



Yukon Livestock Guide

CATTLE, YAK + BISON



**YUKON
LIVESTOCK
GUIDES**

 Cattle, Yak + Bison

 Equine

 Poultry

 Sheep + Goat

 Swine

CONTENTS

01

PURPOSE2

02

STANDARDS OF CARE.....3

03

NOMENCLATURE 4

04

BASIC NEEDS5

Housing and environment 5

Feed and nutrition8

Water.....9

05

BODY CONDITION

SCORE.....10

Beef cattle..... 12

Bison 17

06

ANIMAL HEALTH

STRATEGIES 22

Breeding 22

Disbudding/dehorning
and castration 23

Disease prevention..... 24

Caring for sick
or injured animals 26

Euthanasia 27

07

ANIMAL WELFARE

STRATEGIES 28

Handling 28

Transportation 30

Slaughter 32

08

MANAGING FARM

OPERATIONS34

Identification..... 34

Biosecurity 35

Record keeping..... 37

Emergency planning..... 38

09

GOVERNMENT

SUPPORT 39

10

RESOURCES.....40

11

CONTACTS.....41

12

DISCLAIMERS 42

PURPOSE

The Government of Yukon's role is to support the Yukon's agriculture sector and create conditions for a thriving agricultural industry.

This booklet supports livestock farmers with guidance on raising and caring for their animals as well as managing their farm operations. The content is a summary of the applicable Codes of Practice for raising and caring for livestock and information on addressing or preventing common issues that can impact livestock farmers in the Yukon.



STANDARDS OF CARE

The Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals are nationally developed guidelines that are scientifically informed, practical and reflect societal expectations for responsible farm animal care. We encourage you to consult the [Codes of Practice on the National Farm and Animal Care Council's website](https://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice) (nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice).

Increasing your understanding and adopting best management practices for raising and caring for livestock can increase production, reduce overall costs, reduce injuries and illness as well as reduce loss of profits.

The Five Freedoms

The Five Freedoms are internationally accepted standards for the care of living beings and their right to humane treatment. When producers safeguard these freedoms, they ensure an animal's primary welfare.

The Five Freedoms are the basis for animal care protocols.

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst.
2. Freedom from discomfort.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour.
5. Freedom from fear and distress.

Dairy breeds

This guide is specific to cattle, yak and bison. For dairy breeds, refer to the [Codes of Practice on the National Farm and Animal Care Council's website](https://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice) (nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice).

NOMENCLATURE

Groups of cattle, bison or yak are commonly referred to as a herd.

- **Calf:** Offspring of either sex that is still nursing or less than one year of age.
 - » **Red dog:** Nickname for bison offspring due to their orange–red colour.
- **Weanling:** Recently weaned offspring, six to nine months of age.
- **Yearling:** Nine months to two years of age.
- **Steer:** A castrated male.
- **Bull:** Male breeding stock.
 - » **Sire:** the father of a calf.
- **Heifer:** A young female that has not had an offspring or is under two years of age.
- **Cow:** Female breeding stock that has had one or more offspring.
 - » **Dam:** The mother of a calf.
 - » **Dry cow:** A non-lactating female.
 - » **Open:** A female that is not bred.

BASIC NEEDS

Housing and environment

Housing and living environment must provide for an animal's basic needs and be as stress free as possible. Stressed livestock do not thrive and are more susceptible to illnesses.

Common stress factors for cattle, yak and bison include overcrowding, mixing groups or adding new animals, empty feeders or waterers, dirty pens, and severe or rapid change of weather.

Facilities

Access to equipment or facilities that allows for the safe handling, restraint, treatment, segregation, loading and unloading of cattle or yak/bison reduces stress for the handler and the animal.

Allow enough space in your facilities for horned animals to move freely without hindrance.

Dry and elevate resting/bedding areas. Make the resting/bedding areas available at all times for all cattle or yak/bison in all locations (pasture, pens and segregation pens).

Flooring inside barns should provide secure footing or traction and allow for routine cleaning.

Areas for housing, grazing and loafing should be sufficient in space and size to allow all animals to simultaneously lie down and ruminate, stand up, turn around and move easily.

BASIC NEEDS

Pregnant animals need more space than open animals. Total floor space for animals should meet or exceed their estimated lot space requirement for their current stage of life.

Bovines are prone to respiratory diseases if confined indoors. Access to fresh air and outdoor exercise areas is recommended at all times of the year.

During the off season, locate separation pens so that isolated bulls are able to see, hear and smell the other cows to avoid causing them stress. Producers with multiple bulls should keep compatible bulls together. Younger bulls should be kept in a separate location to avoid increased competition for resources and aggression from older dominant bulls.

Have temporary holding areas available and ready during calving season for first-calf heifers or cows experiencing calving problems.

Fencing

Perimeter fences must be well constructed and regularly maintained to protect cattle or yak/bison from predators and to prevent escape.

Keep pastures and fencing free of loose wire or anything with sharp edges that can cause injury.

Check for poisonous plants such as celery-leaved buttercup or lupine and remove them from pastures.

