

Ohio Livestock Care Standards



Equine

Horses, Ponies, Mules, Donkeys



Department of
Agriculture

Ohio

Livestock Care Standards

In November 2009, Ohio voters passed State Issue 2 approving the creation of the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board. This vote demonstrated Ohioans' support for keeping the state's number one industry – food and agriculture – vibrant and strong. The board was charged with creating state standards for the care and well-being of livestock in Ohio.

The enabling language required the board to take the following into consideration when developing the standards: Best management practices for the care and well-being of livestock; Biosecurity; Disease prevention; Animal Morbidity and mortality data; Food safety practices, Protection of local, affordable food supplies for consumers; Generally accepted veterinary medical practices, livestock practice standards and ethical standards established by the American Veterinary Medical Association, and; Any other factors that the board considers necessary for the proper care and well-being of livestock in this state.

The comprehensive livestock care standards developed by the Board are meant to be practical for livestock producers of all sizes, scales and production methods and will not only assure better livestock care, but will also support the state's overarching goals of promoting safe and affordable food, and helping to prevent the outbreak of both animal and human diseases.

Unless otherwise noted in this guide, the responsibility for ensuring these livestock care standards are being kept falls on the person who owns or has responsibility for or custody of the animal.

Equine

Horses, Ponies, Mules, Donkeys

Ohio's livestock care standards regulate equine animals regardless of the purpose for which they are raised. As used in these rules, **equine animals** means horses, ponies, mules and donkeys.

General Welfare Considerations

Feed and Water

In order to help ensure the growth and maintenance of normal body condition¹, equine animals must receive a sufficient quantity and quality of feed and water on a regular basis. All newborn foals must be offered colostrum or a colostrum replacement within 24 hours of birth.

¹ Body condition is a determination that relates an animal's body fat and/or muscle mass to its skeletal dimension and its stage of production.

Housing

As defined in the rules, housing means the physical area or location which is occupied by the animals. Housing and handling facilities must be designed to **minimize injury**. In general, housing must provide a clean and safe environment that promotes the health, welfare and performance of equine animals in all stages of their lives. It is important that housing, handling facilities and equipment continue to be monitored and maintained for this same reason.

Regardless of whether the animals are housed outdoors or indoors, the environmental management must be designed to control parasite infestation and to minimize insect infestations. The rules require that equine animals housed outside have reasonable protection from adverse weather conditions and from predators. Any enclosures, including fencing, must be designed and maintained to minimize bruising and injury and must also provide for the safety of humans and other animals.

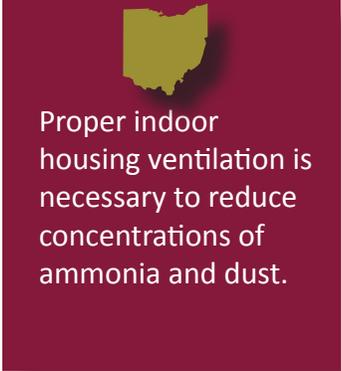
Outdoor housing areas need to minimize prolonged exposure to any adverse environmental conditions that would compromise the animal's health and safety. If open lots are used, they must be maintained to promote proper drainage away from resting areas and from feed and water.



The outdoor housing rules were developed based on three principles:

1. Minimize prolonged exposure to adverse weather conditions
2. Promote drainage away from resting areas
3. Ensure access to feed and water

Indoor housing must seek to minimize exposure to adverse weather, must provide ventilation and alleys must be designed and maintained so as to minimize the potential for injury and bruising. If stalls are used, they must be cleaned and replenished regularly with clean, good quality and absorbent bedding and the animals must be provided with the opportunity for exercise unless medically prohibited.



Proper indoor housing ventilation is necessary to reduce concentrations of ammonia and dust.

Generally, stocking densities that do not allow for all animals to lie down at the same time and easily stand back up are prohibited and all animals must have access to feed and water without excessive competition.

Adequate lighting must be available for inspection purposes. The light can be provided by electric lighting, or may be as minimal as a flashlight, natural sunlight or a portable light source for indoor or outdoor inspection.

Equipment

Animal handling equipment must also be designed and maintained in order to minimize bruising and injury. Distress can occur when animals are injured, sick or in pain, therefore rules require equipment to be used 'humanely'. **Humane care** is defined as handling of animals that seeks to minimize distress.

