



Humane Farm Animal Care
Animal Care Standards
November 2025

SHEEP & LAMB **(meat and dairy)**

HUMANE FARM ANIMAL CARE

Humane Farm Animal Care is a non-profit charity the mission of which is to improve the lives of farm animals by providing viable, credible, duly monitored standards for humane food production and assuring consumers that certified producers meet these standards.

Humane Farm Animal Care is supported by a consortium of Animal Protection Organizations, Individuals, and Foundations.

Humane Farm Animal Care Standards have been developed to provide the only approved standards for the rearing, handling, transport and slaughter of Sheep for use in the “Certified Humane” program. These standards incorporate scientific research, veterinary advice, and the practical experience of the farming industry. The standards are based on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) guidelines, current scientific information and other practical standards and guidelines recognized for the proper care of animals.

Animal welfare is improved when livestock managers adhere to the following:

- Access to wholesome and nutritious feed
- Appropriate environmental design
- Caring and responsible planning and management
- Skilled, knowledgeable, and conscientious animal care
- Considerate handling, transport, and slaughter

We are very grateful to the RSPCA; they have given us permission to use their standards and format as the basis for developing the Humane Farm Animal Care Standards.

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. The Certified Humane Label

The “Certified Humane” program was developed to certify farms adhering to these standards. Upon satisfactory application and inspection, farmers and ranchers will be certified and may use the “Certified Humanely Raised and Handled” logo. Program participants are inspected and monitored by *Humane Farm Animal Care*. Charges levied are to cover inspection and program costs.

B. Guide to the Use of the Welfare Standards

- The broad objectives of the standard are described at the beginning of each section.
- The numbered sections are the standards; all of which must be complied with.
- The standards are written to cover facilities in varying geographic and temperature regions and facilities utilizing different systems. Therefore, not all sections in these standards will apply to each facility.
- Boxed sections provide additional information or may highlight areas where the standards will be reviewed in the future.
- Farmers must also comply with any local, state, or federal requirements or regulations for sheep production that affect the environment or safety of their product as well as their State Veterinary Practices Act.

PART 2: FEED AND WATER

OBJECTIVES: Livestock must have access to fresh water and a diet designed to maintain full health and promote a positive state of well-being. Feed and water must be distributed in such a way that livestock can eat and drink without undue competition.

A. Feed & Grass-fed Feeding Program

FW 1: Wholesome, nutritious feed

- a. Sheep must be fed to meet or exceed nutrient requirements as determined by the National Research Council.
- b. Sheep must be fed a wholesome diet which is:
 1. Appropriate for their age and species;
 2. Fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health; and
 3. Sufficient for their nutritional needs.

FW 2: Free access to feed

Sheep must have access to nutritious feed each day, except when directed by a veterinarian.

FW 3: Feed records

- a. Producers must have written records of the feed constituents, the inclusion rate and constituents of compound feeds and feed supplements, including records from the feed mill or supplier; and
- b. These records must be made available to the *Humane Farm Animal Care* Inspector upon request.

FW 4: Substances prohibited in feed

- a. No feedstuffs containing mammalian or avian-derived protein sources are permitted, with the exception of milk and milk products.
- b. Sheep must not be fed antibiotics, or other substances deliberately to promote growth or feed efficiency.
- c. Antibiotics can be used in individual animals only therapeutically (i.e. disease treatment) as directed by a veterinarian.

FW 5: Body condition

- a. The sheep's body condition must be planned, monitored and maintained according to the stage of production.
- b. Sheep should not, at any time, have a body condition score of less than 2. ("Body Condition Scoring of Sheep" Clair Engle, Department of Dairy and Animal Science, Pennsylvania State University, publication: DAS 94-09---see below).

Score	Appearance	Condition
0	Emaciated, unthrifty, weak	Spine sharp and prominent, no fat cover, wasted muscle structure, transverse processes protrude
1	Extremely thin, unthrifty but agile	Spinous processes prominent, no fat cover, transverse processes protrude
2	Thin, but strong and thrifty	Spinous processes prominent but smooth, slight fat cover, muscle fullness, transverse processes rounded
3	Moderate, thrifty with limited fat deposits in fore-rib	Spinous processes rounded, muscle development full, transverse processes rounded
4	Fat	Spinous processes evident only as a line, fat cover considerable but firm, transverse processes cannot be felt
5	Obese	Spinous processes not detectable, fat cover dense and soft, transverse processes not detectable

FW 6: Avoiding changes in feed

- a. Efforts must be made to avoid sudden changes in type and quantity of feed, unless directed by a veterinarian.
- b. For market lambs and mature sheep, systems involving high intake of cereal-based diets require an appropriate introductory feeding period, during which sufficient roughage or a suitable high-fiber concentrate must also be fed.
- c. During the adjustment period to high-fiber concentrate diets:
 1. High levels of concentrates should be split into more than one meal per day; and
 2. Mineral mixtures must be specifically designed, and appropriate for the animal to avoid causing problems (e.g., urinary problems in male animals).

FW 7: Providing fiber

Sheep must be provided with feed or forage containing adequate, suitable fiber to allow rumination.

FW 8: Pasture

During the grass-growing season, when climatic conditions allow, sheep must have access to pasture or an outside exercise area.

FW 9: Feeding supplementary concentrates

- a. Groups of sheep fed supplementary concentrates must have sufficient trough space to eat at the same time.
- b. There must be sufficient trough space for forages to ensure that, within 24 hours, all sheep have sufficient access to meet their nutritional requirements.
- c. When calculating required trough space, the following must be considered:

1. The size of the animals;
 2. The number of animals; and
 3. The presence or absence of horns.
- d. Sufficient trough space or feeding areas must be provided to minimize aggression due to competition for feed.

