



Community of Agriculturalists who Respect the Earth



2024

CARE Certified

FEEDYARD STANDARD FOR THE BEEF INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

For the purpose of this Standard, the following segments of the beef industry are defined:

- **Feedyard** – Operations that finish cattle for slaughter. Cattle may graze on grasses or forages, or may be fed a ration in a dry lot / pen / confinement barn.
- **Farmer Feeder** – Operations that maintain ownership and possession of calves that they have also calved from their own cow herd. They may also purchase additional calves to finish for slaughter. Relative to CARE for the beef industry, they are an approved location for CARE, meeting the cow/calf Standard; additional requirements specific to feedyard operations are denoted within the following Standard.
- **Backgrounder** – Operations used to put weight on calves prior to entry into a feedyard. For reference to this Standard, calves are primarily fed a ration in a dry lot or dirt pen. Calves on backgrounder operations grazing on grasses or forages may utilize the CARE Standard for Cow/Calf operations.

The CARE Certified program has three components, each having their own set of standard criteria:

1. **Animal Care:** The purpose of the Animal Care Standard is to reinforce animal care measures are being taken in the following stages of cattle production: Feedyard. Embracing the science involved to ensure animals are raised with care, we incorporated the following concepts in the development of the Standard:
 - Five Domains Model (nutrition, environment, health, behavioral interactions, and experiences);
 - Five Freedoms framework (freedom from hunger and thirst, freedom from discomfort, freedom from pain injury or disease, freedom to express normal behavior, and freedom from fear and distress); and
 - Three Circles Model (basic health and functioning, nature, and affective states).

Specific to the feedyard sector of the beef cattle industry, the U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit tool is the foundation for the Animal Care section.

2. **Environmental Stewardship:** The purpose of the Environmental Stewardship Standard is to support the maintenance of a sustainable environment for future generations by promoting practices that encourage waste reduction, management of natural and renewable resources, reducing our carbon footprint, while optimizing animal productivity. Good environmental management practices help ensure the longevity and success of the beef industry.
3. **People & Community:** The purpose of the People & Community Standard is to reinforce efforts being made at the feedyard to ensure workers – whether directly or indirectly employed by the operation – are appropriately trained, provided with a safe working environment and fairly compensated and treated. It is also to encourage the growth and development opportunities for all human resources (including family) and encouraging legacy and succession planning.

Locations certified under the CARE Certified program maintain a quality manual describing how the operation meets the program criteria. The CARE Certified Standard is modified as necessary to continually integrate improved animal husbandry practices, environmental stewardship techniques and improved practices affecting people involved with the operation and the community. At a minimum, a formal review of the program standards and audit checklist are completed by a third party each year. Recommendations for updates are brought forward to an external advisory committee for consideration / approval. Any necessary changes are made on an annual basis.

ANIMAL CARE STANDARD FOR FEEDYARD OPERATIONS

<p>Equivalency: In order to minimize audit fatigue or redundancy, some equivalencies have been established for the Feedyard Animal Care standard. Consideration is made regarding scope of operation and requirements of other industry standards.</p>	<p>Feedyards: The U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit addresses the animal care components for raising beef cattle during the finishing phase of production. If a feedyard has passed a 3rd party audit utilizing this audit tool (or equivalent as identified by Where Food Comes From, Inc.) and the criterion AC1 (below), they have met the Feedyard Animal Care Standard for CARE. This audit must be conducted within the past 12 months to be current and must be conducted annually to maintain certification. A copy of the audit report must be made available to Where Food Comes From, Inc. to verify passing score and any required corrective actions have been addressed.</p> <p>Farmer Feeders: If you are also a cow-calf operation on the same premise and management as the finishing location AND you are CARE certified to the Beef standard, an abbreviated audit of the finishing operation will be conducted, utilizing portions of the U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit. These audit points include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment using BQA tool; • Written SOP's and associated records for feeding operation (if separate/different than cow/calf operations); • Pen /Animal observations (home pens, hospital pens, loading/receiving facilities); and • Processing observations.
Criterion Number	Criterion
FAC1. Identification and Traceability	
FAC1a.	Calves are tagged with RFID prior to leaving the ranch of origin. Feedyard locations shall read and verify incoming calves with qualifying RFID.
FAC1b.	The operation maintains identification of cattle and associated records in order to trace cattle to immediate source into the operation and immediate shipment from the operation. This can be done by group or individual animal.
FAC2. Management Commitment	
FAC2a.	The operation identifies a person responsible to oversee animal care practices.
FAC2b.	The operation has a documented Animal Care Policy addressing expectation of stock personnel and states that willful abuse, neglect or cruelty must be reported and will not be tolerated.
FAC2c.	Management completes an internal review, minimally on an annual basis. This must include observations of cattle processing and loading/unloading.

