

DAIRY VEAL CALVES

RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME
STANDARDS



AUGUST 2017

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

The RSPCA established the Approved Farming Scheme as part of its efforts to improve the lives of Australia's farmed animals. The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is a not-for-profit program that works by:

- establishing animal welfare standards that go beyond regulatory requirements
- enabling differentiation and marketing of products from RSPCA Approved farms
- offering consumers a higher animal welfare alternative.

The *RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards - Dairy Veal Calves* (from here on referred to as “the Standards”) outline production practices and animal welfare requirements that aim to meet the animal's behavioural and physiological needs and are designed to assist the industry in continually improving and demonstrating good animal welfare outcomes.

These Standards take into consideration RSPCA Australia policy, available scientific research, current legislation applied in Australia, government standards and guidelines for animal welfare, veterinary, technical and producer advice, as well as current industry good practice.

Principles underpinning the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards

The Standards are underpinned by the principles of the ‘Five Freedoms’:

- 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, 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 treatment which avoid mental suffering.

In addition, the Scheme aims to provide for good animal welfare by presenting the calf with opportunities to experience positive, rather than neutral or negative welfare states. Covering both behavioural and physiological needs, these principles provide a comprehensive framework for the assessment of calf welfare.

The Scheme requires that those responsible for the care of calves provide:

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

Eligibility

These Standards apply to dairy and dairy-cross calves raised for veal production in eligible farming systems in Australia.

Eligible farming systems are those where the calf is raised according to the provisions of these Standards, either on the property of birth, at a rearing facility, a finishing facility or a combination of these.

A 'rearing facility' is defined as the property where the calf is raised until weaning and a 'finishing facility' is a property where the calf is raised from weaning until slaughter. These may or may not be the same property and may or may not be the property of birth of the calf. Where calves are sourced from and/or transported from/between their property of birth, a rearing facility or finishing facility, these must each meet the relevant provisions of these Standards.

Definitions of eligible rearing systems under the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme include:

- outdoor systems where calves commence rearing within a shed and, from weaning or at least 8 weeks of age, have continuous access to a shed or shelter, and an outdoor area
- pasture systems where calves commence rearing within a shed and, from weaning or at least 8 weeks of age, have continuous access to a shed or shelter and a paddock.

Products that are eligible for approval under the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme must be derived from dairy and dairy-cross calves grown in systems which meet the provisions of these Standards from birth through to slaughter. Eligible systems may operate in parallel with non-eligible systems, however, appropriate separation and traceability arrangements must be in place to ensure that calves associated with the Scheme are clearly identified.

Licensees are responsible for ensuring that the farming system, in addition to meeting the Standards, also meets the dairy veal labelling requirements of the industry and/or retailer as well as all relevant legislative labelling requirements.

RSPCA Australia has discretion to determine the suitability or eligibility of the farming system as applicable within the context of the Scheme.

Application

The documentation that supports the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme consists of:

- *Operations Manual* – which details the operation of the Scheme for both Approved Producers and Licensees, including the application process and the Assessment procedures
- *Standards and glossary* (specific to each species) – which provide the requirements for the rearing, handling, transport and/or slaughter of the species
- *Traceability policy* – which outlines chain of custody requirements for the Scheme
- *Species-specific information notes* – which provide information about a range of aspects relating to species-specific standards and to the production process generally.

Requirements of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme

It is a requirement of participants in the Scheme that:

1. The *RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards – Dairy Veal Calves* are complied with.
2. The requirements in the relevant state or territory legislation applicable to the farming enterprise are complied with, including but not limited to animal welfare, animal health, water and land use, environmental impact management and monitoring, effluent management, biosecurity, transportation, processing, food safety and product labelling.

RSPCA Australia has discretion to request proof of compliance with regulatory requirements through the provision of documentation from the relevant local council, state/territory government, quality assurance program or other appropriate body.

3. The following documents are to be completed and reviewed on an annual basis and made available to RSPCA Australia and to the RSPCA Australia Assessor at any time (including during an assessment):

- *Animal Care Statement* – specifying general management and standard operating procedures
- *Veterinary Health Plan* – specifying animal health management procedures.

Existing quality assurance manuals for other programs or accreditation schemes and/or existing standard operating procedures, and records to support production activities may be utilised to meet the requirements of these Standards, provided the specific provisions in these Standards are demonstrated. Equivalence is determined by RSPCA Australia.

4. Each enterprise nominate a designated person (or persons) who has:
 - responsibility for the operation of the farming enterprise
 - responsibility for overseeing the management and application of the requirements of the Scheme.

The owner of the dairy calves raised under the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme has the final responsibility for ensuring the welfare of the animals and ongoing compliance with these Standards.

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GLOSSARY

NOTE: The glossary defines words/phrases highlighted in bold within the standards and which form part of the requirement(s) of the relevant clause.

abattoir	A facility where animals are slaughtered for the purpose of food for human consumption.
antimicrobial	An agent that kills or stops the growth of microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. Ionophores (antimicrobials not used in humans) and non-ionophores are classed as antibacterial agents and this category includes ionophore coccidiostats.
Approved Producer	A producer who has successfully applied to participate in the Scheme.
Assessor	A person appointed by RSPCA Australia to undertake assessments on farm, during transport and at slaughter.
automatic calf feeders	Feeding systems that enable individual calves to feed voluntarily and allow for automatic monitoring and recording of individual calf feed (milk or solid) intake.
batch	Calves of similar age/weight that progress through rearing/finishing and are then transported off farm as a group.
colostrum	A milky fluid containing antibodies produced by the pregnant cow prior to giving birth to her calf and which, at suckling on the day of birth, enables passive transfer of immunity (protection from infectious disease) to the new-born calf. Colostrum is the milk from the first milking immediately post calving.
concentrate	A solid feed ration formulated to meet the energy, protein and fibre requirements of the calf.
environmental enrichment	Stimuli that enable calves to meet their behavioural needs and provide opportunity to experience positive affective states. Environmental enrichment materials and/or objects include, but are not limited to cow brushes, chains, and balls.
finishing facility	The place where the calf is raised from weaning until slaughter. The finishing facility may or may not be the same property as the rearing facility or the property of birth of the calf.
fortified milk	Whole milk to which milk replacer powder has been added to increase its solid concentration.
frontal position	The midway point on an imaginary line joining each ear canal at the base of the calf's ears.
group	A collection of calves consisting of at least 2 animals.
group composition	A factor that takes into account calf weight and age.
growth promotant	An antimicrobial agent or hormone that is administered to calves (e.g. via feed or water or implant) in doses that increase the efficiency of feed conversion (kg of weight gain per kg of feed).

