Non-Ambulatory Animal SOP

Work with your veterinarian to develop a procedure consistent with AABP guidelines for identifying, transporting, and managing non-ambulatory animals.

Review the plan annually with your veterinarian and the employee(s) responsible for dealing with non-ambulatory animals.

Objectives: (1) To safely and humanely move and handle non-ambulatory cattle (2) To increase the chances of recovery of a non-ambulatory animal (3)To minimize the pain and suffering of non-ambulatory cattle

Definition: Any animal (including calves) that cannot stand or walk is to be considered non-ambulatory. If the animal will not rise, or is unable to rise due to a slippery surface, it is considered non-ambulatory.

Farm: _____

Down Cow Team - Individuals responsible for non-ambulatory cattle:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Standards of Care:

- All employees not affiliated with the Down Cow Team will be made to leave the immediate area.
- Members of the Down Cow Team will not verbally insult or swear at the cow.
- Members of the Down Cow Team *will not strike the down cow with any object.*
- Members of the Down Cow Team *will not drag the down cow by the head or any limb with heavy equipment* except in extreme circumstances when the animal is physically trapped and with the consent of the owner or manager.
- Members of the Down Cow Team will treat the cow with dignity and respect at all times.
- Members of the Down Cow Team will acknowledge that the reason for this team is to safely and humanely move the down cow to an area where she can be given the proper care to facilitate her return to production.

Handling and Movement*: Cows will be moved in accordance with AABP guidelines*

- When a non-ambulatory animal is identified, the above listed individuals are notified.
- *All ambulatory animals are removed from the immediate area.*
- *Non-ambulatory animals that are severely suffering or deemed unsalvageable are to be euthanized immediately.*
- Once identified, non-ambulatory animals will be moved to a well bedded pen within _____ hour(s) (suggested 2 hours or less).
- Before movement the animal will be restrained to prevent injury to itself and employees. A halter will be placed on the head which will be tied to the rear leg. The front legs should be tied together and rear legs should be tied together to prevent kicking.
- If necessary, and safe for the animal, chemical sedation/restraint can be administered. This may be done by your veterinarian of record.

Veterinarian of Record Signature: _____ Date: _____

Method for Moving Non-Ambulatory Animals: (Check all boxes that apply)

- ☐ The farm will utilize a sled for animal movement.
    1. Position the sled as close as possible behind the animal and in a way that the animal will travel headfirst, if possible.
    2. Roll the animal on its side, onto the sled.
    3. Heavy equipment will be used to pull the sled at a speed no faster than a walking pace. At least one person should walk with the sled to ensure the animal stays in place.
    4. Once at the desired location, the animal will be rolled upright and off of the sled.
    5. The restraints will be removed from the animal's front and rear legs and the halter will be removed.

- ☐ The farm will utilize a loader large enough such that the entire body rests within the bucket for animal movement.
    1. Position a loader bucket at least 6 feet long behind the restrained animal. Ensure that the bucket is flush with the ground and that the inside of the bucket is cushioned with bedding or rubber mats.
    2. Manually roll the cow into the bucket, do not use the machinery to scoop the animal.
    3. Rotate the bucket slowly so that the animal is not at risk of falling out and raise the bucket 2 feet off the ground. Ensure that none of the animal's limbs are touching the ground.
    4. Travel with the animal in the bucket at a speed no faster than a walking pace. Again ensure that no body parts are dragging on the ground.
    5. Once at the desired location, slowly lower the bucket to the ground and rotate so that it is flush. Ensure that no body parts are trapped between the bucket and the ground.
    6. Manually roll the animal out of the bucket and onto her belly. Do not use the bucket to dump the animal.
    7. The restraints will be removed from the animal's front and rear legs and the halter will be removed.

Care & Treatment:

- _____ will be responsible for daily care of non-ambulatory animals.
- All non-ambulatory animals will be rolled from side to side every _____ hours (recommended 2-3 hours), *will be offered fresh feed _____ times a day, and will be offered fresh water throughout the day.*
- *The pen or area the animal is in will be bedded frequently to ensure cleanliness and comfort.*
- *If the animal is outdoors it will be provided shade from the sun and shelter from inclement weather.*
- Animals will be evaluated by the veterinarian or manager daily.
    1. Animals that are severely suffering or that have irreversible damage shall be euthanized promptly.
    2. *Animals that are treatable will be treated according to farm protocols.*
    3. If the area where the non-ambulatory animal is being kept is not able to be kept in a dry and comfortable condition to encourage recovery, the animal will be humanely euthanized.
- Non-ambulatory animals can be assisted to stand with the help of an appropriate sling that supports the weight of the animal over a broad area of its belly and chest. Additionally, a cow float can be used to raise an animal providing that the cow is strong enough to stand in the water. Hip lifts, if used, must be used with care. Hip lifts may be used only to help a cow into a standing position and should never be used to move cows over a distance or suspend them off the ground.
- Employee(s) working with a non-ambulatory animal will notify a manager or veterinarian if the animal's condition worsens or if the animal has been down for 2 days. The manager or veterinarian will make a decision whether euthanasia or additional treatments are necessary.

Veterinarian of Record Signature: _____   Date: _____

Adapted from: Animart Down Cow Example SOP
Praedium Non-ambulatory Care Standard Operating Procedure