

Animal Welfare Position Statement

Policy title	Animal Welfare Position Statement
For use of	All NAPCO Employees

The North Australian Pastoral Company is committed to the welfare, well-being and health of our livestock. Our commitment is driven by a recognition that our cattle are in our care for most of their lives and with this comes significant responsibility and accountability. When we place our cattle into the care of others we will ensure our service providers adhere to the same high standards of animal welfare as we expect of everyone at NAPCO.

Our commitment to animal welfare is driven by our genuine desire to provide the best possible care for our cattle.

We also acknowledge there are benefits for our business, including:

- Protecting our social licence to operate
- Improved livestock performance
- Better quality product
- Customer satisfaction and preferred supplier status
- Improved financial performance
- Reduced carbon footprint
- Improved access to capital

NAPCO has constructed a robust governance framework to ensure the highest standards of animal welfare are always maintained. An important part of this is our commitment to educate and train our staff so that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure NAPCO's commitment to animal welfare is upheld across our entire business.

Our approach to animal welfare is guided by the globally recognised **'Five Freedoms' proposed by the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC):**

1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst**
2. **Freedom from discomfort**
3. **Freedom from pain, injury and disease**
4. **Freedom to express normal behaviour**
5. **Freedom from fear and distress**

Governments and industry approved **the 'Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle'** in 2016 to replace previous voluntary welfare codes; the 'Standards' component forms the legislated minimum requirement for livestock handlers to comply with acceptable practice, while the 'Guidelines' component offers a higher level of reach for voluntary use by individual producers and in quality assurance schemes and similar programs. NAPCO supports these standards and guidelines as a base for our approach to animal welfare and we continue to seek ways in which we can continuously improve the welfare and health of our livestock.

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OUR ROLE

At NAPCO, we manage animal welfare across several parts of the supply chain including on-station, feedlot, transport of stock, spelling of stock and processing.

ON OUR STATIONS

STAFF TRAINING

Staff are trained in low stress stock handling techniques, to ensure that our cattle are handled quietly throughout their time on station. This results in positive outcomes for our cattle and staff:

- Reduced stress and improved health and wellbeing
- Reduced mortality rates
- Reduced use of Antimicrobials (animal health treatments e.g. antibiotics)
- A safer working environment
- Improved efficiency
- Greater sense of enjoyment and satisfaction

PAIN RELIEF

Pain relief is administered to stock for husbandry procedures such as dehorning and castration.

GENETICS

We have committed to accelerating the poll content in our herd in order to reduce the need to remove horns from our cattle over time.

We have selected cattle for docile and calm temperament for many years, using the proven objective measure of 'flight time' which improves animal welfare and production outcomes.

CATTLE HANDLING FACILITIES

We have built cattle handling facilities across our properties, taking a practical, efficient and experienced approach to the free flow for stock movement in our yard designs.

We are particularly proud of our focus on continuously improving our facilities at a very high standard, to minimise the risk of injury to our cattle and people. This allows us to minimise stress and the time cattle spend in our handling facilities.

TRANSPORTATION

NAPCO have built strong and trusting relationships with our transport providers over a long period of time. We carefully select our transport providers for alignment with our values and shared commitment to our animal welfare standards. This includes loading and unloading practices and stringent spelling practices that ensure long journeys are broken into travel components that support good animal welfare outcomes, including access to feed and water and adequate rest period during spelling. NAPCO also adheres to the industry 'Fit to Load' Guidelines for the transport of livestock.

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FEEDLOT

Wainui Feedlot has developed a best practice approach to Animal health. NAPCO's ability to care for our livestock through their entire life results in industry leading benchmarks in health and wellbeing at a feedlot level. Our health and welfare programs are based on many procedures and protocols including:

- Animal Care Statement as part of NFAS accreditation – audited annually
- Cattle Health Diagnosis and Treatment Protocol – regular monitoring and training by consulting veterinarians
- Animal Welfare Policy – audited by third party
- Antimicrobial Stewardship Policy – minimise the use of antibiotics
- Heat Management Plan – management program to reduce heat stress
- Pregnant Heifer Management Plan
- Cattle Handling Policy and training program
- Pen cleaning and Environmental Policies

Animal welfare and behaviour in pens is continuously monitored to ensure high standards are always maintained. NAPCO cattle are very well socialised and handled prior to feedlot entry, therefore achieving a very low incidence of health issues. This results in low morbidity, low mortality, reduced use of antimicrobials, reduced use of vaccinations and ultimately reduced health and welfare issues.

We are committed to a feeding regime that promotes consistent weight gain and ensures our cattle on feed remain contented. This is supported by well document protocols and extensive measurement and reporting, consisting of:

- Ration formulations developed and monitored by consulting nutritionist
- Critical control measures - monitored daily
- Bunk Calling Protocol
- Ration Preparation and Delivery Protocol

Our health and nutrition is benchmarked against industry by third party consultants and regularly sets the standard.

PROCESSING

All processors we work with have their own stringent animal welfare frameworks and systems and we remain involved through constant communication and regular visits to processing plants to reaffirm this commitment and ensure NAPCO's standards are being met.

BRANDING AND EAR TAGGING

We are committed to alternatives to branding and ear tagging practices and working with Government and Industry bodies.

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COMPLIANCE & GOVERNANCE PROCESS

In order to ensure appropriate rigour in our pursuit of the best possible standards of animal welfare across our business, NAPCO has and will continue to apply a robust governance framework that covers the following:

MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR ANIMAL WELFARE TRAINING AND REPORTING FOR STAFF

NAPCO has committed to development of a staff training and reporting system in order to record training and communication of animal welfare priorities as well as to accurately report on animal welfare issues across the company.

References

Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle -

http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/files/2011/01/Cattle-Standards-and-Guidelines-Endorsed-Jan-2016-061017_.pdf

The Five Freedoms - <https://www.rspcaqld.org.au/who-we-are/five-freedoms>

Fit to Load - Guidelines for loading of livestock - <https://www.mla.com.au/fittoload#>

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