inclement weather	Severe weather - including rain, hail, snow, wind, extremely high or low temperatures - that may affect the welfare of the exposed calf (e.g. cause heat or cold stress in calves).
journey	The loading, transport and unloading of calves for a period of time commencing when the first calf is loaded onto a transport vehicle until the last calf is unloaded at their destination.
lairage	Pens or yards that are directly attached to the abattoir and used for the purpose of holding calves just prior to slaughter. The lairage area does not include paddocks, yards or other areas that may hold calves for a period longer than 24 hours.
Licensee	An entity that has entered into a Trademark Licence Agreement with RSPCA Australia and is permitted to use the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme logo on product sourced from RSPCA Approved farms.
loading pen	An enclosed area in which calves are held prior to transport.
major reportable event	Circumstances that may include, but are not restricted to sustained above-trend mortality rate(s) or unusual/unexpected incidences of high mortality, injury or disease resulting from endemic and/or exotic disease outbreaks, natural events, predator incursions, infrastructure or equipment failure, feed supply and/or formulation issues, transportation or calf handling. In the case of a suspected exotic animal disease, the relevant state/territory government department must be notified.
milk	A fluid produced by the lactating cow, that is secreted through the mammary glands, and is constituted mainly of water, fat, proteins, lactose and minerals.
milk replacer	Powdered milk largely made from by-products of dairy processing (e.g. skim milk, whey protein) with the addition of non-dairy products (e.g. fat, vitamins, minerals) and with a similar chemical composition to whole milk. Milk replacer is 97% dry matter and water (or milk) must be added before feeding to the calf.
milk temperature	The degree or intensity of heat present in milk as it is fed to the calf. 'Consistent temperature' refers to milk that is fed to the calf at the same temperature at each feeding session each day until weaning.
outdoor area	An uncovered enclosure immediately adjacent to the shed or shelter with a soft-standing surface.
paddock	An uncovered fenced area providing calves with continuous access to pasture, i.e. grass and/or other vegetation suitable for grazing.
pen	An enclosed area within a shed or shelter in which calves are held.
poll position	The midway point on an imaginary line on the back of the skull (just behind the crown) joining the calf's ears at the level of the ear canal.
rearing facility	The place where the calf is raised until weaning. The rearing facility may or may not be on the same property as the finishing facility or the property of birth of the calf.

shed	A housing structure consisting of at least three walls and a roof that provides all calves with protection from cold, heat, wind, and rain. A shed must be of sufficient size to house a group of calves.
shelter	A housing structure consisting of at least a roof that provides all calves with partial protection from cold, heat, wind, and rain. A shelter must be of sufficient size to house a group of calves.
sick pen	An enclosed and identifiable area within a shed or shelter in which calves are held for treatment. Depending on calf age, may also include a paddock.
soft standing	A floor surface that is comfortable for calves to stand on, prevents slipping and falling, and avoids foot or leg issues. Soft-standing surfaces may include loose dirt, floors bedded with straw or wood shavings, sand, rubber matting, and concrete covered with rubber.
stocking density	Space allowance expressed in m ² /calf calculated on the basis of the usable floor area available to the number of calves within the pen, shed, shelter or deck.
stocking density (finishing facility)	Space allowance in the finishing facility is based on calves reaching a maximum live weight of up to 300kg at the end of the feeding period penned in static groups at the start of the feeding period.
thermal discomfort	Refers to heat or cold stress experienced by the calf resulting in calf core body temperatures outside of the normal range (38.5-39.5°C). Signs of heat stress include open mouth breathing, reluctance to move or lie down. Signs of cold stress include huddling, shivering, stiff muscles, cold and pale nostrils, and cold hooves.
transition milk	Milk from the second to eighth milking immediately post calving (the first milking produces colostrum).
transporter	The driver and/or person and/or company responsible for a livestock transport vehicle.
trees	Trees are considered to provide all calves with partial protection from cold, heat, wind and rain as determined by the trees' height, density, number and location within a paddock.
usable area	Floor area within the shed or shelter that is accessible to calves standing with normal posture. Usable area does not include any floor area that is occupied by feeders and/or equipment that prevents access by calves to the floor area underneath.
weaning	The process whereby the amount of milk provided to calves is gradually reduced over a number of days. A calf is considered 'weaned' when milk is no longer provided.
whole milk	Milk from which no constituent has been removed or added.

THE STANDARDS

NOTE: Words/phrases highlighted in bold within a standards clause form part of the requirement(s) of the relevant clause and are defined in the glossary.

1 Staff training and animal management procedures

Training and competency

- 1.01 Persons responsible for the management and/or handling of calves must be appropriately trained and competent in their required tasks, including:
 - a) handling and movement of calves
 - b) observation of calves
 - c) maintaining the calf's environment
 - d) identification of normal and abnormal calf behaviour
 - e) calf care and treatment of injury, disease or distress
 - f) euthanasia of calves.
- 1.02 Staff induction/training programs and standard operating procedures relevant to the property of birth, **rearing facility** or **finishing facility** must include the requirements of these Standards.
- 1.03 Records of staff training and competency assessments must be maintained and made available at the time of an assessment.
- 1.04 Company owned and/or contractor sites must have internal assessment systems in place to ensure on-going compliance with these Standards.
- 1.05 Staff must be available to respond in a timely manner to problems that arise.

