

Handling of Non-Ambulatory Cattle (Downers)

All procedures conducted at XYZ feedyard will be designed to prevent cattle from becoming injured; however in the event that any livestock becomes non-ambulatory, the cattle will be handled and cared for in a humane manner.

A non-ambulatory animal (commonly referred to as a “downer”) is unable to stand up or walk, even if assisted. A “cripple” is an animal which is obviously lame on one or more limbs but still able to get up unassisted and move about. Animals become downers or cripples due to things such as broken limb(s), back injury, calving paralysis, or metabolic/infectious conditions.

Protocol for Handling of Non-Ambulatory Cattle

1. Assess whether the animal is in a safe place or needs to be moved. If moving is required move it to hospital pen “H12” .
2. If the animal is in its home pen, it should be moved to hospital pen “H12” .
3. Movement will be facilitated via use of the “Caterpillar Loader with dirt bucket” .
4. If you are not trained to use the “Caterpillar Loader” , ask your supervisor or find someone in the maintenance department to assist you and to drive the “Caterpillar loader”
5. Once the “Caterpillar loader” is by the down animal, the bucket will be placed on the ground.
6. The animal will be gently rolled into the bucket, being careful to not get kicked while rolling the animal into the bucket. Do not scoop, force against a fence/gate, or drag the animal into the bucket.
7. Move the non-ambulatory animal to the Hospital pen and gently roll the animal out of the bucket. If weather conditions are adverse (snow, very cold or wet), place the animal on a large pile of straw or other bedding.
8. Feed and water will be supplied once the animal is moved to the hospital pen. A fresh supply of water and feed should be supplied at all times.
9. Have treatment crew evaluate the animal and provide proper treatment. Herd health plan treatment protocol “#11” is recommended.
10. Reevaluate the non-ambulatory animal in 24 hours. If improvement is noted, continue to follow treatment “#11” and be sure feed and water is being supplied. If not significantly improved and the chance of recovery is very low, or the condition worsened at any time, the animal may require euthanasia. Follow the Euthanasia protocol to humanely conduct this process.
11. Reevaluate the non-ambulatory animal the next day. If not significantly improved and the chance of recovery is very low, or the condition worsened at any time, the animal may require euthanasia. Follow the Euthanasia protocol to humanely conduct this process.

DO NOT DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AT ANY TIME TO A NON-AMBULATORY ANIMAL!

1. NEVER use an electric prod to stimulate the animal to get up. (Unless its use is to prevent eminent death from suffocation or to prevent other injury. Example: An animal goes down in a chute and is choking/breathing restricted; an electric prod may be a life-saving device.)
2. NEVER use chains or cables to pick up or suspend the animal. DEFINITELY, DO NOT USE CHAINS OR CABLES TO PICK UP AND MOVE THE ANIMAL.
3. If animals are weak and are having trouble walking, do not move them towards the processing barn and never attempt to send these weak or severely lame animals to slaughter.
4. NEVER let a non-ambulatory animal go without feed, water and proper shelter.
5. NEVER let a non-ambulatory animal stay in their home pen or in any area where they may get walked on or trampled.