

Producer Summary of Draft Beef Code Content

About the Code & Public Comment Period

This overview has been prepared to help support beef producers in providing comments during the Beef Code of Practice 60-day public comment period from **April 13 – June 12, 2026**. The content and layout of the draft code available for public comment remains largely consistent with the current Beef Code. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list. Producers are encouraged to have a full review of the draft content to provide feedback.

- The [Beef Code of Practice](#) sets the national on-farm standard of care for beef cattle in Canada and has been around since 1981.
- An industry-led, up-to-date Code ensures producers remain central to animal welfare discussions, while grounding on-farm care expectations in science and practical approaches to continuous improvement.
- The NFACC Code development process strengthens the credibility of on-farm standards through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach while ensuring producers have a clear and ongoing seat at the table.

Chapter 1: Animal Environment

Chapter Desired Outcomes:

- All cattle are kept under conditions conducive to their safety, health and well-being, comfort, nourishment, productivity, and humane handling
- Cattle can express natural behaviour
- Cattle are protected from extremes in weather, such as cold, precipitation, storms, and heat waves.

Cold/Heat: (1.1.1 High Temperature and Humidity & 1.1.2 Extreme Cold)

- New requirements to monitor cattle more frequently during heat waves/high humidity and during adverse cold weather to promptly assist cattle not coping.
- New requirement to provide shelter (natural or man-made) from high winds during cold weather.

New Section on Mud & Moisture: (1.1.3 Mud & Moisture)

- New section added to describe the welfare impacts of mud and moisture, including reduced coat insulation and foot health problems. Includes a requirement that cattle must have access to a dry, well-drained, or bedded resting area. (Updated requirement language moved from another section of the chapter.)

Facilities for all Cattle: (1.2 Facilities for all Cattle)

- Requirements for facilities were updated to emphasize the need for safe, low-stress cattle movement that protects both cattle and handlers, and that a separate area with dry bedding must be available for the recovery of severely sick or injured cattle.

Chapter 2: Feed & Water

Chapter Desired Outcome: Cattle are in optimum health and body condition.

General Notes: This chapter now places greater emphasis on monitoring nutrition, preventing poor body condition, and ensuring reliable water access.

Nutrition, Feed Risks, and Body Condition: (2.1 Nutrition & Feed Management)

- Includes stronger guidance on feed and water testing, toxic feeds, feed bunk management, and use of nutritionists.
- In addition to requiring corrective action for cattle with BCS 2/5 or lower (as in the current code), requirement was enhanced to ensure action is taken to prevent declining body-condition of cattle with a score of 2.5/5.

Snow as a Water Source: (2.2 Water)

- The importance of attentive monitoring of cattle when using snow as a water source is emphasized. Updates were made to Requirements to provide additional detail around when it is acceptable to use snow as a water source.

Chapter 3: Animal Health

Desired Outcomes: Optimum health and welfare are maintained through a combination of appropriate disease prevention and control measures, as well as prompt treatment of illness, injury, and disease.

General Notes: This chapter was updated around veterinary care and herd health management, disease reporting, and emergency preparedness.

Veterinary Care (3.1 Herd Health Management)

- Requirements and Recommended Practices were enhanced to further emphasize the importance of an active Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship, working with a veterinarian, and developing and regularly updating a herd health program.



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Disease Reporting (3.2 Sick & Injured Cattle)

- Requirement on Reportable Diseases to raise awareness of importance of reporting. It is currently an industry expectation and enshrined in Provincial and Federal regulations. *CFIA district veterinarian must be notified of any known or suspected cases of a reportable disease, either directly or through your herd veterinarian.*

Expanding Content on Health Conditions (3.3 Health Conditions of Beef Cattle)

- More content was added on several conditions that are important for animal welfare, particularly to expand the current code content that is largely focused on the feedlot sector, with information relevant to the cow-calf sector. New subsections within this chapter to include guidance on reproductive disease, neurologic disease, and pink eye.

3.3.6.2 Managing Pregnant Heifers in the Feedlot

- In addition to working with your vet to develop a strategy for managing pregnant heifers in a feedlot (as in the current code), a requirement has been added in draft code that feedlots must have appropriate equipment and facilities to manage calving.