Animal Care Statement

- 1.06 An Animal Care Statement must be drawn up and complied with.
- 1.07 The Animal Care Statement must specify general management and standard operating procedures as relevant to the facility, including but not limited to:
 - supply and placement of calves
 - feeding and watering (including **colostrum** feeding procedure, **milk** feeding procedure, **milk temperature**, and **concentrate** feeding)
 - **weaning** management
 - environment and housing
 - **outdoor area** and **paddock** management
 - maintaining **stocking density** and managing **group size**
 - calf handling
 - calf observation
 - calf transport
 - slaughter
 - procedures for managing **major reportable events**.
- 1.08 The current Animal Care Statement must be provided to RSPCA Australia upon request and made available at the time of an assessment.
- 1.09 The Animal Care Statement must be reviewed on an annual basis.

Records

- 1.10 The following production records must be maintained for each **batch** of finished calves:
- a) total production (in live weight kg and in calf numbers)
 - b) calves supplied to **Licensee** (in live weight kg and in calf numbers).
- 1.11 All facility records, calf records and other documentation required to be kept and maintained must:
- a) be available on site at the time of an assessment
 - b) be provided to RSPCA Australia upon request
 - c) be retained for at least 1 year (applicable to calf records only).

2 Health

Veterinary Health Plan

- 2.01 A Veterinary Health Plan must be drawn up and complied with.
- 2.02 The Veterinary Health Plan must specify calf health management and monitoring procedures, including but not limited to:
- a) biosecurity (including quarantine, cleaning and sanitation procedures)
 - b) routine health monitoring procedure (including identification and treatment of weak, ill or injured calves)
 - c) vaccination schedule and procedure
 - d) use of veterinary medicines or additives
 - e) euthanasia
 - f) physical injury
 - g) disease
 - h) internal and external parasites
 - i) mortalities and classification of cause of death
 - j) pest control procedures.
- 2.03 The current Veterinary Health Plan must be provided to RSPCA Australia upon request and be available at the time of an assessment.
- 2.04 The Veterinary Health Plan must be reviewed on an annual basis and authorised by the designated veterinarian.

Health monitoring

- 2.05 Quarantine and biosecurity procedures must be in place to minimise the risk of introducing and spreading disease among calves.
- 2.06 Facilities (**sick pen/paddock**) to isolate calves for special treatment and attention must be available and identified as such.
- 2.07 Calves that have been identified as diseased or injured must be treated or euthanased promptly.
- 2.08 Where the cause of ill health or disease and the appropriate treatment is unable to be identified, veterinary advice must be sought and followed accordingly.
- 2.09 Dead calves must be removed promptly and disposed of in a safe and hygienic manner.
- 2.10 Any **major reportable event** which impacts calf health and welfare adversely must be reported to RSPCA Australia as soon as practical.

Vaccination

- 2.11 The Veterinary Health Plan must incorporate a vaccination program to protect calves from diseases for which an effective vaccine is available and which may represent a risk to the calves at a particular facility.

Medicines

- 2.12 **Antimicrobials** must only be administered for therapeutic purposes under veterinary advice.
- 2.13 Prophylactic use of **antimicrobials** is not permitted unless under veterinary advice during a disease outbreak.

Additives

- 2.14 The use of **growth promotants** or hormones is not permitted.

Euthanasia

- 2.15 Calves must be handled and euthanased in a manner that avoids pain, suffering or distress.
- 2.16 Calves that are sick, injured, and/or unable to walk ('downer calves') and will not recover must be euthanased *in situ* without delay.
- 2.17 The approved methods for euthanasia of individual calves are:
 - a) firearm in the **frontal position**
 - b) penetrative captive bolt gun in the **frontal position**
 - c) firearm or penetrative captive bolt in the **poll position** (applicable only in emergencies where access to the frontal position is unavailable).
- 2.18 The euthanasia device must be of sufficient calibre to achieve immediate loss of consciousness.
- 2.19 The euthanasia device must be designed, manufactured, maintained and operated to ensure humane and effective stunning and/or killing.
- 2.20 Where the euthanasia method has not resulted in immediate loss of consciousness and subsequent death:
 - a) the calf must be shot again
 - b) equipment must be checked immediately and adjusted to correct any fault.
- 2.21 Calves must be checked immediately to ensure they are dead, evidenced by lack of corneal reflex, dilated pupils, relaxed jaw and limp tongue, and no rhythmic breathing.
- 2.22 Calves must not be euthanased using blunt force trauma.
- 2.23 Euthanasia methods not specified in these Standards must not be performed without prior approval from RSPCA Australia.

Health records

- 2.24 Health records must be kept for all calves.
- 2.25 Health records must contain details of the following:
 - a) vaccinations and vaccine batch numbers
 - b) other treatments or medicines administered
 - c) diseases
 - d) injuries
 - e) mortalities, separated into 'deaths' and 'culls' noting the main reason for cause of death or culling
 - f) dates of veterinarian visits, any problems identified and action taken.

3 Supply and placement of calves

- 3.01 Only facilities that have been assessed by RSPCA Australia and shown to comply with these standards may be used to source calves.
- 3.02 Calves must not be sourced from a saleyard, calf pick-up point, calf scales or other collection facility.
- 3.03 Where calves are not born on the **rearing facility** or **finishing facility**, a record must be kept specifying the name, address and Property Identification Code (PIC) of the property from which calves are sourced.
- 3.04 Calves must be individually identified within 24 hours of birth.
- 3.05 Calves not born on the **rearing facility** or **finishing facility** must be quarantined for a minimum period of 48 hours from day of placement to protect the health of the existing herd, unless it can be demonstrated that the herd health status of these calves is at least equivalent to their destination facility.
- 3.06 Calves must be allowed to rest for at least 2 hours following placement in the **rearing facility** or **finishing facility** before further handling can occur unless otherwise advised by the designated veterinarian.
- 3.07 Calves showing signs of disease or dehydration, must receive appropriate treatment or, where the cause is unable to be identified, veterinary advice must be sought and followed accordingly.