FAC3. Animal Husbandry Training	
FAC3a.	The operation has an Animal Husbandry Training Program that describes frequency and method of training.
FAC3b.	All employees (full-time and part-time), contractors and all other personnel involved with feeding, handling or caring for cattle must hold current BQA training certificate (every 3 years).
FAC3c.	The operation trains all caregivers annually in animal care principles and procedures. Training is documented to include date(s), trainer(s), trainee(s) and topic(s) covered. Training must also be conducted with custom processing crews.
FAC4. Biosecurity & Secure Beef Supply	
FAC4a.	The operation has a documented Security Plan that addresses controls and procedures in the case of a foreign animal disease outbreak. The Security Plan addresses the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for stopping movement of livestock; • Plan for segregation of healthy livestock from affected livestock; • Plan for notification to appropriate agencies regarding any suspected disease; and • Plan for depopulation and disposal.
FAC4b.	The operation’s Security Plan minimally includes a Visitor Log.
FAC4c.	The operation cleans equipment used to move non-ambulatory or diseased animals.
FAC4d.	The Security Plan is reviewed annually by management.
FAC4e.	All employees are trained on the operation’s Security Plan annually.
FAC5. Herd Health Plan	
FAC5a.	Herd health plan that addresses the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All types of cattle (steers, heifers, etc.) at the operation. • Prevention of disease through vaccinations and parasite control and use of other technologies to promote health and productivity. • Processing practices performed at the premises such as castration, dehorning, tagging, and pregnancy checking (if applicable). • Cattle health product management (storage, use, and inventory/expiration). Nutritional needs being met for each stage of production, inclusive of transition diets when needed.
FAC5b.	All animal health products are administered according to label instruction, following FDA and/or veterinary prescription.
FAC5c.	Caregivers follow BQA best practices for all animal health products to include recommended injection sites.
FAC5d.	The operation has a documented broken needle protocol that includes details on what to do if the needle remains in the animal when administering injectables.
FAC5e.	Cattle health products are stored properly and in accordance with manufacturer’s label.
FAC5f.	An inventory of cattle health products is maintained by the operation.
FAC5g.	The operation has a protocol for monitoring cattle health product expiration and disposal.
FAC5h.	The operation has a protocol on how to address calving heifers (as applicable).
FAC5i.	The operation has a protocol in place to address newborn calf care. Minimally, calves are provided colostrum as soon as possible and within 24 hours of birth.
FAC6. Feed & Water	
FAC6a.	The operation can demonstrate that cattle under their care are daily observed and monitored for general health, access to feed and water.
FAC6b.	Cattle have access to feed supply as addressed in National Research Council’s nutrient requirements for beef cattle and applicable stage of production.
FAC6c.	Cattle have free access to water in home feeding pens.
FAC6d.	Feed/forage and water quality is monitored annually.

