



## What to know about the FARM Animal Care Version 5 Transition

The FARM Animal Care Program's updated Version 5 standards will go into effect July 1, 2024.

The National Dairy FARM Program, which is funded by Dairy Management, Inc. and managed by the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), has evolved over the years to become the rigorous on-farm quality assurance program and trusted industry risk mitigation tool it is today. Over the past two and a half years, the FARM Program has worked closely with more than 85 individual farmers serving on governing committees as well as numerous veterinarians, cooperative and processor staff, and animal scientists to review relevant discussions, research and more than 300 comments farmer and industry submitted during a six-week public comment period. This is to ensure that the Animal Care standards are supported by the latest dairy industry science and offer appropriate and useful best management practices for producers on all types of dairies. The resulting Animal Care Version 5 standards, approved by the NMPF Board of Directors in June 2023, make small refinements that aid in the industry's commitment to continuous improvement.

### WHEN ARE THE STANDARDS CHANGING?

FARM Animal Care Version 5 will go into effect July 1, 2024. Version 5 will remain in place from July 1, 2024 until June 30, 2027.

### WHY ARE THE STANDARDS CHANGING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR?

From March 2020 to September 2021, FARM lifted due date and timelines reinforcements due to the COVID pandemic. Because of this, the version cycles for FARM Animal Care, Environmental Stewardship and Workforce Development were all adjusted 18 months. Going forward, new version cycles will continue to begin July 1.

### WHY ARE THE STANDARDS CHANGING?

The FARM Animal Care Program develops animal care standards that are science-backed outcomes-based and facility- and size-neutral. Every three years, dairy industry experts review the FARM Animal Care Program standards to ensure relevancy, practicality and incorporation of the latest research. Experts include dairy farmers, animal scientists, veterinarians and milk cooperatives and processors who rely on the latest dairy research to inform necessary revisions.

The last program revision (Version 4) went into effect in January 2020. The Version 4 cycle was extended by 18 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## WHO HAS AN INFLUENCE IN CHANGING THE STANDARDS?

Over the past two and a half years, the FARM Program has worked closely with more than 85 individual farmers serving on governing committees as well as numerous veterinarians, cooperative and processor staff, and animal scientists to review relevant discussions, research and more than 300 comments farmer and industry submitted during a six-week public comment period. These farmer-led committees include FARM's Farmer Advisory Council, Animal Care Task Force, NMPF Animal Health & Wellbeing Committee & NMPF Board of Directors. A summary of the public comment period is available [here](#).

More information about the governance committees:

- [Farmer Advisory Council](#)
- [Animal Care Taskforce](#)
- [NMPF Board of Directors](#)

## ARE ALL THE STANDARDS CHANGING?

No. The majority of the standards from Version 4 are remaining the same in Version 5. The Version 5 standards will include minor refinements and clarifications that will improve consistency in FARM Animal Care on-farm Evaluations.

## WHAT ARE THE CHANGES FROM VERSION 4 TO VERSION 5?

### LOCOMOTION

*Version 4:* 95% or more of the lactating herd score 2 or less on the FARM locomotion scorecard

- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - Continuous Improvement Plan
    - up to 3 years to make improvement towards meeting the benchmark

*Version 5:*

- Maintain 95% or more of the lactating herd score 2 or less on the FARM locomotion scorecard
  - Continuous Improvement opportunity:
    - Continuous Improvement Plan
      - up to 3 years to make improvement towards meeting the benchmark
- **Addition 85% or more of the lactating herd score 1 or less on the FARM locomotion scorecard**

National Dairy FARM Program

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- **Continuous Improvement opportunity:**
  - **Continuous Improvement Plan**
    - **up to 3 years to make improvement towards meeting the benchmark**

#### PAIN MITIGATION FOR DISBUDDING

*Version 4:* Pain mitigation for disbudding is provided

- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - Continuous Improvement Plan
    - up to 3 years to begin using pain mitigation for disbudding

*Version 5:* Pain mitigation for disbudding is provided

- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - **Mandatory Corrective Action Plan**
    - **up to 9 months to begin using pain mitigation for disbudding**

#### DISBUDDING METHOD

*Version 4:* Method not specified

*Version 5:* Calves should be disbudded with caustic Paste or cautery

- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - **Mandatory Corrective Action Plan**
    - **up to 9 months to switch to one of these practices**

#### COLOSTRUM FEEDING

*Version 4:* Pre-weaned calf protocols and practices must demonstrate that pre-weaned calves are provided quality and quantity colostrum/colostrum replacer within 6 hours after birth, even if immediately transported off the farm.

- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - Mandatory Corrective Action Plan
    - up to 9 months to switch to one of these practices

*Version 5:* Pre-weaned calf protocols and practices must demonstrate that pre-weaned calves are provided quality (visual, colostrometer, etc.), and quantity of colostrum/colostrum replacer (10% birth weight) OR evidence of successful transfer of





*passive immunity within 6 hours after birth, even if immediately transported off the farm.*

- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - Mandatory Corrective Action Plan
    - up to 9 months to switch to one of these practices

#### CONTINUING EDUCATION C

*Version 4:* Job-specific continuing education for non-family employees with animal care responsibilities, if they are responsible for:

- Stockmanship/handling
- Pre-weaned calf care
- Non-ambulatory animals
- Euthanasia - Determining animals that are fit for transport
- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - Continuous Improvement Plan
    - up to 3 years to begin using pain mitigation for disbudding

*Version 5:* Job-specific continuing education for non-family employees with animal care responsibilities, if they are responsible for:

- Stockmanship/handling
- Pre-weaned calf care
- Non-ambulatory animals
- Euthanasia - Determining animals that are fit for transport
- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - **Mandatory Corrective Action Plan**
    - **up to 9 months to switch to one of these practices**

#### EUTHANASIA

*Version 4:* New standard

*Version 5:* Euthanasia protocols and practices identify a primary and secondary individual for euthanasia implementation

- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - **Mandatory Corrective Action Plan**
    - **up to 9 months to identify two individuals**

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*Version 4:* New standard

*Version 5:* Euthanasia protocols and practices demonstrate method of confirmation of death

- Continuous Improvement opportunity:
  - **Mandatory Corrective Action Plan**
    - **up to 9 months to establish a practice**

### HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR VERSION 5?

Second-Party Evaluations for FARM Animal Care Version 5 will begin July 1, 2024 and run in the usual three-year cycle. Your second party evaluator, employed or contracted by your milk marketer should be your number one resource for all FARM program matters. FARM resources such as the Animal Care Prep Guide, Reference Manual and FARM website (coming January 2023), are the best place to find relevant information.

**For more information or additional resources, visit [nationaldairyfarm.com](https://nationaldairyfarm.com)**

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