



Improving animal welfare in the Australian cattle feedlot industry over time

Animal welfare is the most important issue in the Australian feedlot sector. Good animal welfare is not only the right thing to do, but it results in improved productivity, beef eating quality and profitability. This document provides an overview of some of the activities that the industry invests in to ensure continuous improvement in animal welfare and to communicate these improvements.

Developing Legislation	The cattle feedlot industry supports the development of animal welfare legislation (e.g. the <i>Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines for Cattle</i>) as it ensures all lot feeders meet legislative requirements for good animal welfare.
Implementing Quality Assurance	The National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) is a quality assurance program that requires feedlots to be audited against animal welfare, environment and food safety standards and legislation each year. It is independently owned, managed and audited to industry. Continuous review and improvement of this program enables industry to keep abreast of the changing requirements and expectations of consumers, markets, regulatory authorities and the wider community.
Monitoring and Reporting	Six-monthly internal animal welfare audits compel accredited feedlots to monitor and report on their animal welfare performance. These audits are then reviewed through NFAS auditing requirements.
Investing in Research & Development	The cattle feedlot industry invests approximately \$1 million annually on R & D programs to improve the industry's animal health and welfare knowledge, performance, assessment and capacity.
Promoting Adoption	Lot feeders are kept informed of developments in R&D, legislation and management practices through formal and informal training, conferences, workshops, webinars, websites, newsletters, magazines, and on the ground extension personnel. This communication relates to things such as low stress handling, animal welfare assessment, auditing and the implementation of NFAS standards.
Undertaking Everyday Best Practices	Every day, specially trained feedlot staff manage the health and welfare of cattle including daily monitoring for injury or disease, use of low stress animal handling practices, treating livestock when ill, and consultations with specialist industry veterinarians and nutritionists.
Recognising Excellence	Annual awards are offered to feedlots and individuals to recognise, encourage and foster industry excellence with respect to caring for cattle.
Engaging with Stakeholders	Feedlot industry representatives regularly meet with key industry stakeholders such as the RSPCA, retailers, Animal Health Australia and State and Federal Government to share information and learn about new and emerging animal husbandry practices.
Informing the Community	The community is kept informed of industry activities, investment and continual improvement in animal welfare performance through feedlot tours and online and traditional media channels. The feedlot industry recognises that is vital that it continues to remain open, honest and transparent about its activities and practices.