Class 3) can be transported to slaughter as above but by short haul (under four hours) only or to a veterinary clinic;
- Lameness Class 4 and Class 5 should be euthanized or slaughtered on-site if salvageable (see Downers).

LUMP JAW



Recognizable by hard lump on the jaw, which may have ruptured and may be draining fluid. Do not confuse with "woody tongue" which can be treated. Advanced lump jaw may interfere with an animal's ability to eat. Animal must have a body score of 2 or more if transported to auction or slaughter.

Management Options

- **Early stages** (Body Condition Score 2+) – transport directly to slaughter in a small trailer or rear compartment, with plenty of bedding;
- **Advanced stages** (Body Condition Score 1) – do NOT transport;
- Slaughter on site or euthanize.

PERITONITIS (Hardware Disease)



Hardware disease is a treatable local peritonitis between the reticulum and the diaphragm.

Diffuse peritonitis is an infection of the abdominal cavity (peritoneum).

The animal may show signs of shock and pain, smell rotten, appear thin, distressed and tired, refuse to remain standing, and may have fluid in the belly. Not salvageable.

Management Options

- Consult veterinarian;
- Do NOT transport;
- Euthanize.

POISONING OR NERVOUS DISORDER

Animals which have been poisoned or are suffering from a nervous disorder will be stumbling, hyper excited, and staggering. They may lie with the neck bent back and one or more legs extended. Lead poisoning, ketosis, polioencephalomalacia and hypomagnesaemia (grass tetany) are treatable. Animals which are unresponsive to treatment may have a contagious reportable disease so consult a veterinarian before euthanizing. Animals over 30 months of age in this category should be reported to CFIA for BSE surveillance testing.

Management Options

- Consult a veterinarian;
- Do NOT transport;
- Euthanize on site;
- Contact CFIA if over 30 months, submit head for testing.

POOR CONDITION (Thin, Emaciated)



Thin, weak, no muscle mass, emaciated, malnourished, old age, injury or diseased.

Signs of disease might be manure running down hindquarters; bone thin but lively; abscesses and healed or weeping sores.

Management Options

- Consult a veterinarian;
- Suspected Reportable Disease MUST be reported immediately to CFIA;
- Do NOT transport;
- If salvageable, do not transport until the animal has recovered body condition to a score of 2 or more;
- Euthanize.

PREGNANT COWS, NEWBORN CALVES



Management Options

- Do NOT transport cows in very late pregnancy (loose or swollen vulva area, tight udder, and full belly) or within 2 to 4 days post-calving;
- Do NOT transport calves under one week of age to market;
- Always segregate animals by size when transporting.

PROLAPSE



Uterine Prolapse

- Do NOT transport;
- Call veterinarian for treatment;
- Euthanize

Rectal or Vaginal Prolapse

- Transport to veterinary facility for immediate treatment;
- Ship by very short haul (under 30 minutes) to nearest suitable abattoir for immediate slaughter.

REPORTABLE DISEASE

Diseases of cattle which must, by federal law, be reported to a veterinarian include but are not limited to: BSE, FMD, rabies, brucellosis, anthrax, bluetongue and tuberculosis. Be suspicious of any animal tendered for transport that shows signs of disease. Look for staggering or circling, slobbering, depression, aggression, fever, oral erosions, lameness, anemia, abortion, coughing, diarrhea, signs of pain or shock, bleeding, blindness, trembling or any other suspicious symptom.

Management Options

- Do not handle – some diseases are transmissible from animals to humans. Consult a veterinarian;
- Do NOT transport;
- Contact CFIA immediately. For full information see CFIA website at www.cfia-acia.agr.ca.

RESPIRATORY DISEASE (Pneumonia, AIP)



Breathing much laboured, tongue may be out, foam may be around mouth as animal fights for breath. Animal “looks sick”, sunken eyes, won’t move, may become aggressive if pressured. An animal with respiratory disease can

become very sick if transported and advanced cases may die.

Management Options

- Consult veterinarian;
- **Early stages** – transport, very short haul;
- **Advanced stages** – do NOT transport;
- Emergency on site slaughter if salvageable;
- Euthanize.

URINARY TRACT AND INJURED PENIS



Animal may be in pain or shock. May wring the tail, grind the teeth, get up and lie back down and kick at its belly.

There may be a visible urinary swelling on the belly of bulls with broken urethras. Bladder rupture or “water belly” can cause poisoning of

the animal. A poisoned animal may appear tired, sleepy, and groggy, won’t rise or remain standing.

