

STANDARDS	 RSPCA ASSURED	UK LEGAL MINIMUM	 RED TRACTOR	 SOIL ASSOCIATION ORGANIC	WELFARE IMPACT
YEAR OF PUBLICATION	2023		2022	2024	
ENVIRONMENT					
SPACE REQUIREMENTS (ADULTS)	Required space (square meters) by weight 8 400–499kg 8.5 500–599kg 9 600–699kg 10 700–799kg 11 800+kg For cubicle housed cattle, 6sqm loafing space per animal	The freedom of movement of animals, having regard to their species and in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge, shall not be restricted in such a way as to cause them unnecessary suffering or injury.	Recommended space (square meters) by weight; loose housing and fully slatted 4.9/1.8 400–499kg 5.85/2.1 500–599kg 6.8/2.3 600–699kg	Required space (square meters) by weight 8.7 350-500kg 8.75 500-599kg 10.5 600-699kg 12.25 700-799kg 14 800-899kg	Sufficient space is required to enable cattle to perform a wide range of important natural behaviours, such as walking, self-grooming and socially interacting. Increasing space allows cattle to avoid aggressive herd-mates
INDIVIDUAL BULL PENS	Space requirements for individual pens for bulls of 16sqm, 1m² per 60kg if very large Additional exercise area of 25sqm²	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Space requirements for individual pens for bulls of 10sqm indoor space. Additional exercise area of 30sqm	Bulls are sometimes kept in 'bull pens' on farms where they are not mixed with the herd. As large animals, space to move around and exercise is important, and minimum space allowances ensure this is provided
SLATTED FLOORS	Fully slatted floors are prohibited	Not mentioned	Permitted. Artificially reared calves must have a non-slatted, bedded lying area.	Fully slatted floors are prohibited	Slatted floors are less comfortable for lying, whereas bedding allows cattle to rest more comfortably. Slatted floors require high stocking densities to work for 'treading' manure through the slats, with the low space per animal causing further welfare issues
ACCESS TO PASTURE	Required from weaning, 4 hours a day Can be housed for 3 months before slaughter	Not mentioned	Not required	Permanent access to pasture Can be housed for 3 months before slaughter	Cattle are motivated to access pasture, and grazing is a natural feeding behaviour. The space available at pasture allows cattle to exercise, space out, and lie down in whatever position they choose
HUSBANDRY					
FEED	Rationed and ad-lib feed space (cm) by weight: 60/25 400kg 70/30 500kg 75/35 600kg+ Diet must maintain health, and have enough fibre to prevent health issues	Harmful effects of competition must be minimised	Rationed and ad-lib feed space (cm) by weight: 55/19 400-500kg 60/24 500-600kg 67/28 600-700kg 70/32 700-800kg 75/32 800kg+	No trough space specified Feed must be at least 60% forage	Feed space impacts on welfare through competition; especially when feed is supplied in a ration rather than ad-lib. 'Displacements' where individuals are pushed off food, can reduce or delay intake, and cause hunger
BREEDING TECHNOLOGIES	Only allows artificial insemination by a vet or skilled and trained person with a recognised standard. Embryo transfer only permitted in exceptional circumstances with proven welfare benefit.	Natural or artificial breeding or breeding procedures which cause, or are likely to cause, suffering or injury to any of the animals concerned, must not be practised. This does not preclude the use of natural or artificial breeding procedures that are likely to cause minimal or momentary suffering or injury or that might necessitate interventions which would not cause lasting injury	Must be satisfied that any contractors used for artificial insemination are competent	No use of breeding hormones. Any person carrying out AI should be trained and competent. Embryo transfer prohibited	The use of some breeding techniques can cause discomfort or pain for cattle, and require extended handling, and must be considered against any welfare gain. Standards requiring training or skills to carry these procedures out, and restricting what methods are used, helps protect welfare
VET CARE	Must have a detailed Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan, reviewed annually. Must have a vet visit once a year for cattle for slaughter, twice a year for breeding herds	No vet inspection frequency set	Must have a Livestock Health Plan. Vet visits at least once a year, see all animals, and undertakes a written annual livestock health and performance review.	Strongly recommend consultation with vet on health planning and review where any improvements can be made annually	Routine vet visits and a written health plan allow proactive health management of a herd, where farmers and vets can focus on health conditions specific to the farm. These can help prevent frequency of health issues, and therefore poor welfare, for cattle
CALF WELFARE					
SPACE ALLOWANCES	Fully bedded housing, required space (sqm) by weight 2.0 <100kg 3.5 100–200kg 4 200–250kg 4.5 250–300kg 5.5 300–350kg	Required space (sqm) by weight 1.5 <150kg 2 150–200kg 3 200kg+ and be able to turn around, groom, stand up, lie down and rest without hindrance.	Required space (sqm) by weight 1.5 50–85kg 1.8 85–150kg 2.4 150–200kg 3 200–300kg 3.95 300–400kg	Required space (sqm) by weight 2.6 <100kg 4.4 100–199kg 7 200–350kg	Calves show play behaviour which includes running, and are developing by exploring their environment. Space allowances can give room for them to be mobile and active, and be close to or distant from pen-mates
