



Dairy Animal Welfare

The Dairy Animal Welfare module within ROC seeks to ensure humane practices in the raising and/or handling of animals intended to be sold or marketed using ROC claims. Other livestock producers should refer to the ROC framework section VI. Animal Welfare module.

1. Standards for Animal Welfare

The below standards are intended to incorporate the five freedoms of animal welfare, along with any additional species-specific requirements. As stated in Section IV, to receive ROC, all requirements listed in this section must be met, and all products sold, labeled, or represented as regenerative organic must also comply with USDA organic regulations at 7 CFR Part 205, National Organic Program. Additionally, any livestock or livestock products with organic and regenerative organic claims must comply with the USDA organic regulations, and operations must comply with all federal humane handling, transportation, and slaughter requirements, as outlined by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Humane Methods of Livestock Slaughter Act of 1978.

1. Base Requirements	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
<p>1.1 Existing Certifications</p>	<p>All livestock products intended to be sold with a ROC claim must have proof of existing USDA Organic certification or recognized equivalent for livestock.</p> <p>Operation has proof of existing animal welfare certification recognized under the ROC, as applicable to the operation being certified.</p> <p>* Dairies are exempt from holding an existing animal welfare certification provided all applicable criteria within this pillar are met and verified at ROC audit.</p>	<p>R*</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>
<p>1.2 General</p>	<p>Operations have researched all applicable laws regarding animal welfare (general and species specific) and are in compliance with all local, provincial/state, and national laws.</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>
<p>1.3 Applicability</p>	<p>Animal welfare requirements apply to commercial livestock operations. See specific requirements per level at right.</p> <p><i>CT: Egregious violations of the five freedoms of animal welfare and/or any abusive treatment of any animals onsite, commercial or non-commercial.</i></p>	<p>Applicable to animals used for dairy, meat, or fiber production</p>	<p>Applicable to animals used for dairy, meat, or fiber production</p>	<p>Applicable to all animals on an operation, including those used for dairy, meat, or fiber production and farm operations (e.g. dogs used to control predators, horses used for herding, etc.)</p>

1.4 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation	Operation does not feed animals in a manner that meets the EPA's definition of a CAFO: "A farm in which animals are raised in confinement that has over 1,000 animal units confined for over 45 days a year." Exemptions may be granted to operations with more than 1,000 animal units that demonstrate ample pasture access and utilization. Operations will be evaluated on a case by case basis.	R	R	R
2. Nutrition and Water	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
2.1 General	Feed and water must be distributed in such a way that livestock can eat and drink without undue competition. Animals have access to sufficient feed quantity to satisfy hunger & promote satiety. If applicable, feed is stored to maintain freshness and hygiene, avoiding mildew, mold, or contamination.	R	R	R
2.2 Water	Animals have access to fresh and clean water for drinking. Water fowl should also have access to fresh or clean water for bathing. <i>CT: Limited fresh water access.</i>	R	R	R
2.3 Feed for Monogastrics	Monogastric feed comes from regenerative organic or certified organic sources. See requirements per level at right.	100% organic sources	>50% from regenerative organic sources; remainder organic	100% from regenerative organic sources
2.4 Feed for Ruminants	Ruminant feed comes from regenerative organic or certified organic grass/forage/baleage/hay. See requirements per level at right.	>50% grass-fed; remainder from organic sources	>75% grass-fed; remainder from organic sources	100% grass-fed (including finishing)

	Supplementation for nutritional purposes using organically approved minerals, vitamins, and/or molasses is allowed.			
2.5 Forced Feeding	Operations do not force feed animals, unless it is for life-saving purposes.	R	R	R
2.6 Malnutrition	Farming practices promote proper nutrition, avoiding malnutrition.	R	R	R
3. Environment and Shelter	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
3.1 General	<p>Environment considers an animal's welfare needs. Environment is designed to protect animals from physical and thermal discomfort, fear, distress, and allows them to perform natural behaviors conducive to good animal welfare.</p> <p>Selection of species and types of livestock are made with regard to suitability for site-specific conditions and resistance to prevalent diseases and pests.</p>	R	R	R
3.2 Indoor Shelter	<p>Animals are provided with shelter adequate for their physical and behavioral needs. Shelter for animals and birds may be provided by natural features such as shade, trees, or by buildings. Housing may also be used as shelter. In extreme weather there must be a means to feed and water animals in a sheltered environment.</p> <p>Tie-Stall Barns: Tie-stall barns are not permitted for permanent housing; see exceptions for Bronze at right.</p>	<p>R</p> <p>Dairies are allowed a two year period to transition to a free stall or complete pasture-based operation.</p>	R	R
3.3 Confinement	Operations do not use any type of permanent confinement that restricts mobility, and livestock	R Dairies are	R Dairies must	R Heifer calves