Supply of calves to the rearing facility

- 3.08 Calves coming into a **rearing facility** must be:
 - a) full-term calves
 - b) delivered without the use of calving induction
 - c) free from signs of injury, deformity or disease
 - d) at least 10 days old unless the **rearing facility** is their property of birth.
- 3.09 A record confirming health status of calves upon entering the **rearing facility** must be kept.

Placement of calves at the property of birth, rearing facility or finishing facility

- 3.10 The facility must be appropriately prepared prior to the arrival of the calves. Preparation activities include:
 - a) cleaning and sanitation of equipment and housing
 - b) ensuring feeding and watering equipment is operational
 - c) checking water and feed availability and quality
 - d) providing bedding.
- 3.11 A record specifying completion of pre-placement facility preparation must be kept.

Calf records

- 3.12 Calf records at placement must contain details of the following:
 - a) date and time of arrival of calves at the facility
 - b) number of calves placed at the facility
 - c) individual calf identification details
 - d) weight of each individual calf.

4 Feed and water

- 4.01 Calves must have continuous access to clean, drinkable water.
- 4.02 Feed and water must be available in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the calf's requirements for growth.
- 4.03 Feeding and watering equipment design, position and height must allow calves to access feed and water using normal posture.
- 4.04 Feeding and watering systems and equipment must be operating effectively to ensure the calf's daily requirements for feed and water are met.
- 4.05 Feeding and watering systems must be thoroughly cleaned and maintained to minimise the risk of disease transfer to calves.
- 4.06 Feed and water distribution must ensure that a uniform supply is available to all calves.

Colostrum

- 4.07 **The quality of colostrum** fed to calves must be at least 22% Brix.
- 4.08 **Colostrum** must be fed to calves:
 - a) as soon as possible, but no later than 12 hours following birth, and
 - b) again in the next 12 hours.
- 4.09 Total quantity of **colostrum** fed to the calf must equal at least:
 - a) 4 litres over 2 feeds in the first 12 hours of life and
 - b) 2 litres in the following 12 hours.

Feed

- 4.10 Following their first 24 hours of life until **weaning**, calves must be fed **milk** (this may include **whole milk**, **colostrum** and **transition milk**), **milk replacer** (prepared per manufacturer's instructions), or a combination of the two (this may include **fortified milk**):
 - a) of consistent **milk temperature** and
 - b) at least 2 times in every 24 hours.
- 4.11 Total daily quantity of **milk** and/or **milk replacer** fed to the calf following their first 24 hours of life until **weaning** must equal at least the equivalent in litres of 12% of calf body weight.
- 4.12 Calves must be given small quantities of good quality fibre in the form of roughage by 3 weeks of age.
- 4.13 Roughage must be:
 - a) fresh and uncontaminated
 - b) supplied separately to bedding and **environmental enrichment** material
 - c) available to all calves at all times
 - d) a mean length of at least 25mm.
- 4.14 Calves must be fed a diet that prevents any mineral or vitamin deficiency.

Feeding methods

- 4.15 Sufficient feeding stations must be available to allow all calves to feed at the same time, unless **automatic calf feeders** are used.
- 4.16 Only teat feeders that satisfy the calf's need to suckle are permitted for calves receiving **milk** and/or **milk replacer**.
- 4.17 Teat feeders must provide each calf with an individual teat, unless **automatic calf feeders** are used.
- 4.18 Where oesophageal feeding tubes are utilised, they must only be used:
 - a) by a competent operator to ensure correct placement
 - b) for **colostrum** feeding of calves within 12 hours of birth
 - c) in a manner that controls the rate at which **colostrum** is given
 - d) as directed by the designated veterinarian for purposes other than **colostrum** feeding.

Weaning

- 4.19 Where calves are weaned off **milk** and/or **milk replacer**, this must be through a staged reduction in **milk** and/or **milk replacer** allocation over a period of at least 4 days.
- 4.20 Calves must be consistently consuming at least an average of 1kg/calf of **concentrate** per day calculated on a **group** basis over at least 3 consecutive days before **weaning** commences.
- 4.21 Weaning must not be completed until calves are at least 6 weeks of age.

5 Environment and housing

- 5.01 Until **weaning** or 8 weeks of age, all calves must have access to a **shed**.
- 5.02 From **weaning** or 8 weeks of age until 8 months of age, all calves must have access to a **shed** or **shelter**.
- 5.03 From 8 months of age, all calves must have access to a **shed**, **shelter** or **trees**.
- 5.04 Floors, surfaces, fittings, equipment and other facilities in and around the **shed** or **shelter** must be designed, constructed and maintained to:
 - a) minimise **thermal discomfort**
 - b) minimise the risk of injury or disease
 - c) be free from rough edges and sharp protrusions
 - d) reduce noise
 - e) facilitate cleaning.
- 5.05 Laneways and races must be designed to facilitate the movement of calves.
- 5.06 Where infrastructure could cause or is observed to cause injury to calves, prompt action must be taken to address the situation.
- 5.07 A maintenance program must be in place to ensure that facility defects are identified and prompt action is taken to ensure their return to full operation.
- 5.08 A record of facility maintenance and repairs must be maintained.
- 5.09 Procedures must be in place to manage the facility environment and provide feed and water to calves in the event of fire, floods, drought, equipment failures and other breakdowns or natural disasters that may impact on calf welfare.
- 5.10 Facilities (including feed and bedding storage areas) must be constructed and maintained to restrict the entry of pests or animals that could cause distress or transmit disease to calves.
- 5.11 Pest animal control programs must use the most humane techniques that are applicable to the situation, achieve the program aims and reduce the risk of impact on non-target species.

