

# **ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE POLICY**



**MEADOW**

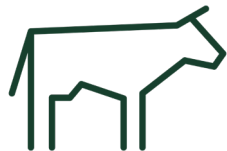


# THE MEADOW FOODS APPROACH

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Meadow Foods has a long-standing belief that a quality product comes from milk produced by well-managed, happy and healthy cows. Our customers and consumers expect great products that do not compromise animal welfare and achieving this is imperative to the team at Meadow Foods.

Our milk is sourced from our direct supply farmers, many of whom we have worked with for over twenty years.



All of the farms are approved members of The Red Tractor Dairy Scheme as well as members of a regional Beef scheme (Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Scheme, Farm Assured Welsh Livestock Beef and Lamb and The Quality Meat Scotland Cattle and Sheep Scheme).

Welfare performance is monitored in a number of ways including scheme assessments; information gathered at the assessments; farm visits; farmer surveys and milk sampling results. Meadow Foods has an experienced and practical farm liaison team who are regularly on farm to offer support to our suppliers and we have a team of internal and external technical experts available when necessary.

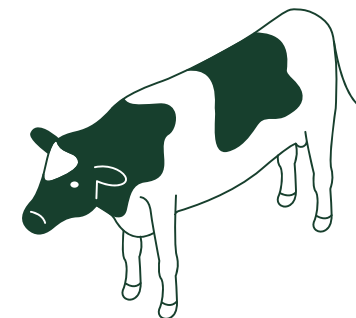


# WORKING TOGETHER



The well-being of the cows that produce milk for our products is at the heart of our business and we are wholly committed to working with our farmers to develop a sustainable milk supply that exceeds the welfare requirements of the UK farm assurance schemes.

We are determined to support our farmers in achieving continuous improvement and to ensure a great product for our customers; the first step was to further develop our Animal Health and Welfare Policy. The policy applies to all cattle under the care of our UK based dedicated supply group of farmers who produce the milk for all our ingredients products.



Meadow Foods' aim is to work with farmers from our dedicated supplier pool to achieve the highest possible welfare management that is commercially viable on farms. The Milk Procurement Director has ownership of the delivery of this policy, and the day to day operational responsibility will be managed by our experienced Farm Liaison Managers. It is important to our business that the responsibility for animal welfare belongs to everyone who has contact with livestock and is a legal and contractual obligation for the farmer.

A close working relationship with the Certification Body that provides our Red Tractor Dairy assurance is key to fulfilling our objectives and supplies a source of additional information and relevant data from which the policy can be developed and monitored.

We are implementing a health and welfare development working group which will influence the strategic direction of the policy, working

alongside the Milk Procurement Director, who is responsible for its success. The collaborative group will represent a range of stakeholders and will be consultative in approach, making recommendations based on research and good commercial practise. Standards and outcome measures will be considered and where appropriate, implemented for the benefit of the animal and continual welfare improvement.



# THE 'FIVE FREEDOMS'

## THE CORNERSTONE OF MEADOW FOODS' VALUES

Meadow Foods will adhere to the Five Freedoms by focusing on the following areas;

Meadow Foods understands that cattle are sentient beings and have the right to a good life, to be physically fit and have a sense of well-being. We embrace the 'Five Freedoms' and expect our farmers to follow them as the foundation for ensuring their animals a good life; not withstanding that on occasion there may be an unavoidable injury or incident that may temporarily influence life quality. When this occurs, we expect prompt action so that everything reasonably possible is done to ensure that distress and pain are kept to a minimum.

The '**FIVE FREEDOMS**' are endorsed by Meadow Foods and must be followed throughout the animal's life.

- 1 Freedom from **HUNGER AND THIRST**, by giving ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour
- 2 Freedom from **DISCOMFORT**, by providing an appropriate environment including shelter, and a comfortable resting area
- 3 Freedom from **PAIN, INJURY AND DISEASE**, by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- 4 Freedom to **EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOUR**, by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and appropriate company of the animal's own kind
- 5 Freedom from **FEAR AND DISTRESS**, by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering



## OUR POSITION ON CORE VALUES

Meadow Foods suppliers must adhere to the Five Freedoms as well as other key requirements, many of which are essential for compliance with The Red Tractor Dairy Scheme.