Keep outdoor stocking densities low enough to prevent soil degradation and overgrazing.

Government funding is available for protecting livestock, pasture or crops from wildlife. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/funding-agriculture](https://www.yukon.ca/funding-agriculture).

There is also compensation available for damage caused by wildlife. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/funding-agriculture](https://www.yukon.ca/funding-agriculture).

Contact the Agriculture Branch's Livestock Extension Services Unit for more information on agricultural funding programs. (See "Contact" section.)

Weather conditions

Provide bulls with additional bedding in the winter to prevent scrotal frostbite.

Manage your herd in relation to adverse weather conditions.

- Relocate to sheltered areas.
- Provide additional bedding when appropriate.
- Provide additional feed to increase energy, especially during excessive cold periods.

Outdoors, provide your animals with access to areas that are either natural (hills, gullies, thickets of trees, shelterbelts) or artificial (windbreaks, three-sided sheds) for protection and relief from extreme weather that poses a serious risk to their welfare.

Feed and nutrition

Correct feed management is necessary to meet animals' varying nutritional needs throughout the production process (e.g., maintenance, growth, reproduction or lactation).

Ruminant diets must contain forage with adequate fibre to ensure proper rumen function, prevent acidosis and reduce the risk of bloat and laminitis.

Distribute feed and water in a way that avoids provoking excessive competition between animals. Design and distribute hay feeders, feed bunks and troughs to provide sufficient feeding space to reduce aggressive interactions. For feeding, provide horned animals with 25 per cent more space.

To determine a balanced feed ration, take into account:

- age, frame size, body condition and reproductive status;
- health status and physiological requirements;
- required vitamins, minerals and amino acids;
- competition; and
- weather.

Check the quality of your feed. Ask your supplier for a feed analysis. Yukon feed suppliers can get their feed tested through the Agriculture Branch. (See "Contact" section.)

Provide additional feed during extreme weather conditions to meet animals' increased energy requirements.

Gradually transition from high-forage to high-energy rations to avoid bloat resulting from abrupt dietary changes.

Water

Provide cattle or yak/bison with access to adequate and clean sources of water at all times.

Cattle require 25 to 55 litres per head per day depending on weather conditions and life stage. Water requirements are less in cold temperatures.

You can use clean, loose snow as a sole water source temporarily. Ice is not an adequate source of water.

If using snow as the sole water source, you must ensure:

- there are sufficient quantities available each day;
- there is no sign of dehydration in the herd;
- the herd gradually acclimated early in the cold season;
- the snow is not hard packed, trampled or soiled; and
- a backup water source is available.

Snow cannot be the sole water source if:

- animals are lactating;
- animals are newly weaned;
- an animal's Body Condition Score is BCS 2 or lower; or
- animals are unable to access feed resources.

In these cases, you must provide another source of water for the cattle or yak/bison.

Use best management practices by moving portable water troughs regularly to avoid muddy and trampled ground.

Continuously monitor water troughs and other water sources in warmer weather to prevent heat stress and increase forage utilization.

BODY CONDITION SCORE

The Body Condition Score (BCS) system is a useful tool to evaluate the health and welfare, assess the nutritional status and optimize production of your animals. Typically, a five-point BCS scale is used with a score of BCS 1 meaning “too thin” and a score of BCS 5 meaning “too fat.” Generally, a score of BCS 3 is ideal. (Refer to the “Body Condition Score” table and images.)

BCS can depend on breed, age and environment. A thick winter coat may make cattle appear to be at a higher BCS.

You must take corrective actions to improve a cow or yak/ bison’s Body Condition Score when the score is BCS 2 or lower and when it is BCS 5.

Factors that can cause a low BCS include:

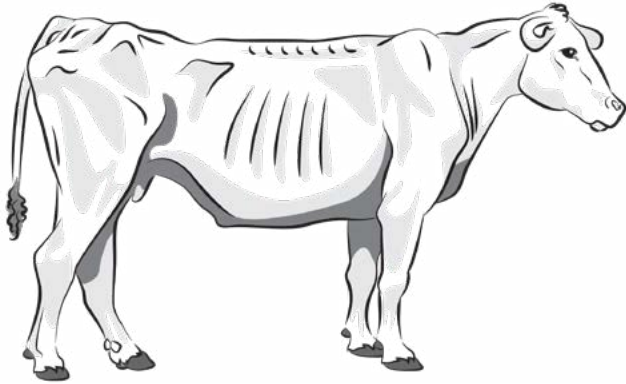
- insufficient nutritional content in feed;
- excessive competition for feed;
- health conditions causing increased nutritional requirements;
- parasitism; or
- old age.

BODY CONDITION SCORE

You must consult with a veterinarian or nutritionist when a Body Condition Score is below the minimum of BCS 2 and if corrective actions (isolation, improved feeding rations, etc.) are ineffective at improving a BCS 2 score.

Contact the Agriculture Branch's livestock health technicians who can connect you with veterinarians and nutritionists specialized in livestock. (See "Contact" section.)

