

Animal Welfare Standards at a Glance

	Conventional (Industry Codes of Practice and Legislation)	SPCA Certified 	Canadian Organic Standards
Standards Development Process	Code development involves input from scientists, vets, and humane organizations. Industry associations have final approval.	Aims to prevent suffering, by applying animal welfare research to meet animals' needs. Involves input from scientists, vets, and producers. BC SPCA has final approval.	Developed through a consensus process. Standards held by Cdn. General Standards Board secretariat. Organic industry has final approval.
Inspection	Codes of practice are not verified through on-farm inspection. Several industry groups have developed animal care assurance programs, with varying requirements for assessment.	Annual and random farm inspections by third party, professional validators. Independent, expert review panel determines farm certification status.	Annual and