

Animal Welfare & Biosecurity

Caring For The Animals

The health and welfare of animals is a primary concern for all farmers. Livestock producers understand and believe that raising animals ethically is the right thing to do. Consumers today are concerned about animal welfare and demand that the products they purchase are from farms that operate humanely. A livestock farm will not succeed without healthy, strong animals. Thus, it is in the livestock producer's best interest to raise their animals in a stress-free, environmentally-controlled, clean environment.

The concern that Indiana's livestock producers have for animals goes beyond business. In general, individuals who enter the field do so because they want to work with animals. Many of Indiana's livestock producers have lived around animals their entire lives and are experts in animal care.

Indiana's livestock producers go to great lengths to ensure that their animals are treated humanely and follow strict national and local regulations when it comes to animal welfare. In addition, the state's livestock producers set and implement their own stringent regulations. Many have adopted zero tolerance policies for mistreatment of animals and participate in regular training sessions and seminars to learn more about ways to care for livestock.

Thanks to science and technology, improvements have been made in the ways in which animals are treated in modern livestock operations. These developments include improving ventilation of facilities, providing animals with specially formulated diets to decrease illness, and improving the methods in which animals are transported.

There Is a Difference Between Animal Rights and Animal Welfare

Animal rights activists believe that sentient (the ability to experience pain or pleasure) beings all deserve the same rights. Based on these principles, people who share the mindset of animal rights activists oppose the use of animals for food, clothing, medical research, product testing, education, recreation, entertainment and companionship.

The animal welfare viewpoint believes that we must be responsible in our utilization of animals. The definition of animal welfare is the human responsibility that encompasses all aspects of animal well-being, including proper housing, management, nutrition, disease prevention and treatment, responsible care, human handling and, when necessary, humane euthanasia.

Livestock Regulations Are Based on Sound Science

Because of the sensitivity of animal welfare, regulations are based solely on sound science. What is sound science? Research that is conducted properly from accredited institutions and is peer reviewed and published in scientific journals. Everything from housing, to space requirements, handling and transportation, to production management practices are researched and analyzed by experts before they are implemented. And the animal agriculture industry is more serious than ever about the responsible management of animal welfare and care.

Animal Welfare Is Based On Five Key Freedoms

There are five internationally known and accepted freedoms that must be met for animal welfare.

- Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition.
- Freedom from discomfort due to environment.
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease.
- Freedom to express normal behavior for the species.
- Freedom from fear and distress.

Animal Welfare Is Enforced

The animal welfare rules for management practices among livestock producers are enforced. Operations found to be noncompliant face stiff fines, the removal of their livestock and the removal of their permits to house a livestock operation.

To learn more about the steps livestock farmers take to care for their animals, visit these web sites...

- Swine Animal Assurance Program
- Take Care - Using Antibiotics in Swine Responsibly
- Swine - Trucker Quality Assurance
- Pork Board's Pork Science - Animal Welfare
- Housing Options for Pigs

- United Egg Producers Certified

- American Meat Institute Animal Welfare Fact Sheets
- Dairy Farming Today - Animal Care
- National Beef Board - Animal Care Guidelines
- Animal Health Institute
- Questions Pertaining to Large Dairy Enterprises
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Animal Welfare as Related to Egg Production Systems: Cage and Non-Cage/Alternative Systems (Barns, Aviaries, Free-Range)

Position Statement by American Veterinary Medical Association on Pregnant Sow Housing

Biosecurity on Livestock Farms...Keeping our Nation's Food Supply Safe

National Biosecurity Resource Center for Animal Health Emergencies

Indiana State Board of Animal Health

Sorting out cage-free dilemma