Our current position for the key requirements is that 100% of our farmers **do not**:

- Produce milk from cows that are cloned or genetically engineered
- Use growth promoters or sub-therapeutic antimicrobials for growth promotion
- Tail dock their cows
- Tether cattle
- Carry out Bull Calf Euthanasia

# MEADOW FOODS WILL ADHERE TO THE FIVE FREEDOMS BY FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING AREAS;

## FEED

All feed used is safe, traceable and legal in accordance with the Red Tractor Scheme requirements.

## ANIMAL HOUSING & PASTURE ACCESS

Our main concern is, and will always be, that the welfare needs of cattle are met and they can express normal behaviour irrespective of the production system. No production system must compromise the welfare of cattle.

## CONFINEMENT

Calf accommodation must allow social contact unless segregated for health reasons. As a minimum, calves must be able to move normally with ease and enter any hutch accommodation provided, freely and unhindered.



## DISEASE MANAGEMENT

All our farmers have implemented herd health plans; the outcomes of which are reviewed annually as a minimum, by their vets. Farmers must record the incidences of lameness, mastitis, involuntary culling and calf mortality in their herd. In the future this information may be used for benchmarking and as a tool to measure continuous development.

We encourage participation in national disease control and management programmes such as Action Johne's- National Johne's Management Plan and BVD free initiatives.

Somatic cell counts are monitored on a daily/weekly basis so that we can identify issues and support our farmers to improve as soon as possible. In addition, we recommend that our farmers milk record which can help identify early indicators of a problem.



## STOCK TASKS

We understand there may be a need to castrate young bull calves and remove horn buds from some calves (disbud), for their safety and that of the stock person. All procedures must be carried out by competent operators who must follow the requirements of the Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock- Cattle, which define age limits and suitable methods; anaesthetic must always be used when disbudding. We encourage early intervention for these tasks and the use of pain relief in line with vet recommendations, to minimise discomfort and pain.

## APPROPRIATE & TIMELY USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS

RUMA (Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance) believes that antibiotics should be used 'as little as possible, but as much as necessary.' We endorse this principle and encourage farmers to avoid prophylactic use of antibiotics unless recommended by their vet. We expect our farmers to select a treatment appropriate for the animal and do this in a timely manner in accordance with veterinary guidance.

In line with the latest Red Tractor Scheme requirements June 2018, our farmers are committed to only using the highest priority critically important antibiotics (as defined by the European Medicines Agency), as a last resort and only under veterinary direction, their use must be supported by sensitivity or diagnostic testing.

## STUNNING BEFORE SLAUGHTER

We are strongly opposed to slaughter without pre-stunning and we recommend that our farmers ensure their stock goes to an abattoir that operates a policy of always stunning before slaughter.

## TRAVELLING TIMES

In addition to information gathered at the Red Tractor Scheme assessment, we often survey our farmers to find out more about their business and operating practices. A recent survey found that nearly all livestock travelled less than 60 miles; most travelled less than 20 miles. Nearly all the journeys travelled are under four hours.

We believe that the export of calves is not acceptable from a welfare perspective and encourage farmers to find out the final destination of calves sold.





# INITIATIVES

Meadow Food's initiatives will include animal welfare considerations and may include benchmarking activities to support sustainable farming for the future.

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## YOUNG FARMER PROGRAMME

We have launched an initiative to help us with future proofing our industry. In October 2018 we launched our Young Farmers programme which brings together the next generation of farmers and gives them key business skills and industry knowledge to drive forward their businesses.



## MEADOW SUSTAINABLE FARM SCHEME

Meadow's new Sustainable Farm Scheme will help ensure our consumers have confidence that the dairy ingredients in the foods they eat are produced in a responsible manner. With the help of our farmers who will receive a specific bonus payment when they contribute and share their practices, we will continue to develop our sustainability policy which will be adopted through our business.

## SHOUT OUT ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE

At Meadow Foods we pride ourselves in taking all animal welfare concerns on our supply farms seriously, whether raised by farmers, members of the public, farm assurance assessors, our tanker drivers or customers. We always investigate any concerns raised and work with the producer to implement an action plan. When necessary we may involve a vet or consultant.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & COMPLIANCE

This policy is the next step on the journey to a sustainable supply base that puts cattle welfare first and it supports our current position. It will evolve over time and will be underpinned by expert advice, research and commercially viable practice.

We will work with our farmers, and we commit to continuous improvement with their help and support. Our animal health and welfare steering group will be heavily involved in identifying future policy development; we are committed to developing a number of tools to help meet welfare requirements and will consider welfare outcome measures.

There will be an annual review to ensure we make continued progress and the evolution of the policy will be monitored at the Executive Board level four times a year and reported annually to the Shareholder Board.