



2023 Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle

Key Requirements and Timelines

Important Facts

- The Codes of Practice are developed collaboratively, with participation from many stakeholder groups including farmers, veterinarians, researchers, processors, experts, animal welfare organizations, government, and others.
- The public comment period of the Draft Code of Practice had a meaningful impact on the final Code of Practice. Close to 6,000 comments from farmers, stakeholders, individuals and organizations from various backgrounds in the industry and outside the sector were made, which helped shape the final Code of Practice requirements and recommendations.
- Requirements of the revised Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle were published on March 30, 2023 with the implementation date of April 1st 2024 unless stated otherwise in individual requirements. A timeline for key requirements is included below.
- Requirements were developed with careful consideration of current research, farm practicality, international standards, and societal expectations.
- The proAction Technical Committees will begin reviewing the revised Code of Practice in April 2023 to determine how and when to incorporate changes into proAction. These recommendations will then be reviewed by the proAction Committee followed by the DFC Board.
- DFC expects the first changes will be incorporated in proAction for September 2025.

Key Impactful Requirements and Timelines

APRIL 1 2024	April 1 2027	April 1 2029	April 1 2031
CALF HOUSING (pre-weaning)			
Where tethering of calves is permitted, the tether must include a collar. <i>For indoor calf housing:</i>			<i>For indoor calf housing:</i> Effective April 1, 2031, calves that are healthy, thriving, and compatible

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<p>Calves must not be tethered as part of normal indoor housing.</p> <p>Producers raising calves individually must develop a plan to transition to pair/group housing methods, in consultation with a veterinarian or other qualified advisor.</p> <p><i>Hutches and other outdoor housing:</i> Calves housed outdoors, including in hutches, must have physical contact with another calf unless they need to be separated for health reasons or they need to be protected from inclement weather.</p> <p>Calves may be tethered only if housed in hutches that provide access to an area outside the hutch.</p>			<p>must be housed in pairs or groups by 4 weeks of age.¹</p>
COW HOUSING			
<p>Newly built barns must allow daily, untethered freedom of movement and social interactions year-round.</p> <p>Tethers or other head restraints must allow cattle to rest in a head back position; stanchions are not permitted.</p> <p>Electrified crowd gates must not be used.</p> <p>Stocking density must not exceed 1.2 cows per stall in free stall systems.</p>	<p>Effective April 1, 2027, cows must not be tethered continuously throughout their entire production cycle (calving to calving)—they must be provided sufficient regular opportunity for freedom of movement to promote good welfare.</p> <p>Effective April 1, 2027, stocking density must not</p>		<p>Effective April 1, 2031, stocking density must not normally exceed 1 cow per stall.²</p>

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Resting areas in group pens must provide at least 9.3 m ² (100 ft ²) per Holstein cow. ²	normally exceed 1.1 cow per stall.²		
CALVING AREA			
Newly built barns must allow cows to calve in loose housed maternity pens, yards, or pastures that permits them to turn around.		Effective April 1, 2029, cattle on all farms must calve in loose housed maternity pens, yards, or pastures that permit them to turn around.	
WEANING			
Calves must be gradually weaned over a period of at least 5 days, and they must be at least 8 weeks old before weaning is completed.			
HEALTH PRACTICES			
<p>If castrating cattle, the procedure must be done as early as possible using local anesthesia and systemic analgesia.</p> <p>Cattle must not be tail docked unless medically necessary for an individual animal, and the procedure must be done using pain control.</p> <p>If removing extra teats, they must be removed as early as possible using pain control.</p> <p>Systemic analgesia must be included in the treatment of cows with severe acute clinical mastitis.</p>			

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<p>Pain control must be included in the treatment of cattle that receive an invasive hoof trim.</p> <p>Disease events, treatments, and mortalities (including cause, if known) must be recorded and records must be kept for at least 3 years to track trends in animal health.</p> <p>If mortality in female calves from 2 days of age exceeds 10%, corrective actions must be implemented to improve calving management and calf health in consultation with a veterinarian or other qualified advisor.</p>			

¹Movement into pairs/groups may need to be delayed for individual calves that are not healthy and thriving. Once moved into pairs/groups, individual calves may need to be singly housed temporarily if they have a health condition that would improve with separation. Movement into pairs/groups may also need to be delayed to ensure there are sufficient number of calves that are compatible as to their age, size, and drinking speed.

²At any time during or after the 2027 and 2031 transition periods, stocking density can go up to 1.2 cows per stall but only temporarily/intermittently. This minimum required space allowance is based on average weights for large breeds (e.g., Holstein) and will be adjusted for medium and small breeds.