The Veterinary Services Program helps farmers get veterinary care for livestock. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/livestock-health](https://www.yukon.ca/livestock-health). Contact the Animal Health Unit about this program. (See "Contact" section.)

BEEF CATTLE – BCS 1**WHOLE BODY**

extremely thin

no fat in brisket or tail docks

all skeletal structures are visible

no muscle tissue evident

no external fat present

dull hair

survival during stress doubtful

BACK BONE

individual vertebrae well defined, sharp

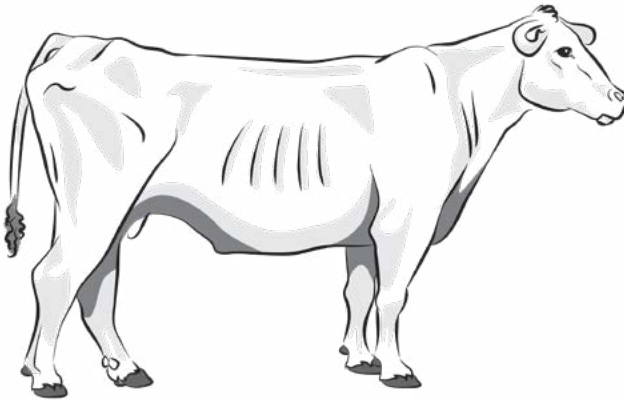
can place fingers between each vertebrae

SHORT RIBS

visually prominent

no fat present

very sharp to the touch

BEEF CATTLE - BCS 2**WHOLE BODY**

thin

upper skeleton prominent (vertebrae, hips, pin bones)

