



# ANIMAL CARE CHECKLIST FOR VBP+

Anchors producer actions and industry preparedness

When the Verified Beef Production (VBP) program was set up by producers as the on-farm food safety program for Canadian beef, it was a leader in many ways. As an easy reminder it included a simple-to-understand checklist of expected outcomes.

These defined industry management fundamentals in beef on-farm food safety. When the program was expanded and rebranded as VBP+ in 2016 to include modules for animal care, environment and bio-security, checklists were expanded. They also became even more important.

The checklist, set up for each standard operating procedure (SOP), helps set the language and expectations of sustainability in the beef nation.

## CHECKLIST FUNDAMENTALS

Today's beef world is focused on sustainability, consumer trust and social license as never before. Checklists outline your responsibility as a producer and build language to communicate with your team, your industry and your public.

Here is the most powerful statement of commitment that we can make as producers about the care of our animals.

**Clear communications.** We will use this knowledge as a guide for our own production, to communicate with and mentor our teams and build a safe, productive work environment. And we will use this knowledge to support our industry image.

**Watch drug withdrawal, manage broken needles.** Managing drugs properly and handling incidences of broken needles have



become a highly visible part of consumer trust. Cattle will only be shipped after meeting the withdrawal period for animal health products. And animals with broken needles will be identified and managed properly.

**Follow the code.** The Beef Code of Practice sets out clear animal care requirements. We will follow this code and work with a veterinarian where necessary to build approaches and techniques that ensure we are handling animals properly.

**Euthanasia and timely culling.** Non-ambulatory cattle will be managed according to clearly established industry protocols. A big part of that is timely culling, especially cull cows.

**Responsible shipping decisions.** Cattle transport is one of the most visible aspects of the beef industry. How animals are treated during transport is one of its major challenges. We will manage transport responsibly.

**Feed and water.** Providing essential feed and water is the most fundamental aspect of animal care. We will be responsible for our

animals' well-being and advocate for others in our industry to act responsibly as well.

**Checking cattle.** We understand checking on animals and knowing what to do if they need help is a basic expectation of a beef manager today.

**Quiet handling.** The benefits of gentle, well-designed animal handling have been proven. We will manage accordingly.

**Feedyard expectations.** Feedyards have a special need to deal with bullers, pregnant cattle, and step-wise rations.

## COMPLETE CHECKLIST ONLINE

The complete checklist for SOPs in all four VBP+ modules is available online. It is the most complete overview of expectations for a sustainable beef industry. It is available free of charge to anyone interested.

However, producers will get the most value from these by participating in VBP+. Find information on the program, how to participate and your provincial contact point on the program website.

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