

GUIDE FOR FEEDLOT OWNERS & MANAGERS

Best Practice Feedlot Activity Checklist

OUTCOME: Provide feedlot enterprises with guidelines for continual improvement in feedlot activities. Use this checklist to prepare your facility for exceeding the outcomes and minimum standards required in the NFAS.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- Entrance to feedlot – secure, tidy, clearly signed
- Restrict entry – mount entrance gates, keep closed where practical and locked (heavy duty chain and padlock)
- Biosecurity signage – “Livestock Biosecurity Area”
- Quarantine signage – “Quarantine Area”
- Visitors signage – “Warning – no entry without permission from the landowner” or “By Appointment Only”
- Visitor access control – single admission point – biosecurity check and record – Q fever check - WHS obligations
- Safety signage – speed limits, noise areas, no entry areas, machinery in operation etc

REMEMBER: Welcome visitors but ensure a sound management process for biosecurity and safety.

ACTIVIST INCURSION

- Daily – dead stock are removed immediately on identification from pens to carcass disposal area
- Daily – check all carcasses are buried or covered over in decomposition site
- Daily – dust control measures – roadways, cattle lanes/alleys, livestock handling & feed preparation areas
- Daily – mechanical equipment used on site operated in accordance with the manufacturers specifications
- Daily – vehicle movements and machinery operations within the feedlot complex are managed – safety, speed, noise, dust
- Weekly – remove spilt feed from roadways
- Weekly – monitor carcass disposal area – prevent environmental harm or nuisance
- Weekly – maintain short grass cover in feedlot complex and immediate surrounds – mow/slash
- Weekly – timing of manure and effluent applications takes into consideration prevailing and forecast weather conditions
- Monthly – visual screens (vegetative buffers) are kept in good order
- Monthly – inspect drainage channels, sedimentation systems, storage lagoons – repair or clean

REMEMBER: Feedlots can be operated to enhance public perception and prevent or minimise adverse impacts on people, livestock and the surrounding community.

PEN MANAGEMENT

- Daily - remove feed residue from feed bunks daily
- Weekly – remove spilt feed from roadways
- Weekly – formulate pen management plans – maintenance, manure loads, cleaning opportunities
- Weekly – repair pen floor potholes and eliminate wet patches
- Monthly – conduct under fence cleaning
- Bi-monthly – conduct pen cleaning – review pens with bedding
- Clean in a manner which ensures the design slopes and integrity of the pen floor are maintained

REMEMBER: Pen management is the key to good amenity and livestock conditions

DRINKING WATER

- Daily – check water troughs and float valves – clean where required
- Daily – check water storage facilities
- Daily – monitor water reticulation system – pumps, pipelines etc
- Bi-weekly – clean water troughs to ensure fresh. clean drinking water

REMEMBER: Fresh drinking water is important to maintain livestock health and performance

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

- Daily – ensure the needs of livestock are being met:
 - o Environmental – comfortable resting area and shelter
 - o Health – prevent disease, injury or functional impairment
 - o Behavioural – interaction, socialise, rumination
 - o Mental or cognitive – prevent thirst, hunger, pain, fear, anxiety, weakness, sickness and distress

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LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT CONT.

- Daily – good handling techniques – leads to good health and productivity
- Daily – practice quiet, low stress livestock handling techniques
 - o limit use of electric prodders and poly goads
 - o limit yelling/screaming when working livestock
 - o prevent slips and trips by livestock – reduce pressure when handling
- Daily – minimise time off water and feed when undertaking tasks
- Weekly – monitor loading and unloading ramps – maintenance check
- Weekly – monitor lairage pens – holding cattle in/out – maintenance check
- Monthly – internal audit of animal welfare practices by Animal Welfare Officer (AWO) or equivalent
- Quarterly – external audit of animal welfare practices by a veterinarian

REMEMBER: “Good welfare = fit and feeling well”

RECEIVING CATTLE

- Daily – on arrival, check cattle for lameness, illness and disease – record
- Daily – new cattle have access to sufficient area to lie down
- Daily – new cattle have immediate access to clean drinking water and hay

REMEMBER: Rehydration and “rebooting” the rumen are crucial to animal’s recovery from transport

DESPATCHING CATTLE

- Daily – check cattle are fit for purpose - declarations
- Daily – check cattle are fit to load and transport – if in doubt, leave them out
- Daily – when loading, practice quiet, low stress livestock handling techniques

