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## RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING CATTLE

adopted by the Standing Committee on 21 October 1988

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### **PREAMBLE**

The Standing Committee of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes,

Having regard to its responsibility under Article 9 of the convention for the elaboration and adoption of recommendations to the Parties containing detailed provisions for the implementation of the principles set out in Chapter I of the

convention based on scientific knowledge concerning the various species of animals;

Aware also of the established experience in the implementation of the principles of animal welfare set out in Articles 3 to 7 of the convention;

Considering that in the light of established experience and scientific knowledge about the essential physiological and ethological needs of cattle, continuous efforts have to be made to adapt both existing and future husbandry systems in order to satisfy these needs;

Aware that the basic requirements for the health and welfare of livestock consist of good stockmanship, husbandry systems appropriate to the physiological and behavioural needs of the animals, and suitable environmental factors, so that the conditions under which cattle are kept fulfill the need for appropriate nutrition and methods of feeding, freedom of movement, physical comfort, the need to perform normal behaviour in connection with getting up, lying down, resting and sleeping postures, grooming, eating, ruminating, drinking, defecating and urinating, adequate social contact and the need for protection against adverse climatic conditions, injury, infestation and disease or behavioural disorder, as well as other essential needs as may be identified by established experience or scientific knowledge;

Concerned with the possibility that the results of certain developments in biotechnology may add to welfare problems of cattle, and aware of the need to ensure that such developments do not diminish their health and welfare;

Bearing also in mind that it is an obligation of the committee to reconsider any recommendation when appropriate new knowledge is available and therefore wishing to encourage the continuation of research by all Parties with the object of making optimum use of new techniques to meet the health and welfare needs of cattle,

Has adopted the following recommendation concerning cattle:

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Article 1**

1. This recommendation shall apply to all cattle kept for farming purposes.
2. For the purpose of this recommendation, an animal under 6 months old is considered to be a calf.
3. Specific provisions contained in the appendices to this recommendation constitute an integral part thereof.

## **STOCKMANSHIP AND INSPECTION OF CATTLE**

### **Article 2**

The animals shall be cared for by a sufficient number of personnel with adequate theoretical and practical knowledge of cattle and of the husbandry system used to recognise whether the animals appear to be in good health or not, including

behavioural changes and whether the total environment is adequate to keep them healthy.

### **Article 3**

1. All animals shall be thoroughly inspected at least once a day and for this purpose a source of light shall be available when necessary. Tied animals should be closely inspected at least twice daily. Such inspections shall be made independently of any automatic surveillance equipment.

Where technological devices are used for recording information such as food intake, milk quality or body temperature, they should be used for monitoring health status and the information be checked twice daily.

2. For thorough inspection of the animals, special attention shall be paid to bodily condition, movements and posture, rumination, condition of hair, skin, eyes, ears, tail, legs and feet. Healthy animals have sounds, activity, movements and posture appropriate to their age, sex, breed or physiological condition. These include: clear bright eyes, good posture, clean and shiny coat, sound feet and legs, normal feeding, ruminating, drinking, sucking or suckling behaviour, normal getting up, lying down, and resting behaviour and otherwise normal movements and behaviour.

3. Thorough inspection of a herd does not mean that each animal has to be examined individually. Individual examination is to be made only of those animals for which the overall inspection indicates this as being necessary.

### **Article 4**

1. At the inspection it must be borne in mind that signs of ill health include listlessness, loss of appetite, sudden fall in milk yield, cessation of rumination, discharge from the nostrils or eyes, excessive salivation, persistent coughing, swollen joints, lameness and scouring. Attention shall also be paid to the presence of external parasites, to the condition of droppings and to feed and water consumption.

2. If animals are apparently not in good health, or if they are showing obvious signs of adverse behavioural changes, the person responsible for them shall take steps without delay to establish the cause and shall take appropriate remedial action. If the immediate action taken by the person responsible is not effective either a veterinarian must be consulted or, if necessary, other expert advice must be sought.