FW 10: Supplying adequate nutrients

Sheep must not be kept for longer than 24 hours in an environment that is known to be nutrient deficient (e.g., holding pens, stubble, or exhausted root crops) unless appropriate nutritional supplements are provided.

FW 11: Appropriate feed for special needs sheep

Sheep that are unable to eat normally due to damaged, missing, or loose teeth, must be supplied with feed that they are able to eat and digest (e.g., sufficiently long grass or concentrates).

FW 12: Trough feeding

- a. Troughs must be kept clean and stale feed removed.
- b. Automatic feeding equipment must be:
 1. Cleaned at least once a week; and
 2. Maintained in good working order.

FW 13: Cleaning tools used for liquid feeding

Equipment and utensils used for liquid feeding must be thoroughly cleansed daily, and routinely sanitized.

FW 14: Wholesomeness of stored feed

- a. Stored feeds, such as hay and silage, must be:
 1. Protected from vermin and other animals;
 2. Of good quality; and
 3. Palatable to sheep.
- b. To reduce contamination by bird feces and other animals, all feed hoppers/bins (storage containers) must be covered.

FW 15: Avoiding unsuitable feedstuffs

Practices must be in place to prevent access to poisonous plants and unsuitable feedstuffs.

FW 16: Caring for sheep fed on root crops

Sheep fed on root crops must be given particular care and attention with regard to:

1. Dentition;
2. Ground condition;
3. Provision of shelter; and
4. A dry lying area.

FW 17: Weaning

- a. Lambs must not be weaned before 5 weeks of age.

- b. Lambs must have access to dry feed (e.g., creep feed, hay, grass) from 2 weeks of age to encourage proper rumen development.

A. Feed GF ~ Grass-Fed Program for Lamb & Sheep

All Grass-fed Lamb & Sheep should be raised with maximum access to pasture during the grazing season. Grass and forage should be the feed source for the entire lifetime of these ruminant animals except for milk consumed prior to weaning.

FW 1 GF: Wholesome, nutritious feed

- a. Lamb and Sheep must have a wholesome diet that meets or exceeds nutrient requirements as determined by the National Research Council.
- b. The diet must be appropriate for their age and breed;
- c. The feed must be provided to them in sufficient quantity to maintain good health.
- d. The feed must not contain any prohibited feedstuffs, (*see FW 4GF Substances prohibited in feed*)

FW 2 GF: Free access to grass and forage

- a. Lamb & Sheep must have access to nutritious feed daily, except when directed by a veterinarian.
- b. Their diet must be derived solely from forage, consisting of grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g. legumes, Brassica), browse, or cereal grain crops in the vegetative (**pre-grain**) state.
Also including:
- c. Hay, haylage, balage, silage, roughage, crop residue without grain, forage products or roughage products on pasture, or as necessary when removed from pasture (during weaning, inclement weather or events that may threaten the health, safety and welfare of the ruminant, natural resources or when conditions compromise the ability to graze).
- c. Incidental consumption of root crops while foraging is permitted
(*See FW 9GF for permitted supplementation*)

FW 3 GF: Feed records

- a. Producers must have written records of the feed constituents, the inclusion rate and constituents of compound feeds and feed supplements, including records from outside sources; and
- b. These records must be made available to the Humane Farm Animal Care during inspection or upon request.

FW 4 GF: Substances prohibited in feed

- a. Grain or grain byproducts are prohibited
- b. No feedstuffs containing mammalian or avian-derived protein sources are permitted, except for milk and milk products prior to weaning
- c. Lamb and Sheep must not be fed antibiotics, or other substances deliberately to promote growth or feed efficiency. d. Antibiotics can and

should be used in individual animals only therapeutically, for instance, for disease treatment as directed by a veterinarian.

- e. If an animal is subject to inadvertent exposure to non-forage feedstuffs or directed by a veterinarian to provide to ensure the animal's well-being during adverse environmental or physical conditions, the producer must document.

...Continued Grass-fed program for Lamb & Sheep

FW 5 GF: Body condition

- a. The animal's body condition must be planned, monitored and maintained according to the stage of production.
- b. The lambs or sheep should not, at any time, have a body condition score of less than 2 on the "Body Condition Scoring of Sheep" (Clair Engle, Department of Dairy and Animal Science, Pennsylvania State University, publication: DAS 94-09

Score	Appearance	Condition
0	Emaciated, unthrifty, weak	Spine sharp and prominent, no fat cover, wasted muscle structure, transverse processes protrude
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5	Obese	Spinous processes not detectable, fat cover dense and soft, transverse processes not detectable

FW 6 GF: Avoiding sudden changes in feed

- a. Efforts must be made to avoid sudden changes in type and quantity of feed especially a concern during drought conditions or extreme weather.
- b. Mineral mixtures must be specifically designed, and appropriate for the animal to avoid causing problems (e.g., urinary problems in male animals).

FW 8 GF: Pasture Usage

- a. Access: During the grass-growing season, when climatic conditions allow, lamb and sheep must have access to the pasture or an outside exercise area.
- b. Safety: Practices must be in place to prevent access to poisonous plants and unsuitable feedstuffs.

FW 9 GF: Permitted Supplementation

1. Mineral and vitamin supplements or soybean hulls, a highly digestible low-starch fiber source, a byproduct of soybean processing (can be pelleted).

2. Supplemental feeding of a non-concentrate ration: Grass hay or pelleted grass like alfalfa pellets as well as cottonseed with its high protein and fat content (from the cotton plant which produces fiber not grain) is also acceptable.

