

Animal welfare

The aim of these rules is to protect the welfare of farmed animals by setting minimum standards for their care and husbandry. They apply to any species kept for farming purposes.

A. You must

1. make sure that your animals are looked after by enough staff who have the correct skills and knowledge;
2. make sure your animals are inspected thoroughly at least once a day if your husbandry system depends on frequent human attention and in other systems as often as necessary to avoid suffering;
3. make sure that there is enough lighting so that you can carry out a thorough inspection of the animals at any time;
4. make sure that you care for ill or injured animals immediately, and if they do not respond to this care then seek veterinary advice;
5. isolate sick or injured animals in suitable accommodation with dry comfortable bedding, if necessary;
6. make a record of any medicinal treatment given to your animals, and keep these records for at least 3 years from the date of the treatment and make these records available to any authorised person at inspection (or when otherwise asked for);
7. make a record of the number of deaths found when the animals are inspected, and keep these records for at least 3 years from the date of the relevant inspection and make these records available to any authorised person at inspection (or when otherwise asked for);
8. give your animals enough space to avoid unnecessary stress, if they are continuously or regularly tethered or confined, and also allow them to show their normal behaviour in line with established experience and scientific knowledge;
9. use materials for animals' accommodation that can be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected;
10. build and maintain accommodation so that there are no sharp edges or protrusions which could injure your animals;
11. keep air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative air humidity and gas concentrations within limits that will not harm your animals;
12. provide artificial lighting if there is not sufficient natural light in a building;
13. give your animals that are not kept in buildings access to a well drained lying area at all times and, if necessary, protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and other risks to their health;
14. check automated and/or mechanical equipment that is essential for the health and well-being of your animals at least once a day and put right any faults immediately (or take appropriate steps to protect the health and well-being of your animals until you can get the fault put right);
15. provide an appropriate back-up to the main system if your animals' health and well-being depends upon artificial ventilation and an alarm to warn you if the ventilation system fails. Inspect and test these at least once every 7 days;



16. feed your animals a wholesome diet, making sure that they have access to feed at intervals appropriate to their needs (and, in any case, at least once a day);
17. give all animals access to a suitable water supply and enough fresh drinking water or other fluid each day;
18. minimise any contamination of food and water and the harmful effects of competition between animals for food and water through the design and location of feeding and watering equipment.

B. You must not

1. restrict your animals' freedom of movement if this causes them unnecessary suffering or injury;
2. use materials and/or equipment for accommodation purposes that is harmful to your animals;
3. keep animals in permanent darkness or without an appropriate rest period from artificial lighting;
4. give your animals food or liquid in any way, or containing any substance, that could cause them unnecessary harm;
5. administer any substance to your animals which is harmful to their health or welfare;
6. carry out any mutilation or intervention on your animals, unless the action is classed as a 'permitted procedure'¹. (Many of these have conditions attached, including the need to be reasonably justified and be a measure of 'last resort');
7. carry out breeding procedures (either natural or artificial) that cause, or are likely to cause, harm to your animals;
8. keep animals for farming purposes unless it can be reasonably expected that the normal breed characteristics (genetic and physical) mean that they can be kept without harm to their health and welfare.



Further advice and guidance

The appendix for animal welfare (SMR 18) is available on our website at rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices

For *Codes of Recommendation for the Welfare of Livestock (for various species)* visit the Defra website at defra.gov.uk

For Council of Europe Recommendations made under the *European Convention on the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes* visit the Council of Europe website at www.coe.int

Your local Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency office at animalhealth.defra.gov.uk

Defra helpline: 08459 33 55 77

¹ Details of permitted procedures are available from the cross compliance section of our website at rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/appendices or in the Mutilations (Permitted Procedures) (England) Regulations 2007.