muscle tissue evident, but not abundant

some tissue cover around the tail dock, over the hip bones and the flank

BACK BONE

individual vertebra can be felt, but not as sharp

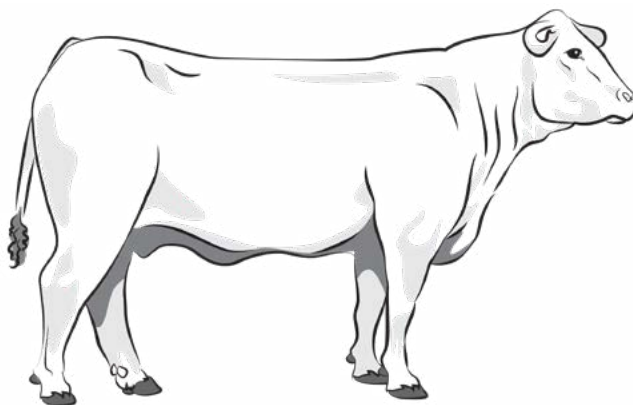
cannot place fingers between vertebrae

SHORT RIBS

feel individual ribs, sharp rather than very sharp

identify individual ribs visually

BODY CONDITION SCORE

BEEF CATTLE – BCS 3**WHOLE BODY**

ideal flesh for calving

ribcage only slightly visible

hooks and pins visible, but not prominent

muscle tissue nearing maximum

fat deposit behind shoulder obvious

fat in brisket area

tail docks easily felt

BACK BONE

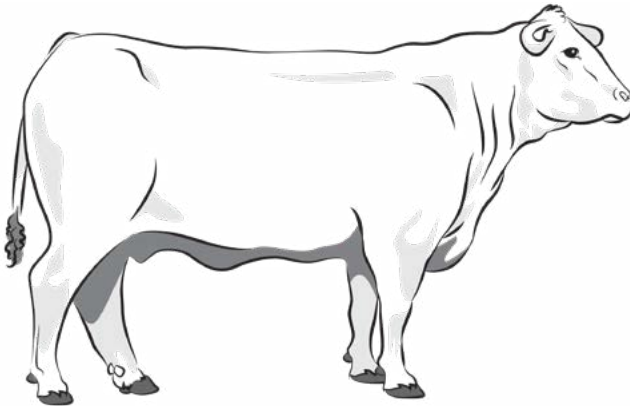
somewhat defined

difficult to feel top of vertebrae

SHORT RIBS

completely covered with fat, beginning to spread over rump

individual ribs only felt with firm pressure

BEEF CATTLE – BCS 4**WHOLE BODY**

skeletal structure difficult to identify

obvious fat deposits behind shoulder and at tail head

fat on brisket and over shoulder

BACK BONE

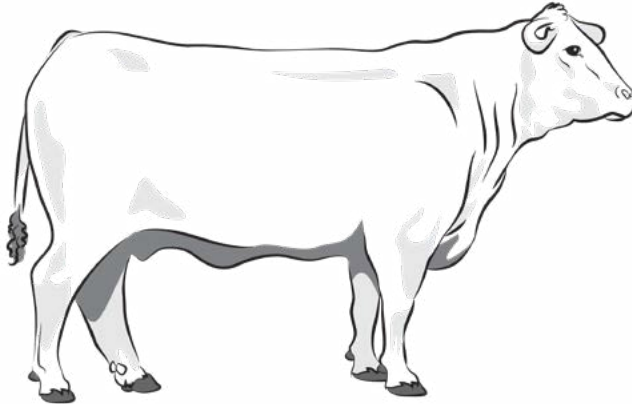
flat appearance to the top line

cannot feel individual vertebrae

SHORT RIBS

folds of fat beginning to develop over the ribs and thighs

cannot feel individual ribs, even with firm pressure

BODY CONDITION SCORE**BEEF CATTLE – BCS 5****WHOLE BODY**

obese

flat appearance dominates

brisket heavy

bone structure not noticeable, “blocky” appearance

tail head and hips bones almost completely buried in fat and folds of fat

BACK BONE

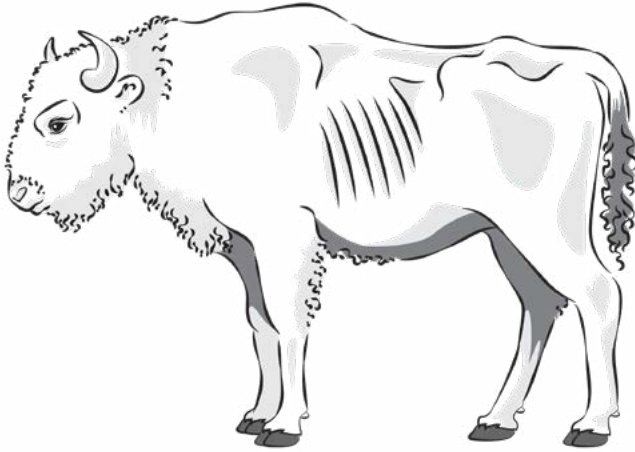
flat back

cannot feel backbone

SHORT RIBS

completely covered by fat

mobility impaired by large amounts of fat

BISON - BCS 1**WHOLE BODY**

thin

RIBS

prominent, many ribs visible in summer

visible but less distinct in winter

SPINE

backbone very sharp

steep angle of muscle

HIP BONE AND RUMP

hip bone prominent, edges very sharp

rump muscles caved in

TAIL HEAD

devoid of fat

deep, sunken depressions on either side of tail head

no fat palpable if bison in squeeze

HUMP

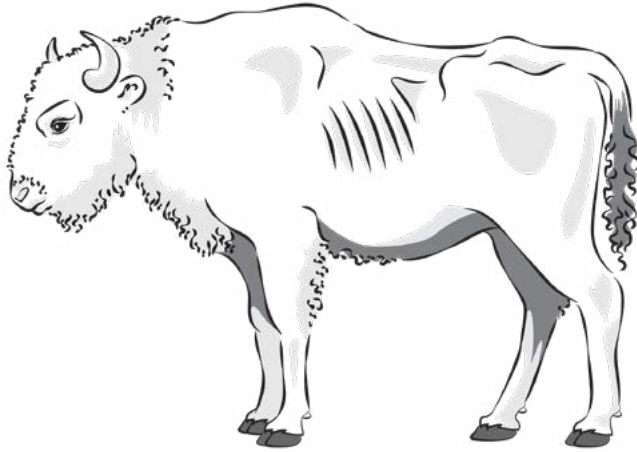
sharp top line

narrow with flat sides when viewed from front

sharp contrast between hump and shoulder when viewed from side

BODY CONDITION SCORE

BISON – BCS 2



WHOLE BODY

moderately thin

RIBS

some ribs visible in summer and winter

SPINE

backbone evident, but not sharp

steep angle of muscle

HIP BONE AND RUMP

hip bone readily seen, edges sharp

rump muscles cave in slightly

TAIL HEAD

sunken depressions on both sides of tail head

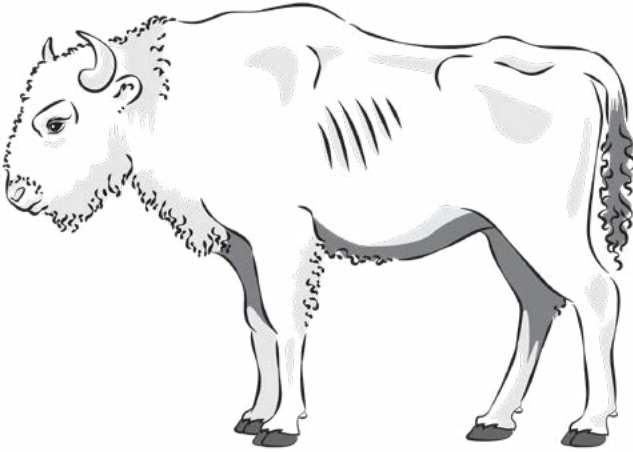
small amount of fat palpable if bison in squeeze