Handling, sorting or other equipment used to move the animals must be used humanely. When restraint is required, it must be minimal in degree and duration, and it must minimize the potential for injury.

An electric prod can only be used as a diagnostic tool to determine whether an animal can rise on its own. When necessary, only hand-held, 50 volt or less, battery-operated electric prods can be used. Prods must be used humanely and cannot be used in sensitive areas (including the eyes, ears, nose, vulva, anus, udder or testicles).

All tack and/or harnesses must fit properly and be well maintained so as to minimize the potential for injuries.

Handling

Ohio's livestock care standards prohibit **anyone** who owns or has responsibility for or custody of livestock from maliciously or recklessly throwing, dropping, or dragging the animals. It is also not permissible use the tail or ears to pick an animal up or carry an animal, or to pull its legs into positions or in directions which might cause it to be injured or in pain.

If the animal's position does not permit lifting or another method of movement, however, it is permissible to drag an ambulatory disabled² or non-ambulatory disabled animal the **minimum distance** needed to allow movement by another method.

² Ambulatory disabled livestock are livestock that are capable of walking, but have a physical impairment that severely limits or threatens their ability to walk.

General Management Practices

When castrating equine animals, chemical restraint and effective analgesia must be used.

Animals must be monitored regularly, and if evidence is found that normal function and/or body condition has not been maintained, corrective measures must be taken.

Tail docking in horses can only be performed as a proactive measure if medically necessary such as in the case of accident, malformation or disease. Tail docking **must** be performed by a licensed veterinarian.

If equine animals are being held at a non-terminal market or collection facility, they must be provided with a dry area so that all animals can lie down at the same time and be protected from adverse weather. If the animals are held at the facility for more than eight hours they must be provided access to feed and water.

Health

In addition to appropriate labeled medication, prescription and extra-label medications are often necessary to ensure livestock health. The medication label instructions must also be followed:

- how and where to administer the medication
- the proper dosage of the medication
- how to store the medication
- how long the medication must be withdrawn prior to the use of the animal's meat for human consumption.

The livestock care rules require all prescription and extra-label use medication to be obtained and administered to livestock with the advice and consent of a licensed veterinarian.

As with equipment usage, all practices and procedures pertaining to the health and medical treatment of equine animals **must** be performed so as to minimize distress. For this reason, animals must also be monitored regularly for evidence of disease, injury and parasites. When evidence of any of these ailments is found, corrective measures must be taken. If required by the condition of the animal, a means of separating the sick animals from the healthy livestock must be available.



Extra-label drug use is the use of an approved drug in a manner that is not in accordance with its approved label. Extra-label drug use is only permitted under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian and in the context of a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship.

Health

Distressed or Disabled Livestock

An entire chapter of the Ohio livestock care standards is devoted to proper and humane care for animals that are **distressed** (injured, sick or in pain) or **disabled** (ability to move or walk is severely or completely hindered). Disabled livestock are defined as either **ambulatory** (meaning they have some ability to walk or move) or **non-ambulatory** (meaning walking or movement is not possible).

When an animal becomes disabled, treatment must be humane and relative to the ailment of the animal. If the disabled animal can still move on its own (ambulatory), then the animal must continue to be monitored for needed treatment, transported for treatment or sale, or euthanized.

If the disabled animal still cannot move on its own (non-ambulatory), then the animal must be cared for and provided feed and water, provided necessary treatment, transported for treatment, or euthanized.

If, at a non-terminal market or a collection facility, an animal becomes disabled and their condition does not allow for immediate sale, the animal(s) must either be released by authorization from the Department of Agriculture or euthanized.

If, after receiving treatment and additional feed and care, an animal still looks to be emaciated, then it must be sent to market, or euthanized.

Proper and complete documentation of treatments, medication and medication withdrawal times is necessary when bringing any disabled



If you have questions about how to have an animal released by authorization from the Department of Agriculture, call the Division of Animal Health at 614-728-6220.

animal to market. It is the responsibility of the person who owns or has responsibility for or custody of the animal (except for third-party transporters) to keep these records.