Management Options

- Consult veterinarian;
- Ship directly to nearest suitable abattoir, call ahead to ensure prompt slaughter;
- Ship in separate compartment with ample bedding;
- Euthanize advanced cases.

MISCELLANEOUS PROBLEMS



- A **broken nose** can happen if an animal collides with a fence. Transport short haul in separate compartment;
- **Wet cattle** may be tendered for transport. Hauling wet cattle on a cold day is not acceptable;
- **Slick animals** (little or no

hair) or animals accustomed to a warm barn will suffer if transported in very cold weather; short haul (<30 minutes) only.

- Animals with a **deep wound or profuse bleeding** should not be transported; call veterinarian for treatment or euthanize on site.

DEFINITIONS

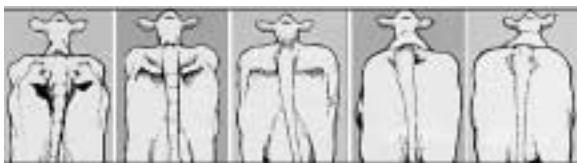
Acronyms:

- **CFIA:** Canadian Food Inspection Agency;
- **FACS:** Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.;
- **SAF:** Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food;
- **SSPCA:** Saskatchewan Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals;
- **SVMA:** Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association.

Animal Welfare: A state which meets animal's individual needs for nutrition, shelter, health and the ability to express its natural behaviour, and in which it is free from undue pain and suffering.

Arthritis: Joint inflammation, causing pain, which results in increasing reluctance to move; and which often causes the animal to spend more time lying down.

Body Condition Score: a measure of body fat on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very thin (see illustration); 2 is somewhat thin; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is fat; 5 is very fat.



Condemned Animal: A condemned animal may have one or more of the following: drug residue from an antibiotic injection or other drug, body temperature above 104°F or 40°C; body condition score of 1; disease which renders the carcass unfit for human consumption. Owners will not be paid for condemned animals.

Distress: A condition in which an animal experiences excessive fear, pain or anxiety.

Lameness Classes (CFIA):

Class 1: Visibly lame but can keep up with group;

Class 2: Unable to keep up, some difficulty climbing ramps;

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

Class 4: Requires assistance to rise; reluctant to walk; halted movement; this is a non-ambulatory animal;

Class 5: Unable to rise or remain standing; this is a non-ambulatory animal.

Nearest Suitable Abattoir: A facility less than 4 hours (unless otherwise stated) away and which provides assurance that the animal will be killed within 24 hours.

Pain: Physical or mental suffering. Extreme discomfort. An animal in pain may show the following signs:

- Unwillingness to rise;
- Reluctance to place a foot on the ground and bear weight;
- Limping;
- Laying on its side;
- Groaning;
- Vocalisation when encouraged to rise or move;

- Trembling;
- Rapid breathing;
- An arched back with tucked up abdomen;
- Flinching in response to pressure;
- An expression of intense anxiety;
- Unwillingness to eat or drink;
- Standing or laying apart from the group.

Reportable Disease: Diseases of cattle which must, by federal law, be reported to a veterinarian include but are not limited to: BSE, FMD, rabies, brucellosis, anthrax, bluetongue and tuberculosis. See CFIA website for full details.

www.cfia-acia.agr.gc.ca

Salvageable Animal: A salvageable animal must meet or exceed the following: be free of drug, vaccine and chemical residue; have a body temperature not above 103°F or 39.5°C; have a body score of two or higher and be able to walk under its own power

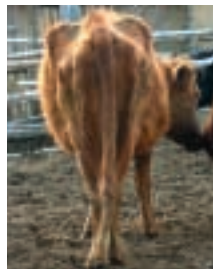
Shock: A state of system shut-down; animal does not respond to handler; will not get up.

Suffering: The state of enduring physical or mental pain, or injury.

Very Thin & Weak: The ends of the short ribs are sharp to the touch and together give a prominent shelf-like appearance to the loin. The individual vertebrae of the backbone are



prominent. The hook and pin bones are sharply defined. The anal area has receded and the vulva is prominent.



Animals that are both thin and weak are likely to be judged 'emaciated' or 'wasted' upon postmortem inspection at the abattoir. Emaciated carcasses are condemned.

EUTHANASIA GUIDELINES

Euthanasia is the humane termination of the life of an animal. The method used must be quick, painless and performed correctly using acceptable industry practices.

