

Policy: SC-33-200  
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ILAR/APHIS/FASS  
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**Title: Husbandry Care of Dairy Cattle**

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I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for dairy cattle.

II. Policy:

All units providing animal care for dairy cattle used in agricultural research and teaching must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the 4th edition of the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching (*Ag Guide*). Dairy cattle used in biomedical research and non-standard agricultural teaching must additionally meet the requirements in the USDA Animal Welfare Regulations (*AWR*) and the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*). Deviations or exceptions must be approved by the Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC.

III. Procedure:

**Daily (365 days a year without exception):**

- Observe each animal and check for health concerns (*AWR* 2.33, *Ag Guide* pg. 22).
- Ensure adequate feed and ad libitum potable water is available (*Ag Guide* p. 21).
- Remove contaminated or spoiled food from feed bunks (*Ag Guide* pg. 81)
- Record and report sick animals to designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure (*AWR* 2.33, *Ag Guide* pg. 10).
- Milk on a regular schedule that is appropriate for the goals of the herd or specific research project.
- Remove wet bedding and manure from free-stalls (*Ag Guide* pg. 95).
- Record daily completion of each task, initial each task, and date the log.

**As needed:**

- Remove excreta and food waste to ensure worker and animal health (*Ag Guide* pg. 20).
- Sanitize primary enclosures, feed bunks, and surrounding environment (*Ag Guide* pg. 20).
- Surfaces that contact the animals such as fences, gates, restraint devices and other equipment should be routinely inspected and maintained or replaced (*Ag Guide* pg. 58)
- Maintain feed stuffs and remove spoiled or contaminated feeds (*Ag Guide* pg. 21). Expiration dates for bagged feed must be readily available.

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- Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (*Ag Guide* pg. 21).
- Each facility will develop their own best practices for sanitization of the macroenvironment typically occurring every 6 months or whenever there is a change in species.

### **Environmental Enrichment:**

- Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy ([SOC-30-102](#)).

### **Housing:**

- Facilities for dairy cattle should provide physical accommodations that allow for a relatively dry area for the animals to lie down in and be comfortable, and should be conducive to cows lying for as many hours of the day as they desire (*Ag Guide* pg. 93).
- Enclosures must be in good condition, free of any damage and protrusions that may cause injury (*Ag. Guide* pg. 64).
- Floors shall be moisture-resistant, impact-resistant, slip-resistant, and resistant to corrosion (*Ag Guide* pg. 80).
- Whenever possible, cattle should be socially housed based on compatibility (*Ag Guide* pg. 31).
- Space requirements for agricultural research and teaching for dairy cattle can be found in the *Ag Guide*
  - Table 7-1 pg. 93 for bedded packs
  - Table 7-3 pg. 96 for freestalls.
  - Calves being fed milk or milk replacer, should have 2.8 m<sup>2</sup> (30 ft<sup>2</sup>) or more of bedded space per calf (not including service alleys) (*Ag Guide* pg. 92)
- Space requirements differ for biomedical research and agricultural use animals. Specific space requirements can be found in the *Guide* and the *Ag Guide*, respectively..