Transportation

When transporting equine animals, the person who owns or has responsibility for or custody of the animal(s) is responsible for determining the load density. The transportation method used and the density of the load must minimize injury and must allow fallen animals to rise. Ramps, chutes and other means used for transportation must be constructed to provide adequate footing to minimize slips and falls.

Equine animals **cannot** be transported in two-tiered or double-deck semi-trailers which are designed to transport cattle, sheep or swine and the animals must be able to stand upright in their normal position without their heads, (except the ears) touching the top of the transport conveyance.

Handling of animals during the loading, transport, and unloading process must be done humanely. Non-ambulatory disabled animals are **not permitted** to be loaded for transport except for treatment. Stallions and jacks must be separated from other equine animals during transport. Suckling foals must be transported separately from other animals and, unless the health and safety of the foal is compromised, must be transported with their dams.

If prolonged transit is necessary, animals must be reasonably protected from adverse weather conditions and transporters **must** stop every 28 hours to unload and provide animals with food, water and rest for at least five consecutive hours. There is an exception to this requirement if the transportation vehicle allows the livestock to lie down and rest and have access to feed and water. The transport driver is solely responsible for the welfare of the animals during transit and must have an emergency action plan.

Transportation

Euthanasia

The only acceptable methods of euthanasia for equine animals are the use of a penetrating captive bolt, a gunshot, or the use of injectable barbiturates. These methods are to be considered as sole methods for euthanasia; however, the rules do not preclude a licensed veterinarian from performing acceptable standards of veterinary practices.

If, in the course of employing one of these methods, humane death does not occur, the same method or another acceptable method must be performed immediately. Death is confirmed by the absence of a heartbeat or breathing for five minutes, and the animal's lack of a blink reflex when the eye is touched. *Exsanguination* (to bleed an animal to death) can only be used to ensure the death of an unconscious animal or following stunning.

Physical Methods

The physical methods permitted for euthanizing equine animals produce a humane death through the rapid loss of consciousness, followed by cardiac and respiratory arrest, ultimately leading to the complete loss of brain function.

Penetrating captive bolt

Captive bolt guns are powered by gunpowder or compressed air. In order to ensure humane death, the gun must be held firmly against the head and must provide sufficient energy to penetrate the skull of the animal and cause a sudden loss of consciousness.

Gunshot

The rules require that the shooting take place in an area where legal firearm use is permitted and that the shooter be proficient in the use of firearms. The safety of the shooter, the public, and any nearby animal(s) must be taken into consideration when employing this method and the animal must be reasonably controlled whenever feasible.



These methods must be followed when euthanizing an animal, regardless of whether the animal will be slaughtered on the farm, or its carcass burned, buried, composted or rendered. Ohio's livestock care standards do not alter the current regulations regarding the disposal of animals after they are confirmed dead.

Gunshot methods must utilize bullets of suitable caliber³ depending on the size of the animal to be euthanized, and that expand on impact. The gun must be held as close as reasonably possible, but not less than 2 inches, from the head and the projectile must enter the brain at such an angle as to cause instant loss of consciousness and humane death.

Barbiturates

Ohio's livestock care standards require that all injectable agents used for euthanizing animals, including all barbiturate derivatives, must be used by or under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

³ Ammunition for most animals must be a minimum caliber .22 hollow point long rifle.

Sites for physical methods

Ohio's livestock care standards permit two sites/entry angles when using a physical method to euthanize equine animals. When performed from the front (see Figure 1), the gun or penetrating captive bolt must be directed at a point just above the intersection of diagonal lines taken from the base of each ear to the opposite eye aiming at the spine.

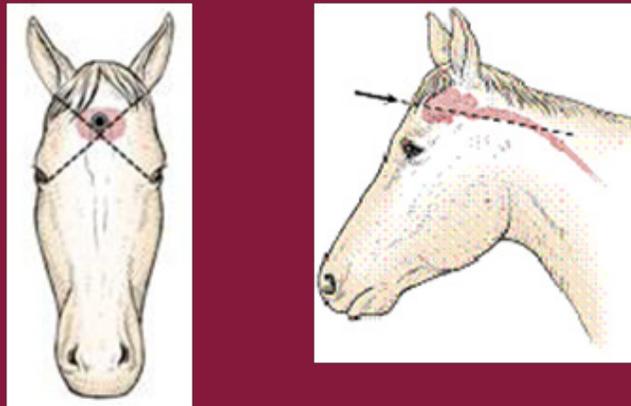


Figure 1 – Frontal method

When performed from the side (see Figure 2), the gun must be directed at a 90 degree angle to the head at a point midway between the eye and the base of the ear.