REMEMBER: Rehydration and “rebooting” the rumen are crucial to animal’s recovery from transport

HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT

- Daily - assessment of animals – treatment v salvage slaughter v recovery paddock v euthanasia
- Daily – decision on animals to euthanase – calculated and confident call early – minimise suffering

- Daily – monitor hay racks – refresh as required
- Daily – check water troughs and float valves – clean
- Daily – review stocking density in hospital treatment pens
- Daily – during excessive hot weather and prolonged wet weather – apply proactive criteria to minimise cattle suffering
- Daily – ensure needles are disposed of in containers, rubbish collected to bins, rubbish removed from livestock handling area
- Daily – all animal health products stored and secured
- Daily – sign off by AWO or equivalent on completion of days activities
- Monthly – review bedding

REMEMBER: Priority is to maximise health improvements in livestock and minimise suffering

MORTALITIES

- Daily – dead stock are removed **immediately** on identification from pens to carcase disposal area
- Daily – euthanased cattle are transferred **immediately** to the carcase disposal area
- Daily – carcasses transported in most **discreet** method possible – front-end loader bucket/tipping truck
- Daily –all carcasses are buried or covered over in decomposition site on delivery to the disposal area
- Weekly – monitor carcase disposal area – ensure carcasses and bones are fully covered
- Annual – review carcase disposal area site – location, discreet site, proximity to feedlot/roadways etc

REMEMBER: Priority is to limit the time deceased cattle are observable in the feedlot

PREGNANT HEIFERS AND CALVES

- Daily – all incoming female cattle assessed for pregnancy status – on-farm/sale/on-feedlot
- Daily – implement strategy of “Pregnancy and Calving Management Plan” – abort v cull v return to vendor
- Daily – calves removed from production feeding pens
- Daily - Premature or sick calves treated or euthanased ASAP and removed from pen immediately
- Daily – calves removed from feeding pens transferred to recovery paddock v grazing paddock v weaning
- Daily – slinks (or premature calves) should be removed **immediately** on identification from pens

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PREGNANT HEIFERS AND CALVES CONT.

- Quarterly – review “Pregnancy and Calving Management Plan” with consultant veterinarian

REMEMBER: Priority is to limit the birthing of calves in the feedlot in the first instance, and then to manage the welfare of those born in the most practical way outside the feedlot

RECOVERY PADDOCKS

- Daily – assessment of cattle unfit for feedlot production transferred to paddock
- Weekly – assessment of cattle not displaying signs of improved health – proactive decisions to prevent prolonged suffering
- Weekly – sign off by AWO or equivalent at completion of weeks activities
- Monthly – assessment of cattle for salvage slaughter – direct to works only

REMEMBER: Priority is to prevent suffering

SHADE

- Annually – undertake risk assessment for excessive heat load events and plan solutions to enhance animal welfare and mitigate against poor outcomes (shade to be supplied for at risk categories of cattle or cattle types assessed to be susceptible without shade during summer removed from the feedlot)
- Summer – shade can mitigate excessive heat load in feedlot cattle
- Summer – during excessive conditions, shelter is a primary need for susceptible livestock

REMEMBER: Priority is to ensure cattle can be protected in periods of extreme hot weather

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- Annually – review systems that are in place to identify and mitigate the impact of potential emergency situations:
 - o Water supply and suitability
 - o Feed supply and suitability
 - o Electricity supply
 - o Disease outbreak
 - o Extreme weather conditions – flooding, excessive heat load
 - o Antagonists and trespassers
 - o Emergency slaughter of cattle and disposal
 - o Others
- Annually – update the risk register – actions, allocation of responsibilities
- Annually – training provided to key personnel for contingency planning

REMEMBER: Priority is to prepare for the worst and manage the rest

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [National Guidelines for Beef Cattle Feedlots in Australia](#)
- [National Beef Cattle Feedlot Environmental Code of Practice](#)
- [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle](#)
- [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Land Transport - Cattle](#)
- Euthanasia of Feedlot Cattle - **not available online, please request from ALFA Office**
- [A national guide to the selection of animals to transport](#)
- [Antimicrobial stewardship guidelines for the Australian cattle feedlot industry](#)
- [National Biosecurity Manual for Beef Cattle Feedlots](#)
- [Heat Load Toolbox](#)
- [Trespass guideline and checklist for feedlot operators](#)