Acceptable

- *Penetrating Captive Bolt*: head must be captured in a chute or secured to a solid object using rope or halter shank;
- *Non-penetrating Captive Bolt*: same as above;
- *Gunshot*: .22 calibre for calves, .22 Long Rifle for cows, high-powered rifle for bulls;
- *Barbiturate*: only a licensed veterinarian may administer a drug to euthanize.



The diagram details the point of entry and direction of a captive bolt or firearm for the purpose of euthanasia. For captive bolt stunning, the head must be secured in a chute or tied to a solid object using a rope or halter.

Not acceptable

- *Blunt trauma*: e.g. hammer to the head;
- *Bleeding*: laceration of carotid arteries & jugular vein is not acceptable unless the animal has been stunned first (with captive bolt or gunshot);
- *Air embolism*: injecting air into the artery of an animal is not acceptable because a swift and painless death cannot be assured;
- *Any other method*: (electrocution unless in a registered packing plant, injection of chemicals not designed for euthanasia) is prohibited.

In the trailer

If an animal goes down or breaks a leg in transit, it is NOT acceptable to drag or chain it from the trailer. If the animal must be euthanized it is to be done inside the unit. Be extremely cautious when working in the confines of a trailer.

Confirmation of death

Confirmation of death is absolutely critical regardless of the method of euthanasia used. Lack of heartbeat and respiration for more than five minutes is considered sufficient confirmation of death.

Disposal

Carcasses that have been chemically euthanized by a licensed veterinarian can accidentally poison scavengers (coyotes, birds). Take the proper precautions.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING LIVESTOCK TRANSPORTATION

CANADIAN LEGISLATION

Health of Animals Regulations

The Health of Animals Act provides authority to regulate the transportation of animals. Regulations governing the transportation of all species of animals into, within and out of Canada are contained in Part XII of the Health of Animals Regulations. Under Health of Animals Regulations it is illegal to:

- Transport non-ambulatory livestock except for receipt of veterinary treatment or diagnosis;
- Transport a sick or injured animal where undue suffering will result, or when the animal is liable to give birth;
- Continue to transport an animal that is injured, becomes ill, or is otherwise unfit to travel;
- Load or unload animals in a way that would cause injury or undue suffering;
- Crowd animals to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering;
- Transport animals if injury or suffering is likely to be caused by inadequate construction of the vehicle, insecure fittings, undue exposure to the weather or inadequate ventilation;
- Use ramps, gangplanks or chutes that are inadequately constructed or maintained and would be likely to cause injury or undue suffering to the animals;
- Confine ruminants, such as cattle, sheep and goats, in a motor vehicle for longer than 48 hours unless they can reach their final destination in 52 hours, or unless the animals are fed, watered and rested on a vehicle that is suitably equipped for the purpose (under review, contact CFIA for current time restrictions);
- Load an animal for a trip of more than 24 hours without first providing food and water within 5 hours before loading (under review, contact CFIA for current time restrictions).

The Health of Animals Regulations also requires that you:

- Segregate animals during transportation if incompatible by nature, disposition, temperament, gender or substantial difference in weight or age;
- Allow animals to stand in a natural position;
- Provide for drainage and absorption of urine;
- Provide sufficient bedding in cold weather to protect animals lying on the floor of the vehicle;
- Either spread sand or have the vehicle fitted with safe footholds in addition to adequate bedding;
- Ensure that animals unloaded for feed, water and rest remain at least 5 hours, and longer, if necessary, for all of the animals to have access to feed and water.

Criminal Code of Canada

The Criminal Code states you are guilty of an offence if you:

- Willfully cause or allow unnecessary pain, suffering, or injury to an animal;

- By willful neglect cause injury to animals while they are being transported;
- Abandon an animal or fail to provide it with enough suitable food, water, shelter and care.

SASKATCHEWAN LEGISLATION

The Animal Protection Act, 1999

The Animal Protection Act 1999 provides that no person responsible for an animal shall cause or permit the animal to be or to continue to be in distress.

An animal is considered in distress if it is:

- Deprived of adequate food, water, care or shelter;
- Injured, sick, in pain or suffering; or
- Abused or neglected.

An animal is not considered to be in distress if it is handled:

- In a manner consistent with a standard or code of conduct, criteria, practice or procedure that is prescribed as acceptable; or
- In accordance with generally accepted practices of animal management.

A person responsible for an animal includes a person who:

- Owns an animal;
- Has custody or control of an animal; or
- Has custody or charge of a minor and the minor is the owner of an animal.

