



CORE PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO THE ON-FARM WELFARE OF FARM ANIMALS

SUBMISSION BY THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE¹

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Overarching Principles

The International Coalition for Animal Welfare suggests that the OIE guidelines for on-farm welfare should begin by setting out certain core principles and addressing issues that are common to all or most species. These should be based on the Five Freedoms and include:

- Animals should not be kept in systems or be subject to practices that lead to ill-health, pain or injury.
- Genetic selection for production traits such as fast growth or high yields should be avoided where this results in compromised welfare such as ill-health or pain. Breeds should be selected for good skeletal and cardiovascular health.
- Animals should not be kept in isolation (except for (i) veterinary reasons and (ii) breeding males who may be kept individually provided they can see and smell conspecifics). Animals should be kept in appropriate social groupings as in most cases they have strong social instincts; such groups should, however, not be too large as this can impede the development of a stable social group.
- Animals should not be kept in overcrowded conditions. Stocking densities should be low enough to prevent excessive temperatures and humidity; competition, stress and aggression; and abnormal behaviour; and to enable good litter management.
- Animal accommodation should allow all animals space to stand, turn around, stretch, sit and lie down comfortably at the same time, and to escape from each other, for example behind physical barriers.
- Animals should be able to express normal patterns of behaviour fully.
- Systems should not be used if they require welfare insults such as mutilations or feed deprivation and alternatives exist to such welfare problems.
- Animals should not be regularly deprived of nutrients (such as iron for calves) or water, and should not be force-fed.
- Animals should be provided with appropriate clean bedding material.
- The incidence of lameness should be kept to a minimum.
- No genetically engineered or cloned animals, or their descendants, should be used in farming.
- Animals should be tended to by skilled, knowledgeable, conscientious and competent stockpersons.

¹ The member organisations of ICAFW, representing more than 12 million individual supporters internationally, include: Compassion in World Farming, Eurogroup for Animals, the Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Japanese Farm Animal Welfare Initiative, the National Council of SPCAs, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the World Society for the Protection of Animals.