HUMP

hump is narrow, but not sharp

sides flat when viewed from front

distinct contrast between hump and shoulder

BISON – BCS 3**WHOLE BODY**

moderate

RIBS

edges round, covered in flesh

may be visible but not sharp or distinct in summer

not visible in winter

SPINE

backbone visible, but not prominent

angle of muscle has moderate slope, similar to roof of tent

HIP BONE AND RUMP

hip bone visible, but not sharp

rump muscles flat and angular

TAIL HEAD

slight hollowing on either side of tail head

some fat palpable if bison in squeeze

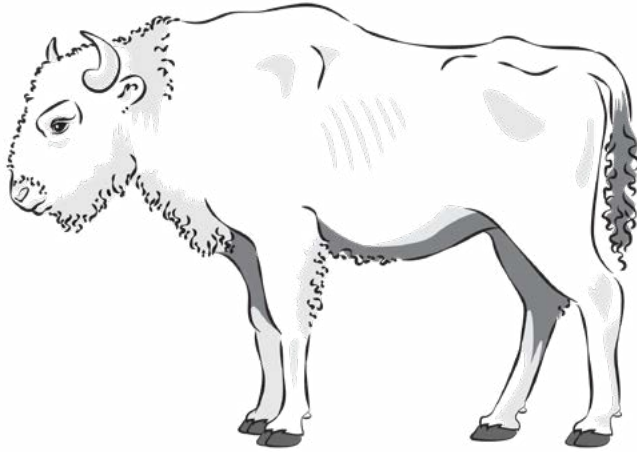
HUMP

well-developed but not bulging

noticeable distinction between hump and shoulder

BODY CONDITION SCORE

BISON – BCS 4



WHOLE BODY

moderately fat

RIBS

individual ribs generally not visible in summer

not visible in winter

SPINE

backbone not readily seen

angle of muscle has gentle slope

HIP BONE AND RUMP

hip bone barely visible

muscles full, but not bulging

TAIL HEAD

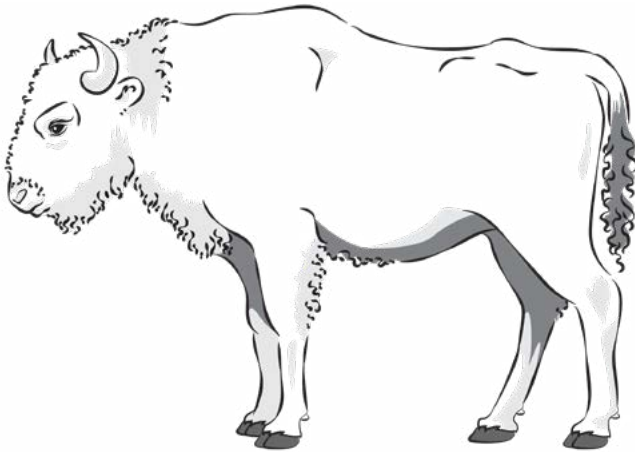
slight depression in bulls

no depression in cows

HUMP

full hump when viewed from front, but not round and bulging

little distinction between hump and shoulder when viewed from side

BISON – BCS 5**WHOLE BODY**

fat

RIBS

covered in fat

not visible in summer or winter

SPINE

covered in fat

not visible in summer or winter

HIP BONE AND RUMP

hip bone covered in fat, not visible

rump rounded out, full

TAIL HEAD

in bulls, no depression on either side of tail head

either side is bulging with fat in cows

HUMP

thick, rounded top when viewed from front

blends into the shoulder when viewed from side

ANIMAL HEALTH STRATEGIES

An effective Herd Health Management Program contributes to animal well-being by focusing on disease prevention, rapid diagnosis and effective treatment. Here are a few strategies for ensuring your animals' welfare and well-being.

Breeding

We recommend that breeding occurs exclusively with a predetermined purpose or market. Avoid accidental or indiscriminate breeding of cattle or yak/bison.

When calving, follow these strategies.

- Intervention is not recommended unless absolutely necessary.
- Personnel in charge must be trained and able to recognize and deal with distressed cows or calves. For bison, if there are no safe or suitable treatment options, bison should be euthanized to avoid further suffering.
- Consult with veterinarians prior to calving season and have a plan in case of emergency.
- Provide colostrum (fresh or reconstituted powder) to any newborn calf showing signs that they have not yet received it through suckling. A calf should receive at least two litres within six hours of birth.

- Dead offspring must be removed from the uterus as it is detrimental to the dam's health. Consult a veterinarian and remove immediately.
- The placenta (afterbirth) should come out approximately three to 72 hours after the birth. Consult a veterinarian if this does not occur.

When calving in cold weather, newborns need shelter and bedding to keep them dry and protected from drafts. Use straw or hay bales as a windbreak if calving on pasture. Provide supplemental heat if temperatures are less than minus 10 degrees Celsius (14 degrees Fahrenheit) and stop using once calves are dry and nursing.

Disbudding/dehorning and castration

Use pain control medication when disbudding/dehorning or castrating livestock to reduce pain and stress.

Ideally, horns are removed before the animal is three months of age.

Castrate calves as young as possible and implement low-stress handling. Yaks are typically castrated at four to eight months of age. It is not recommended to castrate bison due to their slower growth rate.

Consult a veterinarian to discuss safe and effective disbudding and castration practices.

Disease prevention

Importing new cattle or yak/bison is the most common way that disease is introduced into a herd and parasites are introduced into your soil.

