



GUIDE TO PROPER STANDARD COMPREHENSION

Animal Welfare Approved has the most rigorous standards for farm animal welfare currently in use by any United States organization. Its standards have been developed in collaboration with scientists, veterinarians, researchers, and farmers across the globe to maximize practicable, high-welfare farm management. Animal Welfare Approved's standards incorporate best practice and recent research and have been adopted only after vigorous review. The basic premise of all the standards is that animals must be able to behave naturally and be in a state of physical and psychological well-being.

To accomplish the goals of the Animal Welfare Approved program, all standards address every aspect of each species' lifecycle needs from birth to death. Animal Welfare Approved works diligently to maintain a farm's ability to be economically viable and the standards have been proven to be achievable by the vast majority of farm situations. Animal Welfare Approved reviews its standards annually, updating them as needed to incorporate new research and on-farm findings.

Any practice not covered in the standards is permissible unless specifically excluded. Animal Welfare Approved wants to respect the farmer's ability to design his or her own farming systems to the greatest extent possible. In addition, the program acknowledges that different approaches to animal husbandry may be required due to the great variation in geographical conditions. Animal Welfare Approved standards are meant to be **outcome-based** and not prescriptive. It is the task of the program's auditors to confirm that a farm can present the high welfare outcomes the program requires.

If these words are used, strict adherence is required:

- **Prohibited:** means the practice described is banned.
- **Must:** means a standard has to be adhered to as directed.

If these words are used it offers some flexibility:

- **Recommend/encourage:** means it is viewed as the best practice, but other methods will be accepted as long as the goal of high welfare is not jeopardized.
- **Should:** means the standard should be adhered to, however variations will be accepted as long as the goal of high welfare is not jeopardized.