	<p>live, eat, and sleep outdoors the majority of the time in alignment with the principles of the Five Freedoms.</p> <p>There shall be continuous and open access to pasture.</p> <p>Temporary confinement may be used only when necessary and must be in alignment with the ROC-approved baseline Animal Welfare standards.</p> <p>Individual Calf Hutches: Individual calf hutches are not permitted; see exceptions at right.</p>	<p>allowed a two-year transitional period to phase out individual hutches.</p> <p>Operation must begin trialing group pens for 3 to 8 calves.</p> <p><i>Single animals born with no pen mates of similar size/age can be separated in sub-pen in an existing group pen or in calf hutch immediately adjacent to the group pen for up to three weeks.</i></p>	<p>provide group pens for 3 to 8 calves for entire calf rearing operation.</p> <p><i>Single animals born with no pen mates of similar size/age can be separated in sub-pen in an existing group pen or in calf hutch immediately adjacent to the group pen for up to three weeks.</i></p>	<p>remain paired with the mother cow until fully weaned and remains with the herd on pasture.</p>
<p>3.4 Light</p>	<p>Animals have exposure to natural light and are not exposed to artificial light for more than 16 hours per day. A minimum period of 8 hours of continuous darkness must be provided, unless located in geographies where there is less than 8 hours of darkness at night. Natural light must be sufficient indoors on sunny days, such that an inspector can read and write when all lights are turned off.</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>

4. Handling & Management	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
4.1 General	Producers promote compassionate care and handling of animals. Daily inspections of animals occur.	R	R	R
4.2 Physical Modifications	<p>Operations do not abuse animals or treat animals with cruelty and do not use the practices listed below. Exceptions to these prohibited practices must be in alignment with the ROC-approved baseline Animal Welfare standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-Horning[^] • Disbudding[^] • Prodding • Tail Docking of Cattle <p>[^]Must meet specific requirements detailed below:</p> <p>Dehorning and routine trimming/tipping of horns are prohibited. The use of polled breeds is recommended. Trimming of the horns is only permitted for medical purposes when the health of the cow is negatively affected by their horn length (e.g., horn tips are rubbing the eyes) or when the length could negatively impact the welfare of other animals, but this procedure must be performed by an experienced individual using a method of low-stress handling and restraint along with adequate analgesic and anesthetic pain control. Additionally, trimming must avoid the live innervated tissue within the horns.</p> <p>Disbudding is prohibited in calves over three</p>	R	R	R

	<p>weeks of age. Hot iron cauterization allowed up to three weeks of age, which must be preceded and followed by administration of appropriate anesthetic and analgesia to provide short- and long-term pain relief. The procedure must be performed by an experienced individual using low stress handling and restraint techniques (e.g., sedation, disbudding crate). Any other methods of disbudding prohibited (e.g., caustic paste, scooping). The use of polled breeds is recommended over disbudding practices. If ROC producers disbud, they must demonstrate they are incorporating polled genetics via semen purchase for artificial insemination, herd bull selection, or replacement cow purchase. Producers who are disbudding must use polled genetics for breeding at least 20% of their cow herd year over year or until their calves no longer require disbudding. If the producer is unable to find suitable polled genetics, a record detailing efforts made to source the genetics and why such efforts were unsuccessful must be made available to the inspector for review at each inspection.</p>			
<p>4.3 Disposition of culled animals</p>	<p>Culled animals, such as dairy bull calves, shall not be sent to standard livestock auction. If no other viable alternative outlined at right is available, on-farm euthanasia shall be done in accordance with Criteria 5.1.</p>	<p>Dairy bull calves are sold to an operation with a ROC approved AW certification and/or a nearby certified pasture-based operation</p>	<p>Dairy bull calves are sold to a certified organic operation to be raised to maturity</p>	<p>Dairy bull calves are raised on site to maturity or sold to another ROC farm to be raised to maturity</p>