Ventilation

- 5.12 **Shed** ventilation must provide adequate air exchange for the age and number of calves.
- 5.13 Ammonia levels must be managed so as not to exceed 15ppm at calf head height.
- 5.14 Dust levels at calf head height must be managed to avoid negative impacts on calf welfare.
- 5.15 Pre-weaned calves must be protected from draughts.

Lighting

- 5.16 Calves must be provided with natural light and dark periods as determined by the local diurnal cycle.
- 5.17 Light intensity measured at calf head height across the **pen**, must ensure that no area of the **pen** is lit at less than 100 lux during daylight hours.

- 5.18 Artificial lighting is permitted for the provision of additional light as required at the time of calf observations and/or facility checks.

Flooring

- 5.19 **Shed** and **shelter** flooring must be designed, constructed and maintained to:
- a) provide adequate support for the whole of the calves' foot
 - b) prevent damage to calves' feet
 - c) prevent entrapment of calves' feet
 - d) minimise injury
 - e) prevent accumulation of water and faeces.
- 5.20 Floors in all indoor areas, **pens**, loading ramps and major traffic areas must have non-slip surfaces.
- 5.21 **Pen** floors must not be slatted unless slats are **soft standing**.
- 5.22 All calves must have continuous access to a dry lying area that is:
- a) of solid construction
 - b) covered in bedding material.

Bedding

- 5.23 **Sheds** and **shelters** must provide calves with bedding of good quality, water-absorbing material.
- 5.24 Sand and stones are not acceptable bedding materials.
- 5.25 Bedding material must be maintained in order to allow all calves to lie down in a clean and dry lying area in a fully outstretched position at the same time.
- 5.26 Bedding must be maintained to a minimum average depth of 15cm.

Environmental enrichment

- 5.27 From 2 weeks of age, where calves do not have access to a **paddock**, they must be provided with long hay that is:
- a) fresh and uncontaminated
 - b) supplied separately to bedding material
 - c) available in racks
 - d) available to all calves at all times.
- 5.28 From **weaning** or at least 8 weeks of age, where calves do not have access to a **paddock**, they must have, in addition to long hay, continuous access to **environmental enrichment** materials and/or objects that allow calves to express foraging, comfort and play behaviours.
- 5.29 To prevent undue competition, environmental **enrichment** must be:
- a) provided in sufficient quantity
 - b) evenly distributed throughout the facility
 - c) easy for calves to access.
- 5.30 **Environmental enrichment** must be maintained, replaced or changed as necessary to ensure calves maintain interest in the materials and/or objects.

6 Outdoor area / paddock

- 6.01 From **weaning** or at least 8 weeks of age, all calves must be given access to either an **outdoor area** or a **paddock**.
- 6.02 Access to a **paddock** is required for all calves from 8 months of age.
- 6.03 Access to an **outdoor area** and/or **paddock** must be continuous unless:
 - a) under veterinary advice for treatment of injury or disease
 - b) **inclement weather** requires calves to be kept indoors
 - c) within 4 hours of transport.
- 6.04 The **outdoor area** and/or **paddock** must be actively managed and maintained to:
 - a) encourage calves to access all areas
 - b) control disease and parasites
 - c) avoid injury or mortality
 - d) avoid accumulation of water
 - e) minimise the risk of fire.
- 6.05 The surface of the **outdoor area** must be **soft standing**.
- 6.06 Fences must be constructed and maintained to prevent calves escaping.

7 Stocking density

Stocking density – property of birth and rearing facility

- 7.01 Total **usable area** available to each calf must consist of at least:
- a) 2.0m² bedding area for calves <10 days of age
 - b) 2.5m² bedding area for calves ≥10 days of age until **weaning** (or at most 8 weeks of age).

Stocking density – finishing facility

- 7.02 For calves up to 300kg finished weight, total **usable area** available to each calf (from **weaning** or at least 8 weeks of age) must be at least 6.0m², consisting of a minimum:
- a) 3.0m² bedding area indoors
 - b) 1.0m² feed pad either indoors or outdoors
 - c) 2.0m² outdoors.
- 7.03 For calves >300kg finished weight, for every 100kg additional finished weight, the following additional **usable area** must be provided per calf (from **weaning** or at least 8 weeks of age):
- a) 0.5m² bedding area indoors
 - b) 0.5m² area outdoors.

Group size and composition

- 7.04 All calves must be **group** housed unless, where necessary:
- a) under veterinary advice for treatment of injury or disease
 - b) for calves up to 2 days of age to ensure adequate **colostrum** intake and **milk** feeding
 - c) up to 48 hours for quarantine purposes upon entry to the facility.
- 7.05 Where used, individual calf **pens** must be constructed and sited so that each calf can see, smell and hear other calves.
- 7.06 Calves that have been pair-housed or housed in smaller **groups** must at least remain with their paired calf or another familiar calf when introduced into larger **groups** unless, at the time of introduction:
- a) the paired calf requires isolation for treatment of injury or disease
 - b) the paired calf has unexpectedly died.
- 7.07 Once stable **groups** have been formed, the mixing of unfamiliar calves must be minimised.
- 7.08 **Group composition** must be such that competition for feed or displacement of calves at feeders is avoided.
- 7.09 With the exception of weaned calves kept in **paddocks**, **group** size must be such that calves are in **groups** no greater than 30 calves per **pen**.

Review of stocking density

- 7.10 Upon occurrence of disease, injury, aggression, other indicators of poor welfare or where there is difficulty managing environmental conditions, **stocking density** must be reviewed and if necessary, reduced to ensure the welfare of the calves and to allow sufficient space for feeding, resting, exercise, exploration and social behaviour.

Records

7.11 The following records must be maintained for each **batch** of calves:

- a) size of **shed/shelter/pen** as relevant
- b) age/weight of calves in each **shelter/shed/pen**
- c) individual calf identification numbers of calves in each **shelter/shed/pen**
- d) size of **outdoor area** available to calves
- e) where applicable, size of **paddock** area available to calves
- f) where applicable, individual calf identification numbers of calves in each **paddock**.

