

Policy: SC-33-200
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Title: Husbandry Care of Dairy Cattle

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for dairy cattle (*Bos taurus*).

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 Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals Used in Research (*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*), the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*), and Public Health Service Policy (*PHS*). 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 (*Ag Guide* pg. 22).
- Ensure adequate feed and ad libitum potable water is available (*Ag Guide* p. 21).
- Remove contaminated or spoiled food (*Ag Guide* pg. 78)
- Record sick and dead animals, and report them to Campus Veterinary Services (CVS) or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure for reporting sick or dead animals (*Ag Guide* pg. 9).
- 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. 77).
- Record daily completion of tasks, initial, and date log sheet.

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).

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- Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Maintain feed stuffs and remove spoiled or contaminated feeds (*Ag Guide* pg. 21). Expiration dates for bagged feed must be readily available.
- Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (*Ag Guide* pg. 21).

Environmental Enrichment:

- Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy.
- Cattle should be provided the opportunity to demonstrate species typical behavior. Examples of enrichment for cattle include conspecifics (*Ag Guide* pg. 31).
- Devices must be checked regularly for wear and discarded when safety hazards are observed.

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. 74).
- 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. 75).
- Whenever possible, cattle should be socially housed based on compatibility (*Ag Guide* pg. 79).
- Space requirements for agricultural research and teaching for dairy cattle can be found in Table 7-1 of the *Ag Guide*, pg. 76.
- Space requirements:

Animals/Enclosure	Weight (kg)	Floor Area/Animal (ft ²)
1	<75	24
1	Up to 200	48
1	Up to 350	72
1	Up to 500	96
1	Up to 650	124
1	>650	≥144
2-5	<75	20
2-5	Up to 200	40
2-5	Up to 350	60
2-5	Up to 500	80
2-5	Up to 650	105
2-5	>650	≥120
>5	<75	18
>5	Up to 200	36
>5	Up to 350	54
>5	Up to 500	72
>5	Up to 650	93

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>5	>650	≥108
<i>(Guide pg. 62-63)</i>		

When housing this species, please also refer to the Animal Care Program's Standards of Care Policy on Pest Control, Identification and Labeling of Cages, Environmental Enrichment, Food Storage, House-Keeping in Facilities Housing Biomedical Research Animals, Physical Plant Facilities Maintenance, as well as the IACUC's Policy on Social Housing of Social Species.