5. Health	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
5.1 General	<p>Treatment for sick, injured, or diseased animals is undertaken at the first reasonable opportunity to alleviate any unnecessary pain or distress. Operation does not withhold medical treatment from a sick animal in order to preserve certification status.</p> <p>Treatment is also undertaken for non-ambulatory livestock, even if the treatment causes the livestock to lose its certified status or to be humanely euthanized.</p> <p><i>CT: Animals are not treated effectively or promptly for injuries or sickness, or euthanized if necessary, using humane euthanasia methods as described in Euthanasia Section.</i></p>	R	R	R
5.2 Vaccines, Antibiotics & Growth Hormones	<p>When recommended by a veterinarian or if homeopathic, herbal, and other non-antibiotic treatments are not available, antibiotics are used to treat sick or injured animals.</p> <p>Offspring cannot nurse on an animal that has been treated with antibiotics.</p> <p>Vaccines appropriate for the species and region are optimized for prevention of disease.</p> <p>Growth hormones or non-therapeutic use of substances to induce heat are prohibited.</p>	R	R	R
6. Slaughter/ Killing	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
6.1 General	All slaughter/killing systems need to be designed and managed to ensure animals are not caused unnecessary or intentional distress or discomfort	R	R	R

	<p>before slaughter.</p> <p>If slaughter does not occur on farm, approved ROC third-party animal welfare audit records of the slaughter facility must be provided.</p>			
6.2 Pre-slaughter	<p>Operations work to minimize the pre-slaughter handling of animals. This includes but is not limited to handling animals without abuse, ensuring animals have good traction on flooring and do not slip or fall during unloading and movement around the farm or plant, and have their view of the slaughter floor obscured as to avoid any unnecessary stress or discomfort.</p> <p>If slaughter does not occur on farm, approved ROC third-party animal welfare audit records of the slaughter facility must be provided.</p>	R	R	R
6.3 Slaughter Methods	<p>Slaughter is performed using stunning methods that result in immediate insensitivity, such as a shot to brain or penetrative bolt stunning followed by bleeding. Pre-shackle, multi-step controlled-atmosphere stunning may be used in poultry.</p> <p>If slaughter does not occur on farm, approved ROC third-party animal welfare audit records of the slaughter facility must be provided.</p>	R	R	R
6.4 Euthanasia	<p>Animals experiencing pain or suffering from which they are unlikely to recover must be promptly euthanized on the farm in a manner that renders the animal immediately insensible to pain.</p> <p>Prohibited euthanasia practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Suffocation – Manual blow to head by blunt instrument or any manual blunt force trauma – Use of equipment that crushes the neck (incl. 	R	R	R

	<p>killing pliers or Burdizzo clamps)</p> <p><i>CT: Euthanizing in a way that causes unnecessary pain or suffering.</i></p>			
7. Transportation	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
7.1 General	<p>Animal transport systems are designed and managed to ensure animals are not subjected to unnecessary distress or discomfort. Operations and handlers have emergency plans in place that address possible animal welfare problems that may arise during transport.</p> <p>If the producer does not control the transportation of animals off-farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved ROC third-party animal welfare audit records must be provided for the transport operator <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The producer must keep records of all off-farm transportation, including date of transport, number of animals transported and destination, type of vehicle and company used, and transport time. 	R	R	R
7.2 Transport Time	<p>Food and water are not withdrawn for more than 12 hours prior to slaughter.</p> <p>Transportation time from loading of first animal to last animal unloading is less than 13 hours.</p> <p>*Exceptions apply for transportation of breeding stock when such livestock with desired genetics are not located within maximum transport time allowance.</p> <p>If the producer does not control the transportation of animals off-farm:</p>	O*	R	R

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved ROC third-party animal welfare audit records must be provided for the transport operator OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The producer must keep records of all off-farm transportation, including date of transport, number of animals transported and destination, type of vehicle and company used, and transport time. 			
8. Training & Personnel	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
8.1 Personnel	Operations ensure that all employees working with animals are trained on basic measures of animal welfare and have the relevant and necessary skills to perform their duties. Producers are thoroughly trained, skilled, and competent in animal husbandry, animal transport, slaughter, and have a good working knowledge of their system and animals under their care.	R	R	R