FW 11 GF: Appropriate feed for special needs lamb or sheep

Lamb or Sheep that are unable to eat normally due to damaged, missing, or loose teeth, must be supplied with feed that they are able to eat and digest (e.g., sufficiently long grass or concentrates).

FW 12 GF: Trough feeding (if used)

- a. Troughs must be kept clean and stale feed removed.
- b. There must be sufficient trough space for forages or supplemental feed to ensure that, all lamb and sheep have sufficient access to meet their nutritional requirements.

...Continued Grass-fed program for Lamb & Sheep

FW 13 GF: Cleaning tools used for liquid feeding

Equipment and utensils used for liquid (bottle) feeding must be thoroughly cleansed daily, and routinely sanitized.

FW 14 GF: Maintaining Wholesomeness of stored feed such as hay and silage

1. Must be protected from vermin and other animals; stored in covered hoppers, bins or other storage containers to reduce contamination by bird feces and other animals
2. Must be of a good quality; and
3. Palatable to lambs and sheep.

FW 17 GF: Weaning

- a. Lambs must not be weaned before 5 weeks of age.
- b. Lambs must have access to dry feed (hay, grass) from 2 weeks of age to encourage proper rumen develop

B. Water

FW 18: Water supply

Sheep, including those on pasture, must be provided with access to an adequate supply of clean, fresh drinking water each day, except when directed by an attending veterinarian.

FW 19: Emergency water supply

Provision must be made to ensure an emergency supply of suitable drinking water in case normal supplies fail (e.g., in freezing or drought conditions).

FW 20: Watering equipment

- a. Water bowls and troughs must be checked at least once daily and cleaned as necessary to ensure compliance with standard FW 18.
- b. Bowls/troughs must be sized, positioned, or protected to prevent lambs from drowning.

PART 3: ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVES: *The environment in which livestock are kept must take into account their welfare needs and be designed to protect them from physical and thermal discomfort, fear, and distress, and allow them to perform their natural behaviors.*

A. Buildings

E 1: Records of facility features promoting animal welfare

For all buildings and feeding operations, key points relating to welfare must be recorded, including:

1. Total floor area;
2. Building volume available to sheep; and
3. Number of sheep in relation to age, weight, feeding and drinking, and bedding space.

E 2: Building design and maintenance

- a. There must be no physical features of the environment that cause recurring injuries or bruising to sheep (to an extent significantly greater than would be caused by occasional bumps and scratches).
- b. To ensure that there are no sharp edges or protrusions likely to cause injury or distress to animals, the interior of any building, including the floor and all internal surfaces/fittings to which livestock have access, must be:
 1. Designed and constructed properly;
 2. Maintained and regularly inspected.This includes provision of adequate and safe holding and handling facilities (whether indoors or outdoors).

E 3: Limiting the use of toxic substances in buildings

- a. Sheep must not come into contact with toxic fumes or surfaces, such as paints, wood preservatives or surface disinfectants.
- b. Creosote and/or pressure treated wood must not be used in areas where the animals have direct contact with the material.

E 4: Electrical installations

All electrical installations at main voltage must be:

1. Inaccessible to sheep;
2. Well insulated;
3. Safeguarded from rodents;
4. Properly grounded;
5. Regularly tested; and
6. In adherence with local building codes.

GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) protection should be used wherever possible. GFCI “nuisance trips” can indicate conditions that are correctable and that could present a significant danger to personnel or livestock.

E 5: Cleaning and disinfection

Internal surfaces of housing and pens must be made of materials that can be readily cleansed and disinfected or be easily replaced when necessary.

B. Thermal Comfort, Environment and Ventilation

E 6: Thermal conditions

The animal’s environment must not be so hot or so cold as to cause distress.

E 7: Ventilation

Effective ventilation of buildings to avoid high humidity, condensation, and drafts is essential, as sheep are particularly susceptible to respiratory diseases.

Properly designed ventilation will permit the free circulation of air above sheep height and avoid drafts at sheep level.

E 8: Air quality

- a. Provisions must be made to ensure that, when sheep are housed, aerial contaminants do not reach a level at which they are noticeably unpleasant to a human observer (as specified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration).
- b. Ammonia must not exceed 25 ppm (averaged over any 8 hour period).

In animal buildings, it is recommended that levels of inhalable dust should not exceed 10mg/m³ at animal height.

E 9: Housing for lambs

- a. A dry bed and effective ventilation must be provided at all times for housed lambs.
- b. When the temperature falls below the lower critical temperature (when the animals begin to shiver uncontrollably), supplementary heating must be made available for very young animals.

E 10: Sheltering lambs on pasture

When lambs are being reared on pasture (either with the ewe or artificially) they must all have either natural or artificial:

1. Shelter and
2. Shade.

E 11: Winter shelter

In winter, additional shelter or windbreaks must be provided for stock.

E 12: Reducing heat stress

In summer, sheep must be protected from heat stress. If shade or other methods are used to prevent heat stress, adequate space in the shade must be available to allow all animals access simultaneously (especially right after shearing).

Having salt, preferably in the form of a sheep mineral mix, near to the water helps to ensure water intake to replace water lost to perspiration. Sheep can sweat considerably.

E 13: Protecting shorn sheep

- a. Sheep must not be shorn unless measures are taken to ensure that they are protected from extremes of temperature.
- b. In severe winter climates, ewes must not be kept outside or turned out for long periods of time within 2 months of shearing. Even after this time, ewes must be kept indoors until climatic conditions are suitable and adequate shelter must be accessible to all sheep.
- c. If an effective natural windbreak is not available, other methods of shelter such as straw bales must be provided that will give sufficient protection to all sheep.
- d. Even when sheep are housed, environment is particularly important after shearing and must be controlled to ensure that drafts and cold stress are avoided.