If the cause is traced to a factor which it is not essential or possible to remedy immediately, this should be corrected when the accommodation is emptied or in any case within twelve months.

## **BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT**

### **Article 5**

When considering accommodation for cattle the risk of outside environmental factors, such as noise, vibration and atmospheric pollution, should be taken into account.

## **Article 6**

1. The design, construction and maintenance of buildings and equipment for cattle must be such that they maintain good conditions of hygiene and that they limit the risk of disease or traumatic injuries to the animals and respect the security conditions which are necessary for fire prevention and protection.

Passageways and doorways should be wide enough to allow free movement without risk of injury. Sharp corners and projections should be avoided.

2. The design, construction and maintenance of buildings and equipment for cattle shall be such as to allow without difficulty a thorough inspection of all animals.

3. The construction of accommodation for cattle referred to in the appendices, whether tethered or in pens, should at all times allow them sufficient freedom of movement to be able to groom themselves without difficulty and sufficient room to lie down, to rest, to adopt sleeping postures and freely to stretch their limbs and to rise.

Where tethers or ties are used, they shall not cause injury or distress, especially when the cattle are lying down, getting up, drinking and feeding.

The animals referred to in the appendices should be able to see and touch other cattle. Whenever possible they should also be able to show social investigation and behaviour associated with the maintenance of social structure.

4. Floors shall be non slippery, well drained in order to evacuate droppings and spills of water and such as to avoid discomfort, distress or traumatic injury to the animals. Where slatted, or other perforated floors are used they shall be suitable for the size and weight of the animals housed and form a rigid, even and stable surface.

5. A cattle crush, race or other adequate facilities with quick-release devices should be provided for the proper handling of animals under examination, treatment or test.

6. Suitable accommodation should be available for separation and, where necessary for isolation so that sick or injured animals can be treated.

7. For a breeding herd, calving boxes should be available.

8. Automatic computerised feeding systems should be designed so as to provide at least as much information to the stockman as would be available under manual feeding systems, and in particular whether or not an individual animal has consumed all its feed.

## **Article 7**

Parties should consider the possibilities of making arrangements for:

a. improved or new methods of cattle husbandry or equipment to be tested and possibly approved from the point of view of animal health and welfare before their introduction into commercial use;

b. advice on health and welfare aspects to be sought when new buildings are to be constructed or existing buildings modified.

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **Article 8**

The space allowance for cattle housed in groups should be calculated in relation to the whole environment, the age, sex, live weight and behavioural needs of the stock, taking account of the presence or absence of horns and the size of the group. Lack of space or overstocking leading to trampling, behavioural or other disorders shall be avoided.

### **Article 9**

1. Animals should be maintained in a clean condition.
2. Those parts of the accommodation with which the animals come into contact should be thoroughly cleansed, and where appropriate, disinfected, everytime the accommodation has been emptied and before new animals are brought in. While the accommodation is occupied by the animals, the interior surfaces and all equipment therein shall be kept satisfactorily clean.

### **Article 10**

All animals shall have appropriate access to adequate, nutritious, hygienic and balanced feed or wholesome liquid each day, and to adequate supplies of water of suitable quality, so as to maintain their full health and vigour and to meet their behavioural and physiological needs. Sufficient roughage should be provided daily in accordance with the age and the physiological needs of the animal.

### **Article 11**

1. The accommodation for cattle should be kept so that the ambient temperature, the air velocity, the relative humidity, the levels of toxic gases and dust as well as other atmospheric conditions do not affect adversely the health and welfare of the animals.
2. The facilities for storing and handling manure in or outside the accommodation shall be designed, maintained and managed to prevent the exposure of the animals to gases in concentrations detrimental to their health.
3. In closed premises where the health of the animals depends on an artificial ventilation system, a supply of fresh air shall also be guaranteed in case of failures in the system.

### **Article 12**

The animals shall not unnecessarily be exposed to constant or sudden noise. Ventilation fans, feeding machinery or other equipment shall be constructed, placed, operated and maintained in such a way that it causes the least possible noise, both directly inside the accommodation and indirectly through the structure of the accommodation itself.

