



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Cross compliance: welfare standards for farmed animals (SMR 13) (2024)

Summary of the rules about not causing unnecessary pain, suffering or injury.

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Introduction

The aim of these requirements is to give consumers confidence that high welfare standards are being achieved, which in turn improves food safety and quality. They protect the welfare of farmed animals by setting minimum standards for their care and husbandry. They apply to any species that are kept for agricultural purposes.

Owners and keepers of all farm animals should look after the welfare of their animals and see that they are not caused unnecessary pain, suffering or injury.

Main requirements

The following standards are required:

- farm staff: there should be a sufficient number looking after the animals and they must have the appropriate ability and competence
- stock inspection: all animals kept in husbandry systems in which their welfare depends on frequent human attention, must be inspected at least once a day
- injured or ill animals must be treated immediately and if necessary, isolated in suitable premises. Seek and act upon veterinary advice if appropriate
- records: the owner or keeper of the animals must keep a record of any medicines administered to their stock for at least three years from the date of treatment
- freedom of movement: all animals, even if tethered, chained or confined, must be given enough space to move without unnecessary suffering or injury
- buildings and accommodation: materials used in the construction of the buildings must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected. Maintain accommodation to ensure that there are no sharp edges or other hazards

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which may cause injury. Air circulation, dust levels, temperature and relative humidity should be kept within acceptable limits

- animals kept in buildings must not be kept in permanent darkness or constantly exposed to artificial light
- animals not kept in buildings: must, where necessary and possible, be given protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and risks to their health. They shall at all times, have access to a well-drained lying area
- automatic or mechanical equipment: such equipment essential for the health and well-being of animals should be inspected at least once a day. Where an artificial ventilation system is in use, an appropriate backup system must be in place to guarantee sufficient air renewal
- feed, water and other substances: animals must be given a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species, and which is fed to them in sufficient quantities and at regular intervals. No substances should be administered to animals which are harmful to their health or welfare. In addition, feeding and watering equipment must pose minimal risk of contamination
- breeding procedures: natural or artificial breeding or breeding procedures which cause or are likely to cause, suffering or injury to any of the animals concerned are not permitted unless their impact is minimal, brief and do not cause injury

Field checks

- check and inspect animal husbandry methods, housing and records. A dry lying area should be visible
- check the owner and employees (which include any person responsible for a farmed animal) have knowledge and access to the **Codes of Practice** for the welfare of the animals they are responsible for
- check the medicine records are up to date and that products within the medicine cabinet are recorded

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- check all medicines are licensed for the United Kingdom
- check that no products are out of date
- check alarms and fail-safe devices if automatic equipment is used

Good practice

- have and implement a health and welfare plan with a veterinary surgeon and where necessary, other technical advisors. Review and update the plan regularly
- have contingency plans in place for incidents or eventualities that have the potential to affect animal welfare, such as extreme weather or water shortages

Further information

For further information please contact:

- Animal and Plant Health Agency

or see [Cross compliance: useful contacts \(2024\)](#) factsheet.

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