C. Lying area/floors

E 14: Indoor lying area

- a. Sheep kept indoors must be kept on, or have access at all times to, a lying area (see E18) that is:
 1. Of solid construction (i.e., not perforated or slatted);
 2. Bedded to provide a comfortable, clean, dry area sufficient to avoid discomfort; and
 3. Sloped as necessary to provide drainage.
- b. It must be of sufficient size to accommodate all sheep lying together in normal resting posture.

E 15: Outdoor lying area

To limit build up of mud or dung on the fleece when sheep are kept outdoors, there must be an area, to which the sheep have ready access, which is:

1. Dry and/or bedded with grass or straw; and
2. Of sufficient size for all sheep to lie down.

D. Space allowances

E 16: Total floor space

Sheep must always be provided with a total floor space not less than 1.5 times their minimum lying area.

E 17: Pen size

- Pen shape and space allowance must be such that there is sufficient freedom of movement to permit exercise.
- Space allowances and group size must be determined according to the age, size, and class of stock.

E 18: Minimum bedded space

Minimum lying space allowances are as follows:

Type of Animal	Weight of Animal		Space Allowances For Straw Bedded Animals	
	kg.	lbs.	m ²	ft ²
Dry Ewe	45-60	100-135	1.1-1.2	12 – 13
	60-90	135-200	1.2-1.4	13 – 16
Ewe with lamb(s)	45-60	100-135	1.3-1.7	14 – 18
	60-90	135-200	1.4-1.8	16 – 20
Creep Fed Lamb		2 Weeks of age	0.15	1.6
		4 Weeks of age	0.4	4.5
Feeder Lamb (Hoggett)	20-30	45-65	0.7	7.5
	30-40	65-90	0.8	9.0
	40-50	90-110	1.0	11.0
Ram	65-90	135-200	1.9-2.8	20 – 30
	90-135	200-300	2.8-3.0	30 – 32

In the case of shorn sheep, these space allowances may be adjusted down by 15%.

E 19: Confinement and individual housing

Sheep must not be closely confined or individually housed (see E20) except under the following conditions and even then only for the shortest period of time necessary:

- For the duration of any examination, routine test, blood sampling or treatment/operation carried out for veterinary purposes;
- While they are being fed;

3. For the purpose of milking, marking, washing or weighing, vaccination, or dipping;
4. While in fostering or lambing pens;
5. While an accommodation is being cleaned; or
6. While they are awaiting loading for transportation.

E 20: Rams

Rams must be housed with other sheep or at least within sight and sound of flock mates.

Rams that fight when introduced may be put in an area small enough to prevent head-to-head combat, but only for a period necessary to allow familiarization and reduction of aggression.

E. Lighting

E 21: Sufficient light in buildings

When sheep are housed indoors, adequate lighting, whether fixed or portable, must be available to enable them to be thoroughly inspected at any time.

E 22: Light intensity and period

Housed sheep must have access for the normal period of daylight hours to an area lit to a level comparable to natural light.

F. Environmental hazards

E 23: Protection from hazards and predators

All sheep, especially young lambs, must be protected from environmental hazards and/or predators.

*Fences should be designed and maintained to prevent predator entry.
Barbed wire, when used, should be installed above the mesh type fence and at ground level to discourage predators from digging under.*

E 24: Moving sheep to safe areas

- a. To minimize the risk of sheep being trapped in snow or unable to gain shelter, great care must be taken when using shelters, shelterbelts, and fences. As far as practical, sheep must be prevented from gathering in places where they may be buried by snow and must be shepherded into safer areas whenever heavy snowfalls are forecast.
- b. Similarly, sheep must be removed from areas prone to frequent flooding, when heavy rains or flooding are forecast.

G. Fencing

E 25: Design and maintenance of fences

- a. All fencing must be adequately inspected and maintained.
- b. Electric fences must be designed, installed, used, and maintained so that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the sheep.
- c. Electric mesh fencing must not be used for horned sheep.

E 26: Fence inspection

- a. When any type of mesh fencing is used, in particular for horned sheep and around lambing fields, it must be inspected frequently.
- b. Fence inspection must be carried out daily in the case of lambing fields.

PART 4: MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES: *A high degree of caring and responsible management is vital to ensure good animal welfare. Managers and caretakers must be thoroughly trained, skilled, and competent in animal husbandry and welfare, and have a good working knowledge of their system and the livestock under their care.*

A. Managers

M 1: Understanding the standards

Managers must ensure that:

1. They have a copy of the Humane Farm Animal Care *Animal Care Standards for Sheep*;
2. They and the caretakers are familiar with the standards, and
3. They and the caretakers understand their content.

M 2: Management and record keeping activities

Managers must:

1. Develop and implement a suitable training program for stockpersons, with regular updates and opportunities for continuing professional development;
2. Be able to demonstrate that staff with responsibility for stock care have the relevant and necessary skills to perform their duties. When deficiencies are noted, managers must provide training to ensure that all stockpersons have the skills required to perform their assigned tasks;
3. Develop and implement plans and precautions to cope with emergencies such as fire, flood, or interruption of supplies:
 - a) Provide an Emergency Action Plan, sited adjacent to a telephone point, highlighting procedures to be followed by those discovering an emergency such as fire, flood or power failure;
 - b) Post emergency contact numbers by phones and entrances to buildings;
4. Ensure the Animal Health Plan (see H1) is:
 - a) Implemented;
 - b) Regularly updated; and
 - c) That the required data are recorded appropriately;
5. Maintain and make available to the *Humane Farm Animal Care* Inspector records of production data and use of medications. These records must include documentation on all incoming and outgoing stock on the farm as well as types and quantities of medication;
6. Develop and implement a transport plan that minimizes waiting time for the sheep.
7. Develop a plan for emergency euthanasia of any casualty animals.
8. Comply with all local, state, and federal regulations.