FAC7. Cattle Handling	
FAC7a.	No willful acts of abuse or neglect are observed during the audit. If a willful act of abuse or neglect is observed, the site will not be certified.
FAC7b.	Cattle are handled using low stress handling techniques.
FAC7c.	Methods used for herding (horseback, ATV, on foot, etc.) do not cause harm to the cattle or handlers.
FAC7d.	The operation uses only approved handling aids to drive or process cattle, minimizing electric prod use. Examples of approved driving aids include paddles, sorting sticks, flags, etc.
FAC7e.	The operation utilizes BQA best practices when performing painful procedures to cattle. If the age of the calf exceeds the BQA recommended best practices, a veterinary protocol is in place to address the procedure and pain controls.
FAC7f.	Chutes should be operated in a manner that minimizes stress for cattle. When cattle are handled using chutes, safety considerations such as observing falls, stumbles, head catch, side restraint and vocalization are considered.
FAC7g.	Face branding of any kind (hot or freeze) and wattling is not allowed.
FAC7h.	Cattle processing is observed to assess low stress handling, use of handling aids, proper chute operation, and cattle observations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric prod use is not primary driving aid, is minimized and not utilized on more than 10% of the animals. • Cattle must be properly caught in squeeze chute. 100% of cattle must be caught in the front and back catch/gate appropriately. No mis-catches are observed. • 95% of cattle should not vocalize in the chute, prior to processing activity. • Falls are assessed as an animal exits the chute. No more than 2% of the cattle fall when exiting the chute. • Stumbles are assessed as an animal exits the chute. No more than 10% of the cattle stumble when exiting the chute. • Jumps and racing may also be assessed as an animal exits the chute. This is an advanced criteria and no more than 20% of the cattle should jump or race when exiting the chute.
FAC7i.	Loading or unloading should be assessed, when able, to assess low stress handling, use of handling aids, and cattle observations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric prod use is not primary driving aid, is minimized and not utilized on more than 10% of the animals. • Falls are assessed and no more than 2% of the cattle fall in the receiving or shipping process.
FAC8. Observations / Outcome Based Measures – Animal & Facility	
FAC8a.	<u>Home pens & specialty pens</u> are observed to ensure feed bunks are accessible to cattle, clean and free of manure and foreign objects. Spoiled feed is to be removed.
FAC8b.	<u>Home pens & specialty pens</u> are observed to ensure water tanks have fresh, clean water available at all times. Water tanks should be free of manure, excessive algae growth, and other foreign objects.
FAC8c.	<u>Home pens & specialty pens</u> must provide enough space for all cattle to stand up, lie down and move freely. Stocking density is observed during the audit to verify compliance.
FAC8d.	<u>Home pens & specialty pens</u> must provide cattle comfort and relief from extreme weather conditions, including but not limited to weather events with extreme heat, cold, and/or precipitation.
FAC8e.	Home pens, specialty pens and all working facilities must be in good working order.
FAC8f.	<u>Cattle in the home pens</u> are observed to assess mud score, using the 5-point scale. When observed, 75% of the pens assessed have an average mud score less than 3.
FAC8g.	<u>Cattle in the home pens</u> are observed to assess locomotion/lameness, using the 4-point scale. When observed, 80% of the cattle have a locomotion score less than 3.

FAC9. Responsible Antibiotic Use	
FAC9a.	Judicious/responsible use of antibiotics is followed, including those administered via injection, feed (VFD) or water (prescription).
FAC9b.	The operation has evidence of Vet Client Patient Relationship (VCPR).
FAC9c.	The operation treats the fewest number of animals possible to minimize spread of disease and promote judicious use of antibiotics. Mass treating groups of cattle is limited and only performed when necessary.
FAC9d.	Operation adheres to FDA Guidance 209, 213, and 263 which pertain to judicious and responsible use of medically-important antibiotics.
FAC10. Sick or Injured Cattle	
FAC10a.	The operation maintains treatment protocols for sick and/or injured cattle.
FAC10b.	The operation documents all treatments provided to cattle including animal(s) treated (ID), date of treatment, product administered and dose.
FAC10c.	Withdrawal periods are tracked and strictly adhered to, ensuring cattle are clear of any animal health products when shipped for slaughter. If cattle are not clear when sold, detailed information is shared with the buyer of the cattle to include product, date administered and animal identification.
FAC10d.	Cattle that are under extensive treatment are kept separate from large herd and monitored daily.
FAC10e.	Non-ambulatory cattle are never dragged or lifted by its limbs using a rope or chain. Rather, if an animal not able to move on its own needs to be moved, it is rolled into a loader bucket and secured.
FAC11. On-Farm Euthanasia	
FAC11a.	Non-ambulatory cattle unable to eat or drink, or not showing improvement within 36 hours of managed care are humanely euthanized. If the feedyard veterinarian determines that an animal cannot be successfully treated, it must be humanely euthanized immediately.
FAC11b.	Euthanasia is completed using an approved method, as noted in the Bovine Practitioners Guide.
FAC12. Facilities	
FAC12a.	Working facilities are clean, maintained in good working order and repairs are performed in a timely manner.
FAC12b.	Water tanks or troughs are cleaned routinely and provide fresh, clean water to cattle.
FAC12c.	Fences are maintained and repairs are made in a timely manner.
FAC12d.	Pens housing cattle are scraped/cleaned routinely so comfort and health of cattle is optimized.
FAC12e.	The operation has a protocol for pen surface maintenance, including frequency and method(s).
FAC12f.	For operations utilizing barns to house cattle, considerations are provided for stocking density, bedding and air quality. Cattle comfort is observed during the audit to assess housing conditions.
FAC12g.	The operation addresses extreme weather conditions to ensure comfort for cattle. Extreme heat, cold and precipitation are considered for appropriate natural or man-made shelter, shade or protection.
FAC13. Transportation	
FAC13a.	Transporters of cattle have been trained according to the BQA Transportation program.
FAC13b.	All cattle loaded at the operation are considered fit for transport, able to handle the rigors of transportation and are not severely injured or ill. Severely injured or ill cattle can only be transported to receive additional / veterinary care.
FAC13c.	Incompatible animals are segregated in different trailer compartments, unless previously socialized.
FAC13d.	Maximum transport time shall be no longer than 28 hours, in accordance with the 28-Hour Law. If transportation longer than 28 hours is required, cattle must be unloaded, provided feed, water and rest.
FAC13e.	Equipment (loading/unloading chutes) and trailers used to load and/or haul cattle must be in maintained and in good repair.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP STANDARD FOR FEEDYARD OPERATIONS