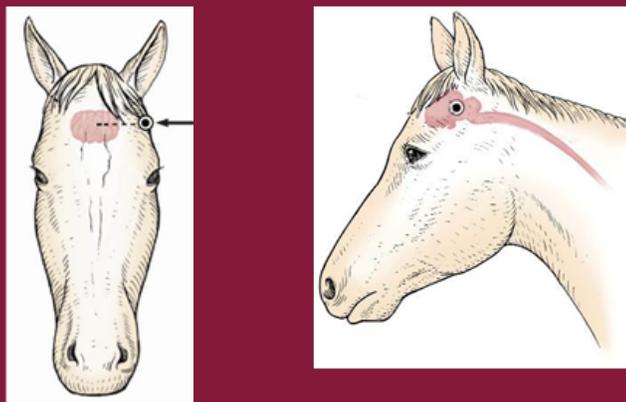


Figure 2 – Temporal (side) method

Enforcement

Ohio's livestock care standards will be enforced by the Ohio Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Divisions of Animal Health and Enforcement. Farms that are not currently subject to regular inspection will not be subject to any new regular inspections as a result of these rules. ODA staff will only inspect a farm if a credible complaint regarding violations of these rules is reported. Anonymous complaints will not be considered credible.

ODA staff will investigate credible complaints to determine if a violation has occurred. Violations affecting more than one animal **may** be considered as one offense. If a violation is found, the person who owns or has immediate custody of the animal(s) will be informed in person, or by telephone, fax, or email. If the notification is made in person or by telephone, written notification will also be sent within three days.

If the violation can be corrected, ODA staff will include the corrective measures which must be taken to achieve compliance with the rules, including the amount of time allowed to take any necessary corrective measures, in the written notice. If the responsible party fails to remedy the violation within the time specified in the written notice, they may be assessed a subsequent violation for each day the violation remains uncured.

Minor Violations

The rules define two kinds of violations: minor and major. Minor violations of Ohio's livestock care standards are generally due to neglect or unintentional acts of substandard practices. Minor violations are finable up to \$500 for the first minor offense and up to \$1,000 for each subsequent minor offense that is committed within 60 months of the previous minor violation.



If you have questions about how to comply with these rules or about the enforcement process, please call the ODA Division of Animal Industry at (614) 728-6220 or visit the Department's website at www.agri.ohio.gov.

Major Violations

Major violations of Ohio's livestock care standards are reckless or intentional acts which result in the unjustified infliction of pain. Major violations can be any action which:

- places an animal's life in imminent peril
- causes protracted disfigurement
- causes protracted impairment of health
- causes protracted loss or impairment of the function of a limb or bodily organ

Major violations of Ohio's livestock care standards are finable offenses with penalties ranging between \$1,000 and \$5,000 for the first major violation and \$5,000 to \$10,000 for each subsequent major violation that is committed within 60 months of the previous major violation.

If a major violation has occurred, ODA staff may also work with state and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations to provide care to the animal(s). This includes but is not limited to providing feed and water, providing medical care, taking possession of the animal(s), or euthanizing the animal.

Additional Penalties

In addition to any fine assessed for a violation, ODA may also assess an additional fee to recover the cost to the department to investigate a matter. This fee is based on the average salary and the average cost of benefits of all employees who are directly involved in the investigation, copying costs, and any direct or indirect costs to ODA including all necessary laboratory analysis and the caretaking costs.

Anyone who has been issued a fine for violations of these rules will have 30 days to request a hearing to appeal the Department's decision. If requested, the hearing will be overseen by an independent hearing officer who is a licensed attorney and not an employee of ODA.

*This summary is for the convenience of those raising and handling livestock and is **not** intended to cover all laws and regulations. The Ohio Administrative Code contains the details of these regulations and is available for review at www.ohiolivestockcarestandards.com*

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