Updating Emergency Preparedness (3.4 Safety and Emergencies)

- Section content expanded and Requirements enhanced to include emphasis on emergency preparedness plan being updated regularly.

Chapter 4: Animal Husbandry

Desired Outcomes: Cattle experience minimal stress and discomfort, while necessary husbandry tasks are carried out properly, safely, and in a timely fashion.

General Notes: This section emphasizes low-stress handling, a new section for non-ambulatory cattle and includes enhanced expectations for providing pain control for various management procedures.

Pain mitigation expectations have been enhanced: Requirements for pain control to be given in consultation with a veterinarian for:

- castration for all ages of cattle
 - branding calves under 6 months (then **all** cattle starting Jan 1, 2032)
 - disbudding/dehorning for all ages of cattle
 - assisted difficult calvings for both cow and calf (new)
 - spaying (must be carried out by a veterinarian using pain control)
- These draft updates are under section 4.3 Identification (Branding), 4.4 Disbudding and Dehorning, 4.5 Castration, 4.5.1 Spaying, and 4.2 Reproductive and Calving Management.



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- [Click here](#) to find 2013 Code Painful Procedure Requirements for comparison.

Low Stress Handling (4.1 Handling and Moving Cattle)

- Information was increased on low-stress handling and behavioural signs of stress. Prode use expectations for unacceptable use were rewritten and clarified.
- In addition to willful mistreatment being unacceptable, requirement enhanced that it must also be reported to proper authorities.

New Section on Non-Ambulatory Cattle (4.1.2 Additional Considerations when Handling, Moving, and Caring for Non-Ambulatory Cattle)

- New section drafted, outlining Requirements for prompt care, safe handling, appropriate lifting tools, and access to feed and water for non-ambulatory cattle.

4.2 Reproductive & Calving Management

- Expanded content now includes a calving decision tree resource and updated recommended practices, including reducing the ideal window to receive colostrum from 6 to 4 hours after birth.

Weaning: (4.6 Weaning)

- The section was expanded with new Recommended Practices, as well as a new Requirement for increased monitoring of calves after weaning. This section is subdivided to provide specific guidance on pre-weaning, weaning, and post-weaning periods.

Chapter 5: Preparations for Transport

Desired Outcome: Cattle arrive at their destination in good condition.

General Note: The Humane Transport Regulations have been revised since the 2013 code, which heavily influenced the updates to this section of the Code.

- **Regulatory Alignment:** New Requirements were drafted to align with updated transport regulations. Some Requirements were removed to avoid duplication of these regulations, while the remaining Requirements were reviewed and updated to ensure consistency and accuracy. The Requirements and Recommended Practices in this chapter focus on assessing fitness for transport and enhanced guidance around preparations for transport.
- **Appendices:** Transportation appendices were updated to include current CFIA guidance.



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Chapter 6. Euthanasia

Desired Outcome: When necessary, cattle are euthanized in a timely and effective manner.

General Note: Chapter updated to include more practical, clear guidance for euthanasia methods and decision making. Updates were made to include references to farmer-specific mental health resources.

6.2 Methods of On-Farm Euthanasia

- **Euthanasia methods:** The table of acceptable methods for euthanasia was updated to be more user-friendly, while also increasing specificity around appropriate firearms and ammunition for different classes of cattle.
- **Updated images:** Images depicting the appropriate landmarks for firearm euthanasia were updated.

What happens after the Public Comment Period?

After the comment period closes, the feedback will be compiled and reviewed by the Code Committee. A report summarizing the feedback and outlining how it was considered in the final consensus-based decision making by the Code Committee will also be shared. The finalized Code is expected to be released in the second quarter of 2027.

How to Participate in the Public Comment Period

Visit www.cattle.ca or the [National Farm Animal Care website](#) when the code launches on April 13 to find links to access the public comment period, which includes the draft code content and the scientific review created and used in the draft code development.

The 60-day public comment period closes on June 12, 2026.

Learn more about the Beef Code of Practice update at www.cattle.ca.