Criterion Number	Criterion
FES1. Water & Land Management	
FES1a.	Egregious acts of neglect to natural resources under the producer’s control are not allowed.
FES1b.	A water management plan for the operation has been developed and includes tracking water use when able (metered) and methods to reduce water use.
FES1c.	Water for use in production areas is monitored for quality and availability.
FES1d.	Irrigation systems are routinely monitored.
FES1e.	Water lines for water delivery systems in production areas are managed to prevent drips, spills, leaks, clogging or other related issues.
FES1f.	List or map of major infrastructure (roads, fences, buildings, corrals, waterpoints and pipes/ditches). Condition of existing infrastructure (fences, roads, buildings, stock water resources) is in good working order.
FES1g.	Resource (grasslands, feed, water, etc.) contingency plans are in place for natural disasters such as fire, flood, drought, disease or pest outbreaks, predator conflict, or other.
FES2. Land Management	
FES2a.	The operation’s grazing management plan (if applicable) includes practices that prevent/reduce soil erosion, maximize forage and pasture roughage yields, promotes vegetative diversity, and controls invasive and noxious weeds.
FES2b.	Water drainage from cattle pens is controlled to minimize erosion and control nutrients.
FES2c.	The operation is working to develop a succession plan to allow for a smooth transition of the business and any assets with minimal disruption to the business and/or family relationships.
FES3. Air & Green House Gas (GHG) Emissions	
FES3a.	An energy management plan for the operation has been developed and elements related to vehicles, equipment, lighting, heating, water systems and other energy-use areas are evaluated / assessed to implement improvement opportunities.
FES3b.	Vehicles and equipment with engines are maintained for optimal operating efficiency.
FES3c.	The operation’s grazing management plan (if applicable) includes practices that support carbon sequestration and minimize emissions.
FES3d.	Practices are implemented to minimize dust and odor.
FES4. Cattle Management & Efficiencies	
FES4a.	Production records are maintained to manage cattle performance and routinely reviewed to ensure operational efficiency.
FES4b.	Operation maintains records of mortality, injury, and treatment. Such records are routinely reviewed by feedyard management.
FES4c.	Consideration for renewable energy/alternative energy sources.

FES5. Feed Management & Sourcing	
FES5a.	Feedstuffs are managed and practices are employed to minimize spills, shrink, and spoilage.
FES5b.	Locations utilizing access to pastures for grazing have a written grazing management plan in place.
FES5c.	Feed storage areas are maintained and clean to prevent pest infestation and contamination.
FES5d.	The operation has a pest control program in place that addresses rodents and insects.
FES5e.	Feedstuffs are traceable to source and support sustainable farming practices.
FES5f.	Feed is produced and/or sourced from locations that have <u>not</u> converted grazing lands, riparian areas, or forest into cropped land within the last five (5) years.
FES5g.	Feed is produced and/or sourced from locations utilizing reduced tilling practices and/or cover crops.
FES5h.	Feed is produced and/or sourced from locations with soil nutrient management plan in place for crop inputs (e.g., fertilizer, biologicals, organic replacements, etc.).
FES5i.	Livestock is incorporated into the cropping system.
FES6. Waste Management	
FES6a.	The operation can demonstrate that it reduces, reuses, and recycles.
FES6b.	Operations qualifying as an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) and/or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) are operating under appropriate permits and are in good standing with state inspection.
FES6c.	The operation has a Nutrient Management Plan for manure and effluent.
FES6d.	Solid waste / manure / bedding is regularly removed from concentrated production areas.
FES6e.	Manure application equipment is maintained in working order and cleaned to prevent spillage and to minimize odor generation.
FES6f.	Drainage and waste disposal areas are designed to avoid contamination of water sources and neighboring properties.
FES6g.	Manure application logs are maintained.
FES6h.	Mortality disposal is in accordance with laws and regulations.
FES6i.	Mortality is removed from animal living area within 24 hours.
FES6j.	Mortality storage/collection area is maintained to prevent unauthorized public or scavenger access.
FES7. Mitigation of Negative Environmental Impacts	
FES7a.	If utilized, fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides are used, stored, and disposed according to the manufacturer's label on the product.
FES7b.	The person making decisions on chemical application has been trained in safe application of chemicals and ensures that modes of application and application rates comply with label recommendations.
FES7c.	The operation complies with all laws and regulations related to chemical use of PPE and chemical storage, as per the manufacturer's label.
FES7d.	Site is well-maintained and litter/trash is minimized.
FES8. Innovation & Continuous Education	
FES8a.	The operation utilizes innovation to improve and enhance environmentally responsible cattle production.
FES8b.	The operation pursues educational opportunities to learn more about environmentally sustainable cattle production.