8 Animal handling, husbandry and management

Handling

- 8.01 Calves must be handled calmly and quietly and with an awareness of the animal's natural flight zone.
- 8.02 Calves must not be:
 - a) lifted by the tail, head, ears, neck, skin or legs
 - b) thrown or dropped
 - c) hit or kicked
 - d) dragged.
- 8.03 Where calves are to be lifted, they must be lifted by supporting the calf's full body weight.
- 8.04 Dogs, electric goads, or other harmful implements must not be used to move calves.

Husbandry

- 8.05 Tethering of calves is not permitted.
- 8.06 Disbudding or dehorning of calves is not permitted.
- 8.07 Castration of calves is not permitted.
- 8.08 Methods of calf identification that involve tattooing or hot branding are not permitted.
- 8.09 The use of pronged nose-rings or other aversive devices is not permitted.

Calf observation

- 8.10 Calves must be observed at least 3 times per day in the first 3 days of life and at least twice daily thereafter to ensure that their appearance, vocalisations and behaviour are normal including:
 - a) feeding and drinking
 - b) absence of disease, injury or distress (including lameness, swellings, respiratory symptoms, scouring)
 - c) active, responsive, sociable, calm, playing, low noise level
 - d) good body condition, skin condition, growth rate and size, absence of soiling
 - e) absence of abnormal behaviour (including soil eating, navel/ear sucking, urine drinking)
 - f) response to stockperson (sociable, relaxed).
- 8.11 Date and time of calf appearance and behaviour checks, any problems identified (including abnormal behaviour) and action taken must be recorded.
- 8.12 Calf appearance and behaviour checks must be increased during periods of adverse environmental conditions and/or other welfare/health concerns.

Other management or husbandry procedures

- 8.13 Management or husbandry procedures that directly impact animal welfare and are not specified in these Standards must not be performed unless prior approval has been obtained from RSPCA Australia.

9 Loading and transport

NOTE: This section applies to all calf loading, transport and unloading including that from the property of birth, to a **rearing facility**, a **finishing facility** or an **abattoir**.

- 9.01 Only **transporters** that have been assessed by RSPCA Australia and shown to comply with these loading and transport standards may be used to transport RSPCA Approved calves.
- 9.02 **Transporters** must provide information relevant to these standards to RSPCA Australia upon request in a timely and appropriate manner.
- 9.03 Persons involved in the handling, loading, transport and unloading of calves must:
 - a) be appropriately trained and competent
 - b) meet on-farm biosecurity procedures
 - c) be aware of contingency arrangements (including in the case of an incident involving the transport vehicle).
- 9.04 Any calves from RSPCA Approved facilities that are exported live from Australia, cannot be sold or marketed as RSPCA Approved.
- 9.05 Calves must not be transported to/from a saleyard, calf pick-up point, calf scales or other collection point not specifically permitted under these Standards.
- 9.06 An assessment of calves must be made before assembly for transport to confirm that they are fit for the intended **journey**.
- 9.07 Any calf rejected from transport as not fit for the intended **journey** must be promptly treated or immediately euthanased.
- 9.08 Where calves under 8 weeks of age are moved from one facility to another on the same property:
 - a) calves must be fed within 4 hours prior to being moved
 - b) calves must not be off feed and water for more than 12 hours
 - c) the floor of any transport vehicle used must be completely and evenly covered with dry, clean bedding to a minimum average depth of 15cm.
- 9.09 Where calves are transported from their property of birth to a **rearing facility** (not located on the same property):
 - a) calves must be ≥ 10 days of age
 - b) calves must be fed within 4 hours prior to transport
 - c) calves must not be off feed and water for more than 12 hours
 - d) the floor of the transport vehicle must be completely and evenly covered with dry, clean bedding to a minimum average depth of 15cm.
- 9.10 Where calves are transported from a **rearing facility** to a **finishing facility**:
 - a) calves must be weaned and/or at least 8 weeks of age
 - b) calves must be fed within 4 hours prior transport
 - c) calves must not be off feed and water for more than 12 hours.
- 9.11 Where calves are transported from a **finishing facility** to an **abattoir**:
 - a) calves must be fed within 4 hours prior to transport
 - b) calves must not be off feed for more than 24 hours
 - c) calves must not be off water for more than 12 hours.

- 9.12 A journey must be completed within 12 hours.
- 9.13 Access roads and loading areas must be well-maintained to provide a level and compacted surface.
- 9.14 Where calves are moved to a **loading pen** prior to transport:
- stocking density** in the **loading pen** must provide sufficient floor space to allow all calves to lie down in a fully outstretched position ($0.047 \times \text{liveweight}^{0.67} \text{m}^2$ per calf) at the same time (see Table 1)
 - calves must not spend more than 4 hours prior to commencement of loading in the **loading pen**.

Table 1: Maximum stocking density in the loading pen

Average weight	m ² /calf		Average weight	m ² /calf
30	0.46		240	1.85
40	0.56		260	1.95
50	0.65		280	2.05
60	0.73		300	2.15
70	0.81		320	2.24
80	0.89		340	2.33
90	0.96		360	2.43
100	1.03		380	2.52
120	1.16		400	2.60
140	1.29		420	2.69
160	1.41		440	2.77
180	1.52		460	2.86
200	1.64		480	2.94
220	1.74		500	3.02

- 9.15 Mixing of unfamiliar calves must be minimised at all stages of assembly, loading and unloading.
- 9.16 Where mixing is unavoidable, precautions must be taken to minimise aggression.
- 9.17 RSPCA Approved calves destined for slaughter must be clearly identified as such prior to leaving the premises of the **Approved Producer**.

Loading/unloading

- 9.18 Calves must have access to water until immediately before loading commences.
- 9.19 Ramps, races, laneways and holding areas must be designed, constructed and maintained to:
- minimise right-angle bends
 - avoid sharp protrusions and sharp edges
 - provide non-slip flooring
 - reduce noise.
- 9.20 Where used, ramps must be of a slope no greater than 20 degrees.