FEEDING AND WEANING	At least 3 litres of colostrum within first 6hrs of life, 8 litres/900g of milk powder per day for 8 weeks, over 2 feeds for first 42 days Weaning from 8 weeks of age	Milk feeds at least twice daily for the first month of life	Colostrum within 6 hours. No milk volume specified, legal requirements for feeding twice daily for first month Weaning from 5 weeks of age	Natural, organic milk, and colostrum, of 'sufficient' quantity Weaning from 45 days (6.4 weeks) of age	Adequate colostrum is vital for health, as this provides early immunity to calves. Calves are often underfed milk, and having requirements for milk feeding helps promote good health and development. Weaning at an appropriate age impacts growth, and stress in calves
GROUP HOUSING	Calves must be paired or grouped by 3 weeks of age	Calves must be paired or grouped by 8 weeks of age	Calves must be paired or grouped by 8 weeks of age	Calves must be paired or grouped by 7 days of age	Calves are social animals who engage in social play, cope better with stressful events in groups, and are motivated to be with other calves. Group housing promotes welfare on these points, but can make individual monitoring more difficult - so may not always be ideal from birth
CASTRATION AND DISBUDDING	Castration – pain relief required for all methods Disbudding – caustic paste not permitted. Local anaesthetic and long-acting pain relief required	Castration – rubber ring permitted up to 1 week of age, no pain relief required. Other methods, pain relief required over 2 months of age Disbudding – caustic paste permitted up to 1 week of age. Anaesthetic, but no long-acting pain relief, for other methods	Castration – no pain relief required for rubber ring method Disbudding – caustic paste permitted, no requirement for pain relief with this method	Castration and disbudding must not be routine, requires choosing breeds where these are not necessary. Pain relief and/or local anaesthetic is required for all types	Castration and disbudding are painful procedures; both at the time of the event, and after this as the tissue dies off. Where these are carried out, pain relief can reduce the welfare impact
TRANSPORT					
TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS	Under 8hrs journeys only. Vehicles must have bedding. Electric goads prohibited. Legal minimum space per animal. Loading ramp no more than 20%	Space allowances of 0.3–1.6sqm per animal, and maximum transport times of 28hrs with an hour rest break halfway. Loading ramp no more than 50%	Legal maximum stocking densities, ramp angle and journey length (up to 28hrs with a rest break). Electric goads prohibited	Journey duration must be kept to a minimum, journeys over 8hrs must be justified. Legal maximum stocking densities. Electric goads prohibited. No mention of ramp incline	Transport is a stressful event for cattle, with fatigue increasing with length of journey. This makes maximum journey times important for protecting welfare. Other factors such as angles of loading ramps, affect the risk of falls, injury and comfort
MARKETS AND COLLECTION CENTRES	Prohibits sales at markets and passing through collection centres	Legislation covering welfare at markets	Permitted. Detailed standards for both livestock markets and collection centres	Markets are discouraged but allowed. Specifies that when at market the handling, care and welfare of the animals is the responsibility of the livestock owner. Collection centres should be avoided.	Markets and collection centres pose a number of welfare challenges to cattle. Animals are transported and loaded/unloaded twice, may be mixed with other animals, and put through the ring, all stressful events. There are disease spread risks between cattle. Markets are noisy, with lots of people, and often dogs present, conditions cattle are likely to find stressful
SLAUGHTER/KILLING METHOD					
PRE-STUN SLAUGHTER	Compulsory that all animals are stunned prior to slaughter	Exceptions for religious slaughter which can be not stunned prior to slaughter	Compulsory that all animals are stunned prior to slaughter	Compulsory that all animals are stunned prior to slaughter	Pre-stunning ensures that an animal is unconscious and cannot feel pain before slaughter up until the point of death.
SLAUGHTER OF HEAVILY PREGNANT COWS	Not permitted at more than 27 weeks pregnant (except for emergency disease control) At <27 weeks pregnant, recommend identify animals to slaughterhouse	Not permitted at more than 90% gestation	Not permitted at more than 90% gestation	Recommend avoid transport over 60% of gestation (6 months)	Transport to slaughter places heavily pregnant cows under significant stress. The welfare of the foetus can also be affected
AUDITING					
WELFARE OUTCOME MONITORING	On-farm annual welfare outcome assessment carried out, using the AssureWel protocol for 10 measures of welfare	Not required	Not required	On-farm welfare outcome assessment may be carried out, using 8 measures of welfare	Welfare Outcome measures are animal-based metrics that reflect aspects of their welfare. They include body condition, cleanliness, mortality rates, and levels of castration and disbudding on-farm