PEOPLE & COMMUNITY STANDARD FOR FEEDYARD OPERATIONS

Criterion Number	Criterion Standard
FPC1. Employee Training	
FPC1a.	The operation provides New Hire Orientation Training on the first day.
FPC1b.	The operation routinely provides Safety Training to family and non-family members working at the operation, at least annually.
FPC1c.	Safety trainings and meetings are documented, and records are kept of session dates and attendance.
FPC1d.	The operation has a process in place, including training and provision of personal protective equipment (if applicable) to minimize risk of injury or illness from operation of equipment or general work tasks.
FPC2. Worker Health and Safety	
FPC2a.	The operation has a designated employee responsible for ensuring that all worker health and safety protocols are communicated to workers, and workers are made aware of who the designated employee is.
FPC2b.	The operation may provide workers with equipment and clothing that is appropriate to their tasks and minimizes illness and injury.
FPC2c.	Safety equipment and Personal Protective Equipment is in good working order and workers are trained on proper use.
FPC2d.	Discussions and review of occupational injuries, illnesses, near-misses and deaths are conducted. The information is used to implement measures to improve rates.
FPC2e.	No abuse of workers is observed during the audit. If any abuse is observed, the site will not be certified.
FPC2f.	The operation has a method for non-family members to report workplace grievances.
FPC3. Facility Requirements	
FPC3a.	An emergency contact list is posted.
FPC3b.	Emergency contact list includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immediate emergency assistance number, i.e. 911 2. Emergency numbers OTHER THAN 911 (e.g., sheriff, closest hospital, fire station, power company, state veterinarian, etc.) 3. Name of facility/location of reference from nearest town 4. Physical address of facility (or if not applicable, location reference) 5. Directions to facility/location of reference 6. Key personnel responsibilities 7. Where to meet in case of a disaster
FPC3c.	Facilities are maintained in order to provide a safe environment and prevent injury to employees.
FPC3d.	First aid kits are available in areas of work.
FPC3e.	Fire extinguishers are easily accessible.
FPC4. Emergency Action Plan	
FPC4a.	The operation has developed an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
FPC4b.	The EAP contains procedures regarding emergency and accident reporting and investigation; first response criteria for all likely emergencies; evacuation procedures; and a timeframe and person responsible for review and updating the EAP.
FPC4c.	The EAP is reviewed annually.

FPC5. Worker Compensation	
FPC5a.	The operation has developed work agreements / contracts / job offers for full-time, non-family member employees. This agreement is written and may include: terms and conditions of employment; position title; deadline for acceptance; requested start date; compensation information; hours of work / work schedule information; and applicable benefit overview.
FPC5b.	The operation pays at least minimum hourly rates required by law.
FPC5c.	If the operation provides housing to workers, housing is supplied at market rates or at no cost. Housing conditions ensures security, privacy and sanitary conditions.
FPC6. Succession Planning, Professional Development and Advancement	
FPC6a.	The operation is working to develop a succession plan to allow for a smooth transition of the business and any assets with minimal disruption to the business and/or family relationships.
FPC6b.	The operation encourages learning and growth opportunities for family and non-family workers.
FPC7. Community Engagement	
FPC7a.	The operation and its employees are involved in local initiatives that enhance the community and promotes good community relations.