- When purchasing new cattle or yak/bison, ask the sellers about their disease and parasite management programs.
- Quarantine new cattle or yak/bison for 30 days in a dedicated location separate from all other livestock on the farm.
- Boost the new animals' immunity by updating their external and internal parasite treatments and vaccinations while they are quarantined.
- Consult with the Agriculture Branch's livestock health technicians or a licensed veterinarian about diseases and parasites common in the territory.

Keep your herd's vaccinations and parasite control status up to date and on a schedule to aid with treatment effectiveness.

Research and understand the life cycle of the parasites that pose problems in livestock in the Yukon. Controlling internal parasites can prevent health and welfare issues.

Refer to the [Government of Yukon's Cattle Health Handbook](https://www.yukon.ca/cattle-health-handbook) (Yukon.ca/cattle-health-handbook) to review common diseases and parasites for cattle in the Yukon.

Do a routine check of your herd to identify any issues or disease quickly.

Reportable disease

If an animal is displaying signs of aggression, poor health or welfare, it is your responsibility to investigate those problems or vices to determine the cause.

Reportable diseases in cattle or yak/bison include:

Bluetongue, Brucellosis, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and Foot-and-mouth disease.

Refer to the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency's list of reportable diseases](https://inspections.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/eng/1303768471142/1303768544412) (inspections.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/eng/1303768471142/1303768544412).

If you suspect that an animal has a reportable disease, you must advise a veterinarian or the Animal Health Unit. (See "Contact" section.) This is required by law.

Caring for sick or injured animals

Provide immediate care, convalescence or treatment for sick or injured animals. Have a segregation area away from the herd and use the area to isolate sick, injured or compromised animals. Ensure the area allows for easy access to resting, food and water areas.

An animal should not suffer due to lack of action on herd health, nutrition, handling or facility design. It is your responsibility to consult a professional and implement any necessary actions to ensure an animal's welfare.

Build an ongoing working relationship with the Agriculture Branch's livestock health technicians or a veterinarian and determine a strategy for disease/parasite prevention and herd health. (See "Contact" section.)

The Veterinary Services Program helps farmers get veterinary care for livestock. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/livestock-health](https://www.yukon.ca/livestock-health). Contact the Animal Health Unit about this program. (See "Contact" section.)

Euthanasia

Euthanize, without delay, cattle or yak/bison that:

- are unlikely to recover from illness or injury;
- fail to respond to treatments;
- are in chronic, severe or debilitating pain and distress;
- are unable to get to or consume feed or water; or
- show continuous weight loss or emaciation.

Prior to euthanasia, cattle or yak/bison should not be dragged, prodded, forced to move on broken limbs or made to move when in pain or suffering.

Methods and approach

Whenever possible, ensure no other animals are present when euthanasia is being performed.

The person performing euthanasia must be experienced and confident.

Acceptable methods of euthanasia include gunshot or penetrating captive bolt directly to the brain. Death by veterinary assistance is also available.

For confirmation of death, check for insensibility by touching the eyeball and noting if the animal blinks (corneal reflex). Do so only when safe. An insensible animal will not blink.

Be ready to immediately deliver a second application should the first attempt fail.

ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGIES

Handling

Even docile cattle, yak and bison can be unpredictable. Be vigilant and do not leave children or other vulnerable people unattended with cattle, yak or bison.

Personnel and animal handlers of cows or yak/bison should be familiar with cattle behaviour and handling techniques. This includes being able to recognize indicators of aggression, poor health or welfare.

Government funding is available for training, mentorship and internship projects. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/funding-agriculture](https://www.yukon.ca/funding-agriculture) and contact the Agriculture Branch for more information. (See “Contact” section.)

Quiet handling techniques are recommended and preferred for moving cattle or yak/bison. Rough handling leads to frightened and aggressive cattle and yak/bison of all ages.

Sticks, flags, cattle rattles or canes should be used to guide and not strike animals. Move the herd calmly by working outside their flight zone. Entering their flight zone too deeply or too quickly can cause unpredictable reactions and possibly dangerous behaviours.

ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGIES

Ensure the animals have a space to go to. When using a chute, encourage the lead animal to move forward and work your way backwards.

Do not use electric prods as a first resort when moving animals, and do not use electric prods on:

- genitals;
- face;
- udder;
- anal areas;
- calves less than three months of age;
- repeatedly on the same animal; or
- downed, sick or injured animals.

It is unacceptable to mistreat or cause intentional harm to animals. This includes and is not limited to: beating, slamming gates on animals, allowing herd dogs to continuously bite or push animals who have nowhere to go, dragging or pushing animals with machinery, excessive use of electric prods, etc.

Exemptions apply when a reasonable and measured defense action is required to protect other animals or humans.

Transportation

Do not transport cattle or yak/bison who are in the last 10 per cent of their gestation period or who have given birth within the last 48 hours, unless to seek veterinary attention.

