

UC Davis Office of the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care

Policy:	SC-33-200
Date:	6/15/15
Enabled by:	The Guide, The Ag Guide, AWA, PPM
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Title: Husbandry and Handling of Dairy Cattle

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for dairy cattle.

II. Policy:

All units providing care for dairy cattle must meet or exceed these minimum requirements, which are based on the *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching* (the Ag Guide). Cattle used in biomedical research and non-standard Ag practice teaching must additionally meet the requirements in the Animal Welfare Act and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, current edition.

III. Procedure:

Daily:

(365 days a year without exception)

Observe each animal and check for health concerns, which must be documented with the date. Record sick and dead animals. Certain injuries or herd health concerns may be treated by facility managers per facility SOPs and do not need to be reported to a veterinarian. Consult with a clinical veterinarian for other health concerns or if potential herd health issues are observed.

Check feed-animals should be fed daily an amount that takes into consideration the nutrient density of the feed and the nutrient requirements of the animal. Dairy cows may have access to feed restricted for up to two hours prior to milking. Exceptions to daily feeding must be approved in animal care and use protocols. Expiration dates for bagged feed must be readily available per Campus Standard of Care Food Storage. If a manufacturer's mill date is not available, indicate date received. To ensure freshness, feeds that are not consumed, especially high moisture feeds such as silage, should be removed from feeders and mangers as needed to maintain feed quality. Feed should be a reasonable distance from waterers to reduce contaminating the water with feed material.

Check water- sufficient clean water must be available in a consistent manner to meet the animal's daily needs under all environmental conditions.

Cows should be milked on a regular schedule that is appropriate for the goals of the herd or specific research project.

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Enclosures:

Enclosures must be in good condition and free of damage that may cause injury. Every animal should have sufficient space to move about at will, adequate access to feed and water, a comfortable resting site, and the opportunity to remain reasonably dry and clean. Physical accommodations for dairy cattle should provide a relatively dry area for the animals to lie down in and be comfortable and should be conducive to cows lying for as many hours of the day as they desire. The length of individual stalls should be longer than the length of the animal, defined as the distance between the pin bones and the front of the shoulders or between the pin bones and the brisket.

Please refer to Table 7-1 and 7-2 of the Ag Guide for specific space recommendations.

<http://www.fass.org/docs/agguide3rd/Chapter07.pdf>

Social housing should be considered the default for housing animals according to the IACUC policy on Social Housing of Social Species.

Calves may be housed individually from birth to 80 days in outdoor hutches or inside buildings on bedded or padded pens or elevated stalls. Individual housing allows for more accurate monitoring of milk replacer intake. It also allows for more accurate and timely monitoring of scours and early intervention to give supportive therapy if needed. Calves suckling each other while being fed milk is a risk for mastitis by introducing bacteria into the teat and singular housing prevents the heifers from sucking each other.

Enclosures need to be cleaned according to the SC 50-104 policy regarding Cleaning and Disinfecting Stalls, Runs and Enclosures for Large/Agricultural Animals

Handling and Transport:

Whenever possible, animals should be moved in a relaxed manner at a normal walking speed with minimum noise to reduce stress and prevent behavioral agitation in alleys, chutes and trailers. When necessary, nonelectrical driving aids such as paddles, flags, and panels may be used. The use of electronic prods may only be used as a last resort to move an animal after repeated attempts with non-electrified driving aids have failed. When an electric prod needs to be used, it should be applied to an area such as the hindquarters of the animal. It should never be applied to sensitive areas of the animal such as the eyes, ears, genitals, udder, or anus. People who are handling cattle should have knowledge of flight zone principles. Every effort should be made to prevent overcrowding in trailers.

Special Considerations: For animals that may enter the food chain, the policy on Quality Assurance - Drug Residues and Labeling of Drugs Used in Food Animals must be followed.