

Animal Welfare:

Livestock



During animal health emergency situations animal welfare issues must be considered and addressed. This handout overviews some of the pertinent animal welfare considerations for livestock during animal health emergencies.

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is the ethical responsibility of ensuring the well-being of animals. It refers to the physical and mental state of the animal and includes consideration of the animal's health, behavior, and biological function. **Animal welfare plans need to be continuously evaluated and refined**

The Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare

The internationally recognized ideal states of welfare, can provide valuable guidance and a framework for determining and assessing animal welfare situations.

- **Freedom from hunger and thirst**
 - Providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain health and vigor
- **Freedom from discomfort**
 - Providing appropriate environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- **Freedom from pain, injuries, or illness**
 - Providing disease preventive measures or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- **Freedom to express normal behavior**
 - Providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
- **Freedom from fear and distress**
 - Ensuring conditions and treatment which avoids mental suffering

Freedom from Hunger and Thirst

- **Daily requirements vary with species and age**
- **Monitor all feed and water intake**

	Water (per head/day)	Feed (per head/day)
Cattle	6-9 gallons	8-20 pounds hay
Pigs	1-3 gallons	3 pounds grain
Sheep/Goats	3 quarts	3 pounds hay

Freedom From Discomfort

- **Appropriately sized confinement space**
 - Stalls or outdoor pens
 - Protection from elements
 - Appropriate temperature for time of year
 - Ventilation
- **Bedding**
 - Saw dust, wood chips, straw
- **Waste management**

Freedom From Pain, Injury, Disease

- **Veterinary examination upon entry/exit**
 - Illness
 - Injury
 - Nutritional well-being
- **Treat appropriately**
 - Medical, surgical
 - Humane euthanasia
- **Monitor daily**
- **May have delay in showing signs**
 - Stress analgesia

Freedom To Express Normal Behavior

- **Livestock**
 - Herd animals/prey animals
 - Anxious when isolated
- **Pigs**
 - Inquisitive nature and strong natural urge to escape
- **Goats**
 - Difficult to keep confined

Freedom From Fear and Distress

- **Recognize normal vs. abnormal**
 - Elevated stress makes animals unpredictable
 - Experienced handlers needed
- **Safe transport**
 - Avoid overcrowding
 - Keep in familiar groups
- **Group by species, age, gender, farm of origin, pregnant animals**

Responders Mental Health and Animal Welfare

- **Response stress can affect mental health of responders**
- **May affect animals welfare**
 - Responder apathy
 - Responder fatigue
 - Uncompleted tasks
 - Carelessness of tasks
 - Forgetting overall welfare needs

Additional Resources

- American Veterinary Medical Association. The veterinarian's role in animal welfare at www.avma.org/products/animal_welfare/welfare.pdf
- AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf
- USDA Animal Welfare Information Center <http://awic.nal.usda.gov>
- OIE Animal Welfare Guidelines. Terrestrial Animal Health Code www.oie.int
- American College of Animal Welfare www.acaw.org

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