

**Directions:** *This template has been developed to assist with the basic procedures for non-ambulatory animal care. It is the responsibility of the farmer to complete this form in accordance to their dairy operation. It should be reviewed on an annual basis to address any changes that have occurred with individual practices.*

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date last reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual or position responsible for this process: \_\_\_\_\_

**Objective:** To provide comfort and support to animals aiding in their recovery from injury/illness or to humanely euthanize animals that will not recover.

**Definitions:** Any animal (including calves) that cannot stand or walk is to be considered 'non-ambulatory'. If the animal will not rise, or is unable to rise due to a slippery surface, it is considered non-ambulatory.

### **Moving and Handling**

- When a non-ambulatory animal is identified in an ambulatory group, the (designated person or position) is notified.
- Non-ambulatory animals that are severely suffering and determined unsalvageable are to be euthanized immediately.
- A person trained to operate the sled or loader for moving a non-ambulatory animal is notified to remove the non-ambulatory animal from an ambulatory animal group within (suggested two hours or less) of being identified.
  - Picking up a non-ambulatory animal with the loader requires (suggested is minimum of three people: one person operating the loader and two people assisting on the ground).
  - The non-ambulatory animal must never be scooped up by the loader; rather it must be gently rolled into the loader bucket by the caretakers on the ground while the loader operator rolls the bucket back.
- The non-ambulatory animal is to be carried gently on the sled or in the loader bucket to an area specified for special needs/non-ambulatory animals. This designated area should be away from other healthy animals that can cause harm to non-ambulatory animals.
  - Any body parts of the non-ambulatory animal shall not be touching the ground while being moved.
  - The loader should never be driven recklessly or at a speed that would cause additional harm to the animals. The loader must be able to stop quickly enough in case the animal attempts to get out of the loader. Therefore, the speed of the loader should be slow enough to stop in time if this event were to occur.
  - The non-ambulatory animal must be gently rolled off the sled or out of the loader bucket into soft bedding where it will immediately be given clean water and food.

### **Treatment and Rehabilitation**

- The non-ambulatory animal will receive treatment by (designated person or position) each morning and evening.
- General treatment protocols will depend on age, stage of lactation and diagnosis.

- Non-ambulatory animals judged to be irreparable by (vet, owner, manager) due to traumatic injury will be euthanized promptly. (see euthanasia section)
- Non-ambulatory animals judged to be treatable (by vet, owner, manager) will be treated according to general treatment protocols.
- Treatment of non-ambulatory animals should consider anti-inflammatory and analgesic medication (individual cases to be determined by herd manager or vet).
- All non-ambulatory animals will be rolled from side to side (suggested minimum every 2-3 hours) to try and prevent damage to their muscles.
- Non-ambulatory animals can be assisted to stand with a sling that is placed around their belly. The sling needs to be wide enough to support the animal's weight over a broad area. The animal should never be left in the sling unattended. The amount of time an animal is allowed to stand in the sling will be dependent on the animal.
  - In general, hip lifts should not be used as they can cause injuries. If they must be used, it must be minimal and with great care and supervision.
- When a non-ambulatory animal that has been receiving treatment is judged to be non-responsive and unsalvageable by (vet, owner, manager), the animal is to be euthanized.
  - Employees are to notify the (vet, owner, manager) of non-ambulatories in rehabilitation longer than (suggested maximum of 3 days). If the animal is deemed to be improving in health, is able to sit upright and appears alert, then rehabilitation may continue as stated in the health plan or directed by the veterinarian.

### Euthanasia

- All non-ambulatory animals must have access to feed and water until euthanasia. Animals should be checked no less than twice a day to ensure access to feed and water.
- If the animal does not improve within (suggested 1 week maximum) after attempts to rehabilitate the animal, then the animal needs to be properly euthanized in accordance to this plan.
- All euthanasia will be conducted in accordance to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) approved practices. This can include gunshot, captive bolt, or other approved practices. (List the practice(s) conducted on this farm).
  - Only specifically trained personnel or herd veterinarians are authorized to euthanize animals.

### Mortality Disposal

- Upon discovery of mortality, remove it from the area within 12 hours. If it can't be removed by hand, use the loader (taking care to avoid damage to the hide).
- Take the animals to the (identify mortality site).
  - Do not place mortalities near any feedstuffs.
  - Avoid placing mortalities in an area that can be viewed by the public.
- Contact designated individual for proper disposal procedures.
  - Disposal practices legal in (state) are attached.
- After moving the mortality, immediately wash and disinfect the loader bucket before using it again on the farm.
- If using a private farm trailer, immediate wash and disinfect the trailer upon returning to the farm (same procedures as with loader).
- Record animal tag number, date of death, and cause of death.