- 9.21 Calves must be handled calmly and quietly and with an awareness of the animal's natural flight zone.
- 9.22 Calves must not be:
- a) lifted by the tail, head, ears, neck, skin or legs
 - b) thrown or dropped
 - c) hit or kicked
 - d) dragged.
- 9.23 Where calves are to be lifted, they must be lifted by supporting the calf's full body weight.
- 9.24 Dogs, electric goads, or other harmful implements must not be used to move calves.
- 9.25 Action must be taken to minimise the risk of heat or cold stress at loading/unloading, during transport and while the vehicle is stationary.
- 9.26 Once loaded, calves must be transported to their destination without off-loading and re-loading.
- 9.27 Multiple pick-ups of RSPCA Approved calves for transport to a common destination is permitted where:
- a) the most direct route is followed
 - b) maximum time off water is calculated from the time of loading the first calf.

Transport

- 9.28 The transport vehicle must be designed, constructed and maintained to:
- a) prevent sharp protrusions and sharp edges
 - b) provide non-slip flooring
 - c) reduce noise.
- 9.29 Calves must have sufficient headroom in the transport vehicle to travel in a natural standing position without touching overhead structures.
- 9.30 For calves ≤ 8 weeks of age, transport vehicles must provide sufficient floor space to allow all calves to lie down in a fully outstretched position ($0.047 \times \text{liveweight}^{0.67} \text{m}^2$ per calf) at the same time (see Table 2).

Table 2: Maximum stocking density for calves ≤ 8 weeks of age based on 12.25m x 2.4m deck

Average weight	m ² /calf	Number of calves per deck
30	0.46	64
40	0.56	52
50	0.65	45
60	0.73	40
70	0.81	36
80	0.89	33
90	0.96	30
100	1.03	28

- 9.31 For calves >8 weeks of age, transport vehicles must provide sufficient floor space to allow all calves to lie down on their sternums ($0.019 \times \text{liveweight}^{0.67}$) at the same time (see Table 3).

Table 3: Maximum stocking density for calves >8 weeks of age based on 12.25m x 2.4m deck

Average weight	m ² /calf	Number of calves per deck		Average weight	m ² /calf	Number of calves per deck
120	0.47	62		320	0.91	32
140	0.52	56		340	0.94	31
160	0.57	51		360	0.98	29
180	0.62	47		380	1.02	28
200	0.66	44		400	1.05	27
220	0.70	41		420	1.09	27
240	0.75	39		440	1.12	26
260	0.79	37		460	1.16	25
280	0.83	35		480	1.19	24
300	0.87	33		500	1.22	24

- 9.32 Where transport mortalities and morbidities occur:
- these must be promptly reported to the consignor with any problems identified
 - action must be taken by the consignor to address problems identified
 - problems identified and action taken must be recorded.

Euthanasia

- 9.33 Calves must be handled and euthanased in a manner that avoids pain, suffering or distress.
- 9.34 Calves that are sick, injured, and/or unable to walk ('downer calves') and will not recover must be euthanased *in situ* without delay.
- 9.35 The approved methods for euthanasia of individual calves are:
- firearm in the **frontal position**
 - penetrative captive bolt gun in the **frontal position**
 - firearm or penetrative captive bolt in the **poll position** (applicable only in emergencies where access to the frontal position is unavailable).
- 9.36 The euthanasia device must be of sufficient calibre to achieve immediate loss of consciousness.
- 9.37 The euthanasia device must be designed, manufactured, maintained and operated to ensure humane and effective stunning and/or killing.
- 9.38 Where the euthanasia method has not resulted in immediate loss of consciousness and subsequent death:
- the calf must be shot again
 - equipment must be checked immediately and adjusted to correct any fault.
- 9.39 Calves must be checked immediately to ensure they are dead, evidenced by lack of corneal reflex, dilated pupils, relaxed jaw and limp tongue, and no rhythmic breathing.
- 9.40 Calves must not be euthanased using blunt force trauma.

- 9.41 Euthanasia methods not specified in these Standards must not be performed without prior approval from RSPCA Australia.

Records

- 9.42 A record of loading and transport must be maintained, including:
- a) time that feed and water were withdrawn
 - b) time that loading commenced and concluded
 - c) number of calves loaded
 - d) time of departure from property of origin
 - e) time of arrival at destination
 - f) time unloading commenced and concluded
 - g) transport mortalities.

10 Slaughter

- 10.01 Only **abattoirs** that have been assessed by RSPCA Australia and shown to comply with these slaughter standards may be used to slaughter RSPCA Approved calves.
- 10.02 **Abattoirs** must provide information relevant to these standards to RSPCA Australia upon request in a timely and appropriate manner.
- 10.03 Persons involved in the handling, stunning and slaughter of calves must be appropriately trained and competent in their required tasks.
- 10.04 A Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system must be installed and operational in the slaughter facility.
- 10.05 Procedures for the use and review of CCTV footage must be in place and include at least the following:
 - a) positioning that allows a clear view and recording of animals present at unloading, in **lairage** at stunning (including the raceway approaching the stunner) and during slaughter
 - b) regular reviewing by authorised staff to ensure these Standards are maintained
 - c) availability for viewing on site by the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme **Assessor**.
- 10.06 Stunning and slaughter equipment must be designed, manufactured, maintained and operated to ensure humane and effective restraint, stunning and killing.
- 10.07 A back-up stunning and slaughter method must be immediately available should the system fail.
- 10.08 Procedures must be in place to manage equipment failure and other breakdowns that may impact calf welfare.

Lairage

- 10.09 The **lairage** area must:
 - a) be covered to provide **shelter**
 - b) be well ventilated
 - c) be appropriately lit to inspect calves
 - d) provide non-slip flooring.
- 10.10 The **lairage** area must provide **pens**:
 - a) of sufficient size or number to avoid mixing of unfamiliar calves
 - b) of sufficient size to allow all calves to lie down in a fully outstretched position ($0.047 \times \text{liveweight}^{0.67} \text{m}^2$ per calf) at the same time (see Table 4).