Handling pens should be the right size and scale for the type and number of animals in the herd. Curved chutes and crowd pens are more efficient because cattle or yak/bison have a natural tendency to go back to where they came from. The ideal radius for a crowd pen is 3.5 metres (12 feet).

Pens, races, restraining gates and floors should be in good condition to avoid injury. Ramps should have an incline of no more than 25 degrees. Loading areas should be well lit and avoid casting shadows.

Provide feed and water to cattle or yak/bison within five hours prior to loading for transportation if the transport will exceed 24 hours. Maximum transport time for mature cattle is 48 hours, with a minimum feed, water and rest time of uninterrupted five hours before reloading.

Do not transport unfit cattle or yak/bison per the federal *Health of Animals Regulations* (canlii.org/en/ca/laws/regu/crc-c-296/latest/crc-c-296.html) that falls under the *Health of Animals Act*. Unfit animals are not to be transported unless being transported to receive care recommended by a veterinarian. If transported, the unfit animal must be loaded, confined, transported and unloaded in accordance with the provisions under the regulations (see section 139) to prevent suffering, injury or death.

ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGIES

Calves should not be shipped until at least seven days old.

Do not mix cattle or yak/bison that are incompatible for any duration of transportation. Transport pairs in a separate compartment to avoid injury to the calves by the adults.

Provide adequate dry bedding during transport per current weather and transport conditions (add extra bedding if exceedingly cold).

Provide adequate ventilation during transport (extra ventilation if exceedingly warm, or limited ventilation if exceedingly cold).

Slaughter

Slaughter only healthy cattle or yak/bison. Only healthy cattle or yak/bison can be transported to a slaughter facility.

Some exceptions can be made for emergency slaughter of an injured animal if the animal can be killed humanely. Contact a veterinarian if you need advice. You must get a veterinarian to approve the injured animal for slaughter if you plan on selling the meat for retail.

Withdraw feed from the animal from six to 24 hours prior to slaughter. Continue to allow access to water prior to slaughter.

Cattle or yak/bison that have received a veterinary drug cannot be slaughtered to be sold or used for food until the withdrawal time specified on the drug's label has passed.

Selling meat for human consumption

The Yukon's *Meat Inspection and Abattoir Regulations* apply to the slaughter of animals and sale of meat in the Yukon. According to the regulations, no person shall slaughter animals, sell or offer meat for sale to any person unless the animal has been slaughtered and inspected in accordance with regulations.

To sell meat or advertise meat for sale, you must meet all the requirements in the regulations, including:

- slaughtering the animal in a licensed abattoir;
- having the meat inspected and approved fit for consumption by a government meat inspector; and
- transporting and storing meat from an abattoir in an approved containment that is both temperature-controlled and equipped for the care of meat.

If one of the requirements above occurs in a non-inspected setting, the meat product loses its inspected status and can no longer be sold.

For the sale of uninspected (also known as “farm gate”) meat, an animal must be sold whole and alive directly from the producer to the purchaser prior to slaughter. The purchaser must be able to provide proof of a purchase agreement date before the slaughter date. The purchaser agrees that the meat will not be used or sold commercially and will only be consumed by themselves, their immediate family and non-paying guests. Each meat package should be stamped with “uninspected” or “not for sale.”

MANAGING FARM OPERATIONS

Identification

It is the producers' responsibility to have proper Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) identification for cattle and bison.

Proper identification of individual animals assists with tracking animal performance, verifying individual animals that require attention, dam and offspring identification, and culling decision making. Identification methods available include CCIA-approved radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags, dangle ear tags, brisket tags, metal ear tags and freeze/hot branding.

Do not brand cattle when wet due to risk of scalding. Avoid branding yak and bison for herd identification purposes.

Yukon farmers are encouraged to enrol in the Premises Identification and Traceability Program. The program is a bridge between local farms and the National Livestock and Poultry Traceability System. Get more information on how to enrol at [Yukon.ca/premises-identification](https://www.yukon.ca/premises-identification). Enrolment is free.

You are also required to have the premises identification number to register for the Government of Yukon's Veterinary Services Program. (See "Government support" section.)

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is critical to minimizing the spread of diseases among cattle and within the cattle industry.

A biosecurity plan puts measures and procedures in place to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading disease agents (pathogens).

- External biosecurity means keeping disease agents from getting onto the farm and keeping them from getting out into other farms.
- Internal biosecurity means containing the spread of disease within the farm or system and is managed by individual farms.

Biocontainment means preventing the spread of pathogens to other populations of cattle or yak/bison.

Integrate the following into your daily farm practices and routines.

- Segregate diseased or infected cattle or yak/bison to limit the risk of pathogens entering uninfected areas or groups of cattle or yak/bison.
- Sanitize areas (especially segregation pens) to reduce or inactivate pathogens. Clean and wash to remove visible organic materials. Then disinfect and dry the area, especially in livestock trailers.
- Apply flow management practices and guidelines to reduce cross-contamination by people, material (equipment) and other cattle or yak/bison. A good practice is to divide your farm into zones to control and organize movements (of people, livestock and equipment). Designate areas for parking spots, signage, boots and equipment, cleaning/changing areas and fencing. These are good tools to limit contacts between designated zones.