IX. Appendix

Animal Welfare:

- **Body Condition Score:** A system of measuring how thin or fat an animal is by reference to a standardized scale.
- **Carrying Capacity:** The average number of animals that can be rotationally grazed on a given area of pasture for a year without harming it. It is a measure of a pasture's ability to produce enough forage to meet the requirements of grazing animals.
- **Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO):** Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are agricultural operations where animals are kept and raised in confined situations. A CAFO is a lot or facility (other than an aquatic animal production facility) where animals have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of 45 days or more in any 12-month period, and crops, vegetation, forage growth, or post-harvest residues are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the lot or facility. The EPA provides specific thresholds by animal sector for small, medium, and large CAFOs. For example, a large CAFO for beef cattle is defined as 1,000 or more "animal units" confined for over 45 days a year.
- **Commercial Livestock Operation:** Animals are raised with the primary purpose of generating a profit. Non-commercial animals are those that generally have functions outside of or alongside profit, such as draught power, transport, manure production, or for educational purposes. The Five Freedoms described below must be demonstrated for all animals. Contact the ROA for additional guidance on determining if your livestock operation is considered commercial under the ROC.
- **Dehorning:** Dehorning and routine trimming/tipping of horns are prohibited. The use of polled breeds is recommended. Trimming of the horns is only permitted for medical purposes when the health of the cow is negatively affected by their horn length (e.g., horn tips are rubbing the eyes) or when the length could negatively impact the welfare of other animals, but this procedure must be performed by an experienced individual using a method of low-stress handling and restraint along with adequate analgesic and anesthetic pain control. Additionally, trimming must avoid the live innervated tissue within the horns.
- **Disbudding:** Prohibited in calves over three weeks of age. Hot iron cauterization allowed up to three weeks of age, which must be preceded and followed by administration of appropriate anesthetic and analgesia to provide short- and long-term pain relief. The procedure must be performed by an experienced individual using low stress handling

and restraint techniques (e.g., sedation, disbudding crate). Any other methods of disbudding prohibited (e.g., caustic paste, scooping). The use of polled breeds is recommended over disbudding practices. If ROC producers disbud, they must demonstrate they are incorporating polled genetics via semen purchase for artificial insemination, herd bull selection, or replacement cow purchase. Producers who are disbudding must use polled genetics for breeding at least 20% of their cow herd year over year or until their calves no longer require disbudding. If the producer is unable to find suitable polled genetics, a record detailing efforts made to source the genetics and why such efforts were unsuccessful must be made available to the inspector for review at each inspection.

- **Five Freedoms:** The Animal Welfare module leverages the five freedoms for animal welfare, which include:
 1. Freedom from hunger or thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
 2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
 3. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
 4. Freedom to express normal behaviors by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
 5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.
- **Handling:** The handling of animals covers the general treatment of animals during the various tasks performed and requirements of an operation. To minimize stress, pain, and suffering to an animal, ROC prohibits certain practices, such as prodding (jabbing of animal with instrument), wattling (cutting chunks out of an animal's hide to hang under the animal's neck), and dehorning (removal of horns).
- **Mobile Harvesting Unit:** A mobile harvest unit, or mobile slaughterhouse, enables livestock and poultry farmers to slaughter their animals humanely on-site. This decreases the exposure of animals to stressful and inhumane treatment at large scale slaughter facilities.
- **Monogastrics:** Monogastric animals have a simple single-chambered stomach and include dogs, pigs, horses, and rabbits. Their ability to extract energy from cellulose digestion is less efficient than in ruminants, and therefore are permitted to feed on grains.
- **Non-Ambulatory Animals:** Animals that cannot rise from a recumbent position or that cannot walk, including, but not limited to, those with broken appendages, severed tendons or ligaments, nerve paralysis, fractured vertebral column, or metabolic conditions.
- **Ruminants:** Ruminant species include cud-chewing animals such as cows, goats, bison,

and sheep. Ruminants are designed to eat fibrous grasses, plants, and shrubs. A high-grain diet may cause physical problems for ruminants. Additionally, when ruminants are switched from pasture to grain, they can become afflicted with numerous disorders, including a common but painful condition called "subacute acidosis."