Table 4: Maximum stocking density in the lairage pen

Average weight	m ² /calf		Average weight	m ² /calf
80	0.89		300	2.15
90	0.96		320	2.24
100	1.03		340	2.33
120	1.16		360	2.43
140	1.29		380	2.52
160	1.41		400	2.60
180	1.52		420	2.69
200	1.64		440	2.77
220	1.74		460	2.86
240	1.85		480	2.94
260	1.95		500	3.02
280	2.05			

- 10.11 Calves in **lairage** must be provided with clean water at all times.
- 10.12 Calves must be observed for pain, injury or disease as they walk off the truck and while in **lairage** area.
- 10.13 Dates and times of calf checks, any problems identified and action taken must be recorded.
- 10.14 Calves that are sick, injured, and/or unable to walk ('downer calves') and will not recover must be euthanased *in situ* without delay.
- 10.15 Dead calves must be removed promptly and disposed of in a safe and hygienic manner.
- 10.16 Where calves in **lairage** are unable to be slaughtered within 24 hours of their last feed, they must be provided with palatable feed.
- 10.17 A record of **lairage** must be maintained, including:
- a) segregation of RSPCA Approved calves
 - b) slaughter schedule
 - c) **lairage** mortalities
 - d) feed provision where required.

Handling

- 10.18 Calves must be handled calmly and quietly to avoid unnecessary excitement or distress.
- 10.19 Calves must not be:
- a) lifted by the tail, head, ears, neck, skin or legs
 - b) thrown or dropped
 - c) hit or kicked
 - d) dragged.
- 10.20 Where calves are to be lifted, they must be lifted by supporting the calf's full body weight.
- 10.21 Dogs, electric goads, or other harmful implements must not be used to move calves.

10.22 Races and laneways must be designed, constructed and maintained to:

- a) minimise right-angle bends
- b) prevent sharp protrusions and sharp edges
- c) avoid shadows, obstructions, moving objects and other distractions that may cause calves to baulk
- d) provide non-slip flooring
- e) reduce noise.

10.23 Where used, ramps must be of a slope no greater than 20 degrees.

Restraint

10.24 Calves must be effectively restrained to allow for accurate placement of the stunning device.

10.25 Raceways leading up to the restraint device must have escape gates to allow for removal of calves if required.

10.26 Raceways leading up to the restraint device and the point of stunning must be well-lit to encourage calves to move forward.

Stunning

10.27 Calves must be stunned prior to slaughter.

10.28 The stunning method used must result in immediate unconsciousness.

10.29 Following stunning, the calf must be checked to ensure it is unconscious, evidenced by collapse of the animal, no rhythmic breathing, fixed/glazed eyes, no corneal reflex, relaxed jaw and limp tongue.

10.30 Where the stun has not been effective:

- a) the calf must be re-stunned immediately
- b) corrective action must be implemented immediately, including equipment checks and adjustment.

10.31 Date and time of stunning and back-up stunning equipment checks, any problems identified and action taken must be recorded.

Bleeding out

10.32 Once the calf is effectively stunned, it must be promptly bled out.

10.33 The stunning method must ensure that the calf remains unconscious during bleed-out until death occurs.

10.34 Each calf must be checked to ensure they are dead (evidenced by absence of corneal reflex and reflex gasping breaths) before any dressing procedures begin.

10.35 Where 100% stunning efficacy is not achieved (i.e. calf is conscious or regaining consciousness at bleed out and requires a re-stun):

- a) the calf must be re-stunned and bled out immediately
- b) operations must cease immediately
- c) no animals must be admitted to the stunning area
- d) operating procedures must be reviewed to ensure effective stunning at recommencement of operations.

- 10.36 Methods of stunning and/or killing not specified in these Standards must not be performed without prior approval from RSPCA Australia

Euthanasia

- 10.37 Calves must be handled and euthanased in a manner that avoids pain, suffering or distress.
- 10.38 The approved methods for euthanasia of individual calves are:
- a) firearm in the frontal position
 - b) penetrative captive bolt gun in the frontal position
 - c) firearm or penetrative captive bolt in the poll position (applicable only in emergencies where access to the frontal position is unavailable).
- 10.39 The euthanasia device must be of sufficient calibre to achieve immediate loss of consciousness.
- 10.40 The euthanasia device must be designed, manufactured, maintained and operated to ensure humane and effective stunning and/or killing.
- 10.41 Where the euthanasia method has not resulted in immediate loss of consciousness and subsequent death:
- a) the calf must be shot again
 - b) equipment must be checked immediately and adjusted to correct any fault.
- 10.42 Calves must be checked immediately to ensure they are dead, evidenced by lack of corneal reflex, dilated pupils, relaxed jaw and limp tongue, and no rhythmic breathing.
- 10.43 Calves must not be euthanased using blunt force trauma.
- 10.44 Euthanasia methods not specified in these Standards must not be performed without prior approval from RSPCA Australia.

Animal-based welfare assessment

- 10.45 A daily sample of 10% of total number of RSPCA Approved calves must be observed for the following welfare outcomes:
- a) % of animals slipping or falling
 - b) % of animals vocalising during handling or stunning
 - c) % of animals effectively stunned on first attempt
 - d) % of animals regaining consciousness at bleed out.
- 10.46 Date and time of welfare outcome checks, number of animals observed, any problems identified and action taken must be recorded.

Traceability

- 10.47 RSPCA Approved calves must be separated from calves from other sources at all times at **lairage** and during and after slaughter.
- 10.48 All carcasses from RSPCA Approved calves must be checked for source identification and clearly marked as RSPCA Approved before leaving the **abattoir** floor.
- 10.49 Supporting documentation and evidence of physical separation of RSPCA Approved calf carcasses from other calves must be demonstrated.

END OF STANDARDS



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