Livestock Inspection and Transportation Regulations, 1978

These regulations provide vehicle specifications governing the secure and safe loading and transport of various livestock species. These specifications set out minimum amounts of space per animal required when transporting various species of livestock. The regulations also have provisions requiring:

- Proper vehicle ramps and flooring to hold livestock and to prevent injuring from slippage while loading or in transit;
- Proper headroom;
- Proper ventilation;
- Proper protection from cold weather; and
- Provision of feed, water and rest when animals are in transit for long periods of time (more than 12 hours).

The regulations provide that where horses, cattle, calves under 200 kg in weight, sheep, goats and swine, or two or more of such kinds of livestock are transported by a vehicle at the same time:

- Each of the said kinds of classes of livestock shall be separated by a partition;
- Crippled, injured, sick or disabled animals must be separated from other livestock by a partition;
- Any animal that becomes crippled, injured, sick or disabled during transport, or that dies during transport, must be unloaded at the nearest stockyard for treatment or disposal at the vehicle owner's expense.

DISCLAIMER

The primary purpose of this handbook is to provide beef and dairy producers with a decision-making tool to ensure proper humane handling and transportation of unfit animals, as required by law and the Codes of Practice.

It is important to note that while the authors have made every effort to ensure accuracy and completeness; this should not be considered the final word on the areas of law and practice.

Seek the advice of appropriate professionals and experts as the facts of each situation may differ from those set out here.

All information is provided entirely 'as is' and the authors make no representations, warranties or conditions, either express or implied, in connection with the use of or reliance upon this information. Persons responsible for animals are expected to be familiar with the applicable acts and regulations.

This information is provided to the recipient entirely at the risk of the recipient and, because the recipient assumes full responsibility, the authors shall not be liable for any claims, damages or losses of any kind based on any theory of liability arising out of the use of or reliance upon this information (including omissions, inaccuracies, typographical errors and infringement of third party rights).

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Canadian Food Inspection Agency	
Sask North	(306) 975-4987
Battleford	(306) 937-3633
Prince Albert	(306) 953-8614
Wynyard	(306) 554-2304
Yorkton	(306) 786-5302
Saskatoon	(306) 975-5006
Sask South	(306) 780-5180
Swift Current	(306) 778-5031
North Portal	(306) 927-2255
Regina	(306) 780-7093
Moose Jaw	(306) 691-3454
Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Brand Inspection	(306) 933-6122
North Central	(306) 933-7660
North East	(306) 786-5702
North West	(306) 446-7404
South Central	(306) 694-3709
South East	(306) 435-4582
South West	(306) 778-8312
Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	(877) 382-7722
Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association	(306) 955-7862

ABOUT FACS

Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS) is a membership-based, non-profit organization that represents the livestock and poultry industries in advancing responsible animal welfare, care and handling practices in agriculture. FACS endeavors to raise producer awareness of the economic and ethical benefits of animal welfare and help consumers achieve a greater understanding of animal care issues.

Incorporated in 1992, FACS works closely with other groups and experts in obtaining, sharing and disseminating information.

Responsible animal care is necessary for the long term sustainability of Canada's livestock industry, both domestically and globally. When it comes to animal welfare, FACS believes that industry driven change, when change is needed, is the best way to improve.

Other FACS resources available in the beef and dairy industry include a series of Cattle FACS brochures addressing topics including:

- Animal Health Concerns When Pasture and Feed are Limited (Drought);
- Body Condition Scoring;
- Calf Scours Overview: General Principles;
- Calving: When and How to Help;
- Cancer Eye;
- Carcass Quality Shortfalls;
- Cattle Handling, In the Zone;
- Colostrum: It's Important;
- Creep Feeding of Calves;
- Early Weaning of Calves;
- Euthanasia of Cattle;
- Feed Testing and Ration Balancing;
- Feeding in a Cold Snap;
- Managing Water Supplies in a Drought;
- Nitrate Poisoning;
- Non-Ambulatory Cattle ("Downers");
- Not Enough Feed For Winter?
- Problem Feeds

For more information on FACS or to become a member, please contact the FACS office at 306.249.3227 or check out our website at www.facs.sk.ca

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It is endorsed by the Dairy Farmers of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association, the Saskatchewan Livestock Markets and Order Buyers Association, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association, the Western Beef Development Center and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.



**Saskatchewan
Agriculture
and Food**

***is proud to support
the
Farm Animal
Council of
Saskatchewan
in its work to
advance responsible
animal care and
handling practices
in agriculture.***

*For more information on handling
practices, visit
www.gov.sk.ca*



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*FACS represents the livestock industry in advancing
responsible animal care
and handling practices in agriculture.*