M 3: Artificial Insemination

Artificial insemination must only be performed by a veterinarian or a skilled and trained individual.

M 4: Range management systems

Range management systems must make best use of local knowledge, traditions, and practices to ensure the highest possible welfare standards.

M 5: Mitigating problems

Managers must understand the times and circumstances in which sheep are prone to welfare problems in their own unit and must be able to demonstrate their competence in recognizing and dealing with these problems.

M 6: Awareness of welfare implications

- a. Managers must be aware of the welfare implications of, and also be able to demonstrate their proficiency in, procedures that have the potential to cause suffering so as to minimize that suffering. Examples are:
 1. Lambing;
 2. Injection;
 3. Oral dosing;
 4. Shearing;
 5. Tail docking;
 6. Castration; and
 7. Euthanasia.
- b. They must know when to give colostrum and how to avoid the problems of mismothering.

M 7: Training

Prior to being given responsibility for the welfare of livestock, managers must be properly trained and be able to:

1. Recognize signs of normal behavior, abnormal behavior, pain and fear;
2. Recognize signs of common diseases, understand their prevention and control, and know when to seek veterinary help;
3. Have a basic knowledge of what constitutes proper nutrition in sheep;
4. Have knowledge of body condition scoring;
5. Understand functional anatomy of the normal foot, its care and treatment; and
6. Have knowledge of lambing, and of the care of the newborn lamb.

M 8: Compassionate handling

- a. Managers must be able to demonstrate competence in handling animals in a positive and compassionate manner.
- b. Managers must be able to demonstrate their proficiency in procedures that have the potential to cause discomfort (e.g. injections, foot trimming, dehorning, castration, and marking).

M 9: Complaints to Operators

- a. To be certified, an operation must maintain systems for receiving, responding to, and documenting complaints alleging the operation's failure to comply with the HFAC standards.

- b. Whenever an operator receives a complaint, the operator must:
 - 1. Take appropriate action to respond to the complaint; and
 - 2. Correct any deficiency in products or services that affect their compliance with the requirements for certification.
- c. Written records must be retained by the operation for a minimum of 3 years from the date of the records' creation. Records must contain information documenting:
 - 1. All complaints received (written or verbal), and
 - 2. Actions taken by the operator to respond to the complaint.
- d. These records must be made available to *Humane Farm Animal Care* upon request. *Humane Farm Animal Care* will review these records at least annually, during the operation's annual inspection.
- e. Operators must notify *Humane Farm Animal Care* if an adverse ruling (such as suspension or revocation of certification, fine, or sanction) related to the operation's humane management practices is levied against the operation by another certifier or by a governmental program that regulates the operation.

B. Handling

M 10: Handling facilities

- a. All producers must have suitable facilities for routine handling and management of the flock.
- b. Handling systems must be designed, constructed, and maintained to minimize the stress and likelihood of injury suffered by the sheep during handling.
- c. Such systems must be appropriate for the number of sheep kept, and the nature of the procedures carried out.

M 11: Quiet handling

- a. Sheep must be handled quietly and firmly at all times, and care must be taken to avoid unnecessary pain or distress.
- b. Sheep must not be caught by their fleece alone; they must be handled or restrained by means of a hand or an arm under the neck (holding the neck wool, if necessary) with the other arm placed on or around the rear. Lifting or dragging sheep by the fleece, limbs, ears, or tail is not permitted. Horns can break if sheep are roughly handled by their horns.
- c. Use of electric prods is not allowed under any circumstances.

M 12: Handling pregnant ewes

Pregnant ewes within one month of lambing must only be handled when absolutely necessary, and must be handled with care to avoid distress and injury, which may result in premature lambing. If animals require daily handling for the purposes of supplementary feeding, then they must be socialized to such handling to minimize possible distress.

C. Shearing

M 13: Shearing

- a. Every adult sheep, except hair breeds, must have its fleece removed at least once every year.
- b. Personnel must be properly trained, either by
 1. Attending a professional shearing school; or
 2. Completing an apprentice period with a professional shearing operation; and
 3. Documentation of training must be made available to Humane Farm Animal Care.
- c. When shearing, care must be taken not to nick or cut the skin:
 1. Particular care must be taken not to cut the teats/udders of female sheep and not to injure the penis/sheath and/or scrotum of rams.
 2. If a wound occurs, effective treatment must be administered promptly (by a veterinarian if necessary).
- d. Shearing equipment must be:
 1. Properly sharpened;
 2. In accordance with UL electrical codes; and
 3. Properly grounded to prevent shocking sheep.
- e. Shearers must disinfect shearing equipment between flocks to minimize the risk of spreading diseases such as caseous lymphadenitis and orf (sore mouth).
- f. Withdrawal of feed is permitted for up to 12 hours prior to shearing, but sheep must be given access to feed immediately following shearing.

D. Identification

M 14: Identification

- a. Identification, in the form of tattoo, ear tag, ear notching, or microchipping, must be done as quickly and humanely as possible by experienced stockpersons.
- b. Equipment must be sanitized to avoid spreading infection.
- c. If necessary, the animals must be treated to prevent pest infestation at the site of identification.

E. Equipment

M 15: Using equipment

When equipment is installed that affects animal welfare, managers must be able to:

1. Demonstrate their ability to operate the equipment;
2. Demonstrate their ability to carry out routine maintenance;
3. Recognize common signs of malfunction; and
4. Demonstrate knowledge of actions to be carried out in event of a failure.

M 16: Automatic equipment

- a. All automatic equipment must be thoroughly inspected daily by a stockperson or other competent person to ensure proper function.
- b. When a defect is found in automatic equipment:
 1. The defect must be rectified promptly, or
 2. If this is impracticable, measures must promptly be taken (and must be maintained until the defect is rectified) as required to safeguard livestock from suffering unnecessary pain or distress as a result of the defect.

M 17: Automatic ventilation equipment

When automatic equipment includes a ventilation system, the system must contain:

1. An alarm that:
 - a) Will provide adequate warning of the failure of that system to function properly and
 - b) Will operate even if the principal electricity supply to it has failed.
2. Additional equipment or means of ventilation (whether automatic or not) that, in the event of a failure of the normal ventilation system, will provide adequate ventilation so as to prevent livestock from suffering unnecessary distress as a result of the failure.

M 18: Harness devices

Marking harnesses must be made of suitable material and must be:

1. Properly fitted and adjusted to avoid causing injury or discomfort; and
2. Be closely checked daily.

F. Inspection

M 19: Monitoring

- a. When sheep must be housed in confined areas, stockpersons must inspect their livestock and the equipment on which stock depend daily and record abnormal observations and actions taken;
- b. An exception to this requirement may be made for shepherds on extensive pasture. In this case, shepherds must inspect the flock at least 2 to 3 times a week, particularly:
 1. In summer, when fly strike risk is high;
 2. In winter, under adverse weather conditions; and
 3. When sheep have access to a potentially hazardous environment (e.g. where sheep may become trapped, or entangled).

G. Sheep dogs

M 20: Managing stock dogs

- a. Working dogs, herding dogs and guard dogs must be properly trained and all dogs must be under control at all times.

- b. With the exception of guard dogs, no dog must ever be allowed access to the sheep without an experienced shepherd in attendance.

PART 5: HEALTH

OBJECTIVES: The environment in which livestock are housed must be conducive to good health. All producers must develop a health plan in consultation with their veterinarian.

A. Health Care Practices

H 1: Animal Health Plan

- a. An Animal Health Plan (AHP) must be drawn up and regularly updated in consultation with a veterinarian.
- b. The AHP must include:
 - 1. Details of any vaccinations;
 - 2. Information on treatments and other aspects of flock health;
 - 3. Causes of morbidity and mortality, when known;
 - 4. Tolerance limits on overall flock performance; and
 - 5. Biosecurity provisions and disease prevention program.

H 2: Mitigating health problems

All sudden deaths, disease outbreaks and euthanasia performed because sheep are unfit, must be

- 1. Recorded;
- 2. Investigated as appropriate; and
- 3. The outcome of the investigation and resulting actions recorded.

H 3: Monitoring flock performance data

- a. Flock performance data must be regularly monitored for signs of disease or production disorders.
- b. If flock performance parameters fall outside tolerance limits identified in the AHP (e.g., parasite infestations), the veterinarian must be informed and the problem must be resolved.
- c. The AHP must be revised to prevent recurrence of the problem.

H 4: Care of sick and injured animals

- a. Provisions must be made for segregation and care of sick and injured animals when needed to prevent further injury or prevent spread of a contagious condition. Any sheep suffering from a contagious illness or susceptible to further injury must be:
 - 1. Segregated;
 - 2. Treated without delay; and
 - 3. Able to benefit from veterinary advice when needed; or,

4. If necessary, humanely euthanized.
- b. Urine and dung from hospital pens housing sick and injured animals must be disposed of in a manner that prevents spreading infection to other stock.
- c. Pens must be constructed to facilitate effective cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, and the possible removal of a carcass from the area.

H 5: Managing replacement animals

Replacement animals brought in from other sources must be quarantined and/or appropriately vaccinated and treated (e.g., ecto/endoparasite control) in accordance with the AHP before integration into the flock.

H 6: Controlling parasites

- a. Measures must be taken to prevent or control external and internal parasitic infestations.
- b. When infestations such as fly strike are likely, sheep must be given routine treatment such as regular dipping or other effective methods.
- c. When dipping, operators must:
 1. Minimize stress to the sheep; and
 2. Safeguard human health and safety.

H 7: Foot care

Close attention must be given to the condition of the hooves, which must be inspected at least annually for signs of abnormal wear, infection and excessive growth.

- a. When there is excessive growth or abnormal wear, hooves must be trimmed appropriately.
- b. Sheep must be checked for foot rot prior to housing indoors.
- c. Non-irritant solutions must be used for foot bathing.
- d. When foot rot is detected, affected animals must be:
 1. Treated promptly; and
 2. Isolated.
- e. When conventional methods prove ineffective for control of foot rot, a veterinarian must be consulted regarding immunization of the flock against the infection.

Preventive measures may include careful trimming and the regular use of a footbath. When footbaths are used, sheep should not be thirsty so that they try to drink the footbath.

B. Pregnancy/lambs

H 8: Monitoring pregnant ewes

Body condition must be monitored throughout pregnancy and diet adjusted accordingly. Every effort must be made to maintain appropriate body condition scores (see FW 5).

H 9: Assistance during lambing

When a stockperson experiences difficulty in delivering a live lamb, skilled assistance must be sought promptly.

H 10: Removing dead lambs

Fetotomy (the removal of dead lambs from the uterus of the ewe using obstetrical equipment) must be carried out only by a veterinarian.

H 11: Training for treating lambs

Employees working with newborn lambs must be trained in:

1. The use of stomach tubes for feeding weak lambs and
2. Treatment techniques for hypothermia in lambs
3. Perinatal care, including navel dipping.

H 12: Feeding lambs

- a. All lambs must receive colostrum in the first 8 hours after birth.
- b. To ensure that lambs remain in good condition without dehydration, orphan lambs must be fed a suitable milk substitute (e.g., milk replacer or goat milk):
 1. A minimum of 3 times daily in the first four weeks; and
 2. At least 2 times daily after week four until weaning.
- c. When automatic feeding equipment is provided, lambs must be trained in its use to ensure adequate intake of feed.
- d. From the end of the second week of life, lambs must also have access to:
 1. Palatable and nutritious solid feed (which may be grass); and
 2. Fresh, clean water.

H 13: Artificial rearing

Close attention to individual lamb health and feed consumption and high standards of stockmanship must be applied when artificial rearing is practiced.

H 14: Physical alterations

- a. The only physical alterations that are allowed under the Animal Care Standards, are as follows (except those done for therapeutic reasons by a veterinarian):

1. Castration

Castration can be avoided by marketing ram lambs prior to their sexual maturity. When procedure is carried out, the use of a local anesthetic and analgesics for pain management is recommended.

- a) When necessary, castration may be performed on lambs that are between 24 hours and 7 days old. Castration should ideally be carried out surgically by, or under the supervision of, a veterinarian. Rubber rings are acceptable when castration is performed by trained on-farm personnel, as this is a simpler

- method, with less potential for complications and infection. In tetanus prone areas, tetanus antitoxin should be administered when castration is performed.
- b) In the event of a failure, or unintentional omission of the rubber ring, the use of a bloodless castrator, a burdizzo, or surgical castration on lambs between the ages of 1 week to 4 weeks is allowed.
2. Tail docking
- a) Tail docking must not be carried out unless there is an unavoidable and high risk of suffering due to fly strike.
 - b) When necessary, tail docking must be performed on lambs that are between 24 hours and 14 days old. The procedure must be performed using either a rubber ring or a hot docking iron (thermocautery).
 - c) Ultra short tail docking (shorter than distal end of the caudal tail fold) is not permitted. The docked tail must cover the anus, and in females the vulva.
- b. Both castration and tail docking must be:
 - 1. Carried out by a suitably trained, competent person; and
 - 2. Done in ways that minimize suffering to the animals.
 - c. There must be no cosmetic surgery carried out on sheep for show purposes.

H 15: Housed lambs

For at least the first 3 weeks of life, housed lambs must be kept in groups small enough to facilitate inspection and limit spread of disease. This is particularly important for twin and triplet lambs.

C. Casualty Animals

H 16: Euthanasia

- a. Each farm must have provisions for humane slaughter of casualty sheep without delay, by either an on-farm method carried out by a named, trained, competent member of the staff, a trained slaughterer, or a veterinarian.
- b. Euthanasia must be performed in accordance with the American Veterinary Medical Association's *2000 Report of the Panel on Euthanasia*, which requires use of a captive bolt, gunshot, or acceptable method decided by attending veterinarian for euthanasia of sheep.
- c. Each farm shall have a written emergency euthanasia plan for each production group of stock.
- d. If there is any doubt as to how to proceed, a veterinarian must be called at an early stage to advise whether treatment is possible or whether humane slaughter/euthanasia is required to prevent suffering.
- e. If an animal is in severe pain that is uncontrollable, then the animal must be promptly and humanely slaughtered.

It is permissible to slaughter an animal to prevent further suffering if a method of humane slaughter is available on the premises and there is someone competent to undertake the procedure.

H 17: Carcass disposal

Disposal of the carcass must meet local requirements and regulations.

PART 6: TRANSPORTATION

OBJECTIVES: *Animal transport systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not subjected to unnecessary distress or discomfort. Transport and handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in transport must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.*

A. Handling/loading/unloading

T 1: Competent personnel

Personnel in charge of sheep transporters must demonstrate competence in handling sheep when loading, unloading and while in transit.

T 2: Reducing stress

- a. Animal handlers must be trained and must understand the stress factors to which sheep may be exposed (e.g., how sheep react toward other sheep, towards humans, to strange noises, sights, sounds, and smells).
- b. Transport of animals must not exceed eight hours.

Note: A derogation can be considered if a slaughter plant (inspected and approved for use under our standards) is not available within eight hours traveling distance from the farm.

Sheep have the following behavioral characteristics, which must be taken into consideration when they are being moved:

- 1. They have a wide field of vision and can see moving objects even at long distances, so whenever possible their far vision should be restricted.*
- 2. They have acute hearing, so they must not be subjected to loud noise.*
- 3. They are gregarious animals and should be in the company of compatible animals while in transit.*

T 3: Handling systems

All handling systems must be designed and operated so they do not impede movement of sheep and to reduce the amount and intensity of noise.

T 4: Handling aids

- a. Sticks and flags may be used as benign handling aids, i.e., as extensions of the arms.
- b. Sticks must not be used for hitting sheep.

- c. Well-trained dogs may be used.
- d. Use of electric prods is strictly prohibited.

T 5: Driving sheep

- a. Sheep must not be driven unless the exit or the way forward is clear.
- b. Sheep must not be rushed or run along alleyways, passageways or through gateways

T 6: Loading ramps

- a. Loading facilities must provide a ramp of no more than a 20% incline.
- b. Both loading ramps and tailboards must be fitted with equipment to prevent the sheep from falling off.
- c. Ramps must be designed to minimize slippage during loading.

T 7: Alleyways and gates

Alleyways and gates must be designed and operated so that they do not impede the movement of sheep.

T 8: Transporting in crates

- a. When transporting sheep and lambs in crates, there must be sufficient space for all animals to stand, turn around and lie down comfortably. Hog-tying, where legs are bound together, sometimes to the head or horns is not an acceptable method of transporting or restraining sheep and is prohibited.
- b. Transportation by ship is prohibited.

PART 7: SLAUGHTER

OBJECTIVES: All slaughter systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress or discomfort.

A: Slaughter procedures

S 1: Minimizing pre-slaughter handling

The pre-slaughter handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum.

S 2: Trained personnel

Personnel involved in slaughter must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.

S 3: Slaughter guidelines

All slaughter systems must be designed and managed to ensure minimum distress and discomfort to the sheep. Slaughter facilities must follow the North American Meat Institute (NAMI) guidelines while processing HFAC livestock. In addition, slaughter protocols must include stunning and ensured insensibility prior to the exsanguination process.

SUPPLEMENTARY STANDARDS FOR DAIRY SHEEP

The following standards for the care of dairy sheep are additional requirements to the Humane Farm Animal Care Animal Care Standards for Sheep, which must also be complied with.

PART 1: FEED AND WATER

A. Feed

It is recognized that dairy sheep during lactation will not be able to attain sufficient nutrients and energy from grazing alone, and will require supplementary concentrates.

FW (D) 1: Weaning

Dairy lambs must not be weaned before they are 3 weeks of age, unless in individual cases, health and welfare considerations dictate otherwise. Lambs must not be weaned until they are capable of consuming sufficient quantities of solid feed to fulfill their nutritional requirements.

B. Water

FW (D) 2: Water supply

Drinking facilities must be sufficient, and appropriately positioned (e.g. away from the entrance/exit to the dairy), to ensure that all sheep waiting in the holding pens, both prior to and following milking, have ready access to sufficient quantities of clean, fresh water.

It is particularly important that lactating dairy ewes are provided with sufficient quantities of water. It is recognized that there will be variations in the numbers of sheep waiting at any one time and in the waiting period on different farms. It is necessary, therefore, to take account of these criteria when calculating the provision of water facilities needed to satisfy the standard.

PART 2: ENVIRONMENT

C. Thermal Comfort, Environment and Ventilation

E (D) 1: Shade

Dairy sheep at pasture must have access to shade and shelter, either natural or artificial at all times, to protect them from adverse weather conditions.

D. Space Allowances

When housed indoors, additional space may be required by dairy ewes when lactating, particularly in the case of higher yielding breeds with larger udders. As a guide, for such animals, the space allowances in E18 of the HFAC Animal Care Standards for Sheep should be increased by approximately 20%.

E. Milking Parlor

E (D) 2: Milking parlor hygiene

The highest standards of hygiene must be practiced in the parlor to reduce risk of infection:

- 1 Ewes must be clean and dry at milking, paying particular attention to udders and teats.
- 2 Udder, teats and flanks must be clean, dry and free from sores on entry to the parlor.
- 3 Parlor staff must have clean hands when handling teats and udders; consideration should be given to the use of clean rubber gloves.
- 4 Single-use udder cloths or paper towels must be used to clean/dry udders.
- 5 All cases of mastitis must be treated promptly, and underlying predisposing factors corrected.
- 6 Any sheep with mastitis or other udder diseases must be marked and milked last, and the milk discarded. Alternatively, they may be milked with a separate cluster and bucket.
- 7 Sheep with chronic mastitis must be identified and humanely slaughtered.
- 8 Milking machinery must be properly maintained (see E(D) 3: Milking Machines).
- 9 Measures must be in place to minimize the risk/incidence of mastitis in dry sheep.
- 10 Flock somatic cell counts, individual clinical cases of mastitis and mastitis tube usage, must be monitored and recorded.
- 11 Routine 'fore-milk' examination must be made to identify early cases of mastitis.
- 12 All teats must be treated with an approved teat disinfectant; consideration should be given to the use of an emollient when teats are dry, chapped and cracked.

E (D) 3: Milking Machines

- a. Milking machine testing must be carried out and recorded at least once annually.
- b. Proper application, function and maintenance of the milking machinery must be ensured, by practicing the following:
 1. Avoid under and over milking.
 2. Select appropriate teat cup liners.
 3. Check teat cup liners daily and replace damaged/rough teat liners.
 4. Exchange liners according to manufacturer's recommendations.
 5. Ensure correct pulsation rate and a correct release/squeeze ratio.
 6. The vacuum regulation must be functioning correctly and preventing vacuum fluctuation.

E (D) 4: Waiting times

Ewes must not wait/stand for longer than a total of 2 hours in holding pens prior to or after milking.

F. Dairy

E (D) 5: Dairy requirements

The dairy must meet the State and Federal Pasteurized Milk Ordinance requirements.

PART 3: HEALTH

G. Surplus Lambs

H (D) 1: Euthanasia of surplus lambs

Every effort must be made to avoid the need to dispose of animals and euthanasia should happen only as a last resort. Lambs that are not required for rearing, not being incorporated into the milking herd or marketed after weaning, must be euthanized using a humane method by a named, trained competent member of farm staff, a trained slaughterer, or a veterinarian.

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Change Table

Date	Standard	Original	Addition	Notes
	A. Feed			
	FW 1 – FW 17	Stays in place – no change		
November 2025	FW 1 GF – FW 17 GF		Optional Grass-fed feeding protocols added for those producers wanting to make that claim	



Humane Farm Animal Care
Animal Care Standards
November 2025

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