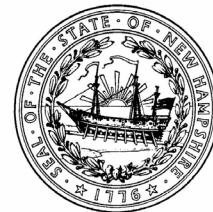


CARING FOR CATTLE



Recommendations

Sponsored by

The Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Cattle: The Basics

Terminology

Female - Cow

Young female - Heifer

Male - Bull

Castrated male - Steer

Young animal (either sex) - Calf

Cattle Care

- Fresh, clean water should be available at all times. Water consumption can be expected around 30 (± 15) gal/day for a milking cow, 12 (± 5) gal/day for a beef cow, and 8 (± 6) gal/day for a heifer. The amount of water consumed depends on ambient temperature, stage of lactation, age, body weight, type of feed.
- Cattle should have good quality forage or mixed ration available or be able to graze on adequate pasture. Supplemental grain should be provided if needed to meet the additional nutritional demands of lactation, gestation, growth, cold weather, or to compensate for poor forage or pasture quality. As a general guideline, estimate a dry matter intake of between 2 – 4% of body weight (or 2 lbs for every 100 lbs of body weight) for dry cows, and up to 4% of body weight of lactating cows depending on forage quality, lactation stage, body weight. If pastures are a primary source of feed, a year round space of 1-2 acres of a good pasture is recommended for a mature animal.
- It is preferable that hay (with the exception of big bales) and grain should not be dumped on the ground, but rather placed in a manger or hay rack, or in the case of grain, in a bucket or other container.
- All feed should be kept dry to avoid mold.

Shelter

Facilities should be well-ventilated. Some form of natural shelter, such as a wooded area, may be adequate for certain acclimated and hearty

breeds of cattle. Confined cattle should have dry bedding that needs to be cleaned regularly. This can be sand, sawdust, shredded paper, straw, hay, packed manure (if dry). In the winter, depending the type of barn provided, bedding should be of an appropriate type and volume to provide insulation from the cold floor and ground.

Overcrowding animals should be avoided. It is recommended to have a minimum of 75 sq. feet of space for a mature animal in bedded pack (open) barns.



Additional Recommendations

- Unless provided for in a mixed or complete ration, salt blocks should be available—either white salt or preferably trace mineralized salt (red blocks).
- Hoof trimming is not necessary unless hooves are excessively long.
- Cows should be vaccinated annually for rabies and other diseases, and de-wormed according to veterinary advice.
- Dairy calves have a limited ability to digest hay, grass or forages until after weaning at about 2-3 months of age. They should be provided with milk or milk replacer and calf starter grain. In addition, unlimited access to water is vital.

Possible Signs of Illness, Neglect, or Intentional Cruelty

Appearance of Animal

Dairy cows are by nature "bony" in the hip area and may normally appear thin during early stages of lactation; however signs of an emaciated dairy cow may be a protruding back bone and sunken eyes. Poor care maybe also be indicated by:

- red, swollen, hot, or dark blue or grey udder
- clotted or chunky milk or blood tinged milk
- tears in teats or udder
- dry, dull hairy coat, rather unkempt in appearance, missing hair in large areas
- excessively long hoofs
- swollen joints

Behavior

Weak; minimally responsive; (Note: cattle who receive minimal handling (i.e. beef cows)

will be naturally fearful of humans.) Loud and frequent bellowing from many of the animals may occur when cattle are hungry and feed has not been provided.

Housing Conditions

An area for cattle to exercise is a good practice; however, tie stalls and stanchions, as well as free stalls, are acceptable housing systems. Not having a dry place to lie down; no food or water; overcrowding or a strong ammonia odor (not just a manure odor) from a lack of ventilation are not acceptable practices. Insufficient manger space for the number of cattle can result in a competitive situation where the weakest animals can be excluded from the food source. To prevent such situation, two feet of manger space per mature animal is recommended.

Reporting Cruelty

Animal cruelty should be reported to the police department of the town in which the animal lives. Please leave your name and contact information so that a follow-up response may be made.

Additional Resources

Dairy Cattle (NH)

extension.unh.edu/Agric/AGDLEP/Dairy.htm

Beef Cattle Production

www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/HTML/MP-184.asp

Housing and Space Guidelines for Livestock

extension.unh.edu/resources/category/Agriculture

For more information about animal cruelty, visit

www.humane.nh.gov

Be sure to view the **Interactive Presentation** on the **Welcome Page**.