### **Article 13**

The animals must not be kept permanently in strong light nor in total darkness. Artificial light sources must be mounted so as not to cause discomfort to the animals and the level of lighting whether natural or artificial must be sufficient to permit normal behaviour.

#### **Article 14**

The electrical circuits and equipment shall be maintained so as to avoid the animals being exposed to stray voltages.

#### **Article 15**

All automatic or other mechanical equipment upon which the animals depend for their health and welfare must be inspected at least once daily. Provisions shall be made enabling any failure of the ventilation system which could endanger the health or welfare of the animals to be discovered and rectified immediately. If immediate rectification appears impossible, appropriate steps shall be taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the animals until the defect is rectified.

#### **Article 16**

1. Where cattle are kept outdoors in areas without natural shelter or shade some form of protection from the weather should be provided.
2. Pastures should be selected and managed in such a way so as to ensure grazing animals are not subjected to physical, chemical or other health hazards which can be reasonably avoided by the stockkeeper.

### **CHANGES OF PHENOTYPE AND/OR GENOTYPE**

#### **Article 17**

1. Procedures resulting in the loss of a significant amount of tissue, or the modification of bone structure of cattle shall be forbidden, and in particular:
  - a.* tongue modification or mutilation;
  - b.* dehorning by other means than the surgical removal of the horns;
  - c.* docking of tails;
2. Exceptions to the prohibitions under paragraph 1 may be made:
  - a.* for procedures performed for veterinary medical purposes;
  - b.* for the following procedures which can be performed only in the interest of the animals or when necessary for the protection of people in close contact with the animals, and on the conditions set out in paragraphs 3 and/or 4 hereafter;
    - i.* destruction or removal of the horn producing area at an early stage (disbudding) to avoid dehorning;
    - ii.* dehorning, if performed by surgical removal of the horns;
    - iii.* nose ringing bulls and cows.

c. for the following procedures which should be avoided where possible, but may be carried out in accordance with paragraphs 3 or 4 hereafter and on the following conditions:

- i. castration of bulls and bull-calves, preferably by the surgical removal of the testicles but not by methods which cause unnecessary or prolonged pain and distress;
- ii. spaying of fattening cows, if allowed by domestic legislation;
- iii. notching or punching of animals' ears if required or allowed by domestic legislation.

3. Procedures in which the animal will or is likely to experience considerable pain shall be carried out under local or general anaesthesia by a veterinary surgeon or any other person qualified in accordance with domestic legislation. These procedures include spaying, dehorning and disbudding by surgical means or by heat cauterisation on animals over four weeks of age and should include castration and vasectomy.

4. Procedures for which no anaesthesia is required shall be performed on animals in a way so as to avoid unnecessary or prolonged pain or distress. Such procedures may be carried out by a skilled operator, and include, on the conditions set out in paragraph 2 above:

a. destruction or removal of the horn producing area of animals under four weeks of age:

- i. by chemical cauterisation;
- ii. by heat cauterisation on the condition that it is done with an instrument which produces sufficient heat for at least ten seconds;

b. nose ringing bulls and cows;

c. notching or punching of animals' ears.

### **Article 18**

1. The marking of cattle for identification should be done with care by competent operators so as to avoid unnecessary pain or distress to the animals at the time of marking or subsequently.

In particular toxic materials should be prohibited and caustic paste or hot irons shall only be used when an absolutely permanent identification for special purposes (for example animal disease control) cannot be achieved by other methods.

2. Neck bands or chains, tail or leg bands should be kept clean and adjusted as required.

### **Article 19**

Breeding or breeding programmes which cause or are likely to cause suffering or damage to either parents or offspring should not be practised.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS**

### **Article 20**

This recommendation shall have no direct application within Parties and shall be implemented according to the method that each Party considers adequate, that is through legislation or through administrative practice.

### **Article 21**

This recommendation shall be completed with an appendix on special provisions for calves.

## **APPENDIX A: SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR BULLS KEPT FOR BREEDING OR FATTENING**

### **Breeding bulls**

1. Pens or standings for bulls should be sited so as to allow the bull sight and sound of farm activity.
2. As a guideline, individual accommodation for an adult bull of average size kept in a pen should include a sleeping area of not less than 16 square metres. For bulls heavier than 1000 kg, the sleeping area should be not less than 1 square metre for each 60 kg liveweight.
3. The service area should be designed, equipped and maintained so as to avoid injuries to bull and cow.
4. Bulls shall be allowed sufficient exercise.

### **Fattening bulls**

5. Bulls should be provided with a sufficiently rich environment to allow social interactions. Normally it is easiest to do this by loose housing. Except where the herd is very small or where disease, injury or bullying by other animals makes separation necessary, bulls should be kept in groups. The maximum group size should be twenty animals. Bulls should not be added to groups already formed nor should one group be added to another.
6. Group-housing of horned bulls or bringing horned and dehorned bulls together should be avoided.
7. As a guideline the minimum space allowed for group-housed bulls of about 600 kg should be not less than 3,0 square metres per animal. A comfortable lying area should be provided.
8. If tail tip inflammation or signs of abnormal behaviour appear, the husbandry system should be improved, for instance, by reducing the stocking density, avoiding barren environment, enriching the diet with roughage, improving the floor quality and the climatic and hygienic conditions.
9. If bulls are tethered, neck bands or chains must be adjusted as required to avoid any unnecessary pain or distress to the animals.



10. The use of electrified wire to avoid bulls mounting each other should be avoided.

11. In the design, construction or reconstruction of accommodation for fattening bulls, endeavours should be made to develop and apply husbandry systems which are likely to prevent injuries, allow for behavioural needs and, in particular, provide suitable flooring especially in the light of available scientific knowledge on the comparison between bedded and slatted lying areas.

## **APPENDIX B: SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR COWS AND HEIFERS**

1. In loose housing, the number of animals housed should not exceed the number of cubicles available nor, if roughage is not provided ad lib., the number of eating places. It is advisable that spare cubicles should be available. The design and dimensions of the passageways and of the exercising area shall be such as to avoid unnecessary social pressure.

2. The length of a standing must be such that the animal can stand and lie on solid flooring. Cubicles and standings should allow for the species-specific movements of the animal when it stands up and lies down.

3. The animals should not be kept in a totally slatted area. A lying area should be available which consists of a solid floor covered by straw or other suitable bedding in order to ensure comfort and to reduce the risk of injuries.

4. Sharp edged or pointed devices for the purpose of controlling the behaviour of the animals, other than for fencing purposes, shall not be used. Appliances delivering electric shocks other than for fencing purposes, should not be used. On the condition that they are properly inspected and, if necessary, re-adjusted to each individual animal, cow trainers may be switched on for the time necessary for training; they shall not be used during the perinatal period.

5. Animals should be given the opportunity to go outside whenever possible and in summertime preferably every day.

6. Milking techniques should be applied and milking equipment should be maintained in good condition to prevent udder injuries.

7. The permanent tying up of a cow's tail should be avoided.

8. At the daily inspection of the animals, attention shall also be paid to the udder and the genitals. During the last month of pregnancy, animals should be closely observed for signs of abnormality.

9. Separate solid floored bedded pens are recommended for use prior to and at calving time.

10. The responsible stockman should be experienced and competent in the techniques of calving and should pay particular attention to hygiene especially at assisted calvings. He should ensure that the calf can be licked by the cow immediately after the delivery.

11. Veterinary advice should be sought at an early stage of calving if difficulties are suspected.

12. The use of mechanical calving aids other than manually used chains and ropes should be avoided; they may be used in exceptional circumstances and then only if they are equipped with a quick release device and handled by a skilled operator. If manual delivery is not possible without serious risks of damage to cow or calf, veterinary advice shall be sought.

13. Caesarian operations shall be carried out by a veterinary surgeon and only in the interest of individual animals and not as a routine measure.

14. When breeding, especially from maiden heifers, sires and dams should be carefully selected, taking into account breed, size, age and previous record, so as to reduce calving difficulties.

#### **APPENDIX C: SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CALVES**

1. In order to develop a positive relationship between man and animal, there shall be appropriate careful handling and other contact from an early age of the animal.

2. Calves should not be tethered; if kept in pens, calves shall not be tethered.

Calves may need to be suitably restrained for the time necessary to examine them, to treat them or, if they are kept in groups, to feed them and, for a short period after milk feeding, to prevent them from sucking each other.

3. If calves are to be kept in individual pens, these shall be sited and constructed so as to allow the calf sight of other calves or other animals.

4. The dimensions of the individual pen or stall shall be appropriate to the size of the animal at the end of its stay in that pen or stall. The width of the pen should be not less than, and preferably more than the height of the calf at the withers; the length should be greater than the length of the calf (measured in standing position from the extended head to the base of the tail) plus 40cm.

5. Where possible, the keeping of calves in groups should be advised, subject to respect of the following provisions:

a) they must have a lying area of sufficient unobstructed floor space to be able to lie down simultaneously without hindrance, and

b) each calf must be able to turn around, rest, stand up and groom itself without difficulty and to stay clean.

6. For calves up to two weeks of age, the lying area shall, and for older calves should, be covered by a suitable, deformable bedding material which is clean, dry and of sufficient thickness.

The accommodation for calves shall be well lit, preferably by natural light, for at least 8 hours a day.

7. Housed calves shall be inspected at least twice daily and, when the inspection suggests it to be necessary, thoroughly examined.

Sick or injured calves shall, where necessary, be placed in separate sick-pens with dry, comfortable bedding.

8. The stockkeeper should ensure that the newborn calf receives sufficient colostrum from its dam or another suitable source, as soon as possible after it is born and within the first six hours of life. Where this may involve a risk of disease, which could be the case when using colostrum from another farm, it should be subjected to an appropriate treatment, for example being heated for an hour at 56°C, but in any case it shall not be overheated as this destroys antibodies.

Calves older than 2 weeks shall have access to a palatable, digestible and nutritious diet containing a sufficient quantity of iron and roughage appropriate to their age, weight and biological needs in order to maintain good health and vigour and allow for normal behaviour and normal development of the rumen. They shall have access to water in sufficient quantity and of suitable quality at all times or at least be able to satisfy their fluid requirements by drinking other fluids.

All calves shall receive liquid food at least twice daily during the first four weeks and, in any case, until they are eating adequate quantities of suitable solid food. The supply of milk from a nipple instead of a bucket is strongly recommended.

Calves shall not be muzzled.

9. If calves are being bucket fed, each calf should have access to a separate bucket. Equipment used for feeding liquids should be thoroughly cleaned immediately after each use and, if necessary, disinfected. Troughs shall be kept clean and any stale food removed. Automatic feeding equipment shall be cleaned at regular and frequent intervals. Faeces, urine and spoilt feed shall be removed and bedding changed as often as necessary.

Where a group of cows have calves at foot and if supplementary feeding of the calves is needed, a separate facility to which only the calves have access must be provided.

10. Calves up to the age of one week or those in which the navel is not completely healed may be removed from the farm of birth only in emergencies.

If calves are to be transported or marketed, precautions shall be taken to safeguard their health and welfare.

11. Calves which are introduced to the farm should be kept separate from other calves for a period sufficient to prevent cross-infection. When calves are bought and kept for fattening purposes they should be kept in separate, stable groups.

12. Electro-immobilisation shall not be used.

13. Calves kept for farming purposes shall not be used in the course of public spectacles or demonstrations if such use is likely to be detrimental to their health and welfare.

14. Since some systems at present in use are not designed, constructed or operated in such a way as to fulfil all the biological needs of calves, efforts must be made to develop and apply husbandry systems which minimise the risk of injuries and disease and allow for all their biological needs to be met, in particular by providing for appropriate feeding regimes and by avoiding barren environments, too restricted areas, and lack of social contact.