MANAGING FARM OPERATIONS

- Keep records. Record keeping helps with origin tracking if there is an outbreak within your herd. It also helps you mitigate an outbreak and reduce the spread to other producers. It can also be used to train new staff. (See “Record keeping” section.)

We recommend that you stay up to date on the Canadian Beef Cattle On-Farm Biosecurity Standard from the Canada Food Inspection Agency (inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/biosecurity/standards-and-principles/eng/1344707905203/1344707981478).

Record keeping

Keeping good records helps producers with their genetic performance, biosecurity and profitability.

Animal ID records: Tracks an animal's place of origin, date of birth, health, vaccination records and treatment records. This is valuable in determining withdrawal periods for slaughter.

Biosecurity records: Tracks farm visitors, pest management and cleaning protocols.

Breeding records for individual animals: Allows for estimated calving dates and paternity tracking.

Cost records: Helps producers plan for the future by evaluating the expenses versus revenues associated with cattle or yak/bison production (e.g., feed cost, vaccination cost, maintenance, income from selling/butchering).

Health records: Tracks treatments, types of medications and vaccinations per animal, and withdrawal times.

Inventory records: Tracks and determines the number of cattle or yak/bison that have been bought, sold, born and died over a one-year period.

Traceability records: Tracks transportation of livestock and deadstock.

Emergency planning

It is important to prepare an emergency plan for unexpected events such as fires or wildfires, flooding, limited feed supply, utility failure or extreme weather. This can also include serious illness or death of main caretaker, transportation accidents, or evacuating and relocating livestock.

Refer to these emergency preparedness documents specific for farms and livestock.

- [Government of Canada's Emergency Preparedness for Farm Animals](https://getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/frm-nmls/index-en.aspx) (getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/frm-nmls/index-en.aspx).
- [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Emergency planning is for producers too](https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/canadas-agriculture-sectors/animal-industry/agriculture-emergency-management/emergency-planning-producers-too) (agriculture.canada.ca/en/canadas-agriculture-sectors/animal-industry/agriculture-emergency-management/emergency-planning-producers-too).

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Agricultural funding programs

The Government of Yukon's Agriculture Branch, in partnership with the Government of Canada, provides funding to the Yukon's agriculture sector to:

- increase competitiveness, productivity or profitability;
- increase environmental sustainability;
- expand domestic and international markets; and
- improve anticipating, mitigating and responding to risks.

Learn more about the programs at [Yukon.ca/funding-agriculture](https://yukon.ca/funding-agriculture) or contact the Agriculture Branch. (See "Contact" section.)

Veterinary Services Program

The Government of Yukon's Animal Health Unit coordinates the Veterinary Services Program.

- It's free for farmers to enrol.
- Producers must have a premise ID to enrol.
- It helps with consultations, animal care, management plans, biosecurity assessments, drugs, vaccines and treatments, and laboratory analysis.
- It offers funding for private veterinarian costs.

Learn more at [Yukon.ca/livestock-health](https://yukon.ca/livestock-health) to access the Veterinary Services Program for farmers or contact the Animal Health Unit. (See "Contact" section.)

RESOURCES

Standards

National Farm Animal Care Council's Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals (nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice)

Yukon Cattle Health Handbook (Yukon.ca/cattle-health-handbook)

Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada's Guidance for Organic Beef Production: Animal Welfare on Organic Farms (cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/agriculture/oacc/en/livestock/Welfare/awtf_guidance_beef08.pdf)

Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada's Guidance for Organic Dairy Cattle: Animal Welfare on Organic Farms (cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/agriculture/oacc/en/livestock/Welfare/awtf_guidance_dairy08.pdf)

Cattle organizations

Canadian Bison Association (canadianbison.ca)

Canadian Cattlemen's Association (cattle.ca)

Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada – Animal Welfare Task Force (dal.ca/faculty/agriculture/oacc/en-home/resources/livestock/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-task-force.html)

The Beef Magazine for Canadian Farmers (canadiancattlemen.ca)

CONTACTS

Agriculture Branch, Livestock Extension Services Unit

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources
Government of Yukon

Phone: 867-667-5838 or toll-free: 1-800-661-0408
(ask to be transferred)

Fax: 867-393-6222

Email: agriculture-livestock@yukon.ca

Website: Yukon.ca/support-agriculture

Location: 300 Main Street, Suite 320, Elijah Smith Building in Whitehorse

Mail: PO Box 2703 (K-320A) Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

Animal Health Unit

Department of Environment
Government of Yukon

Phone: 867-667-5600 or toll-free: 1-800-661-0408
(ask to be transferred)

Fax: 867-393-6263

Email: animalhealth@yukon.ca

Website: Yukon.ca/support-agriculture

Location: 10 Burns Road in Whitehorse

Mail: PO Box 2703 (V7) Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

DISCLAIMERS

French version

This document is available in French. A digital version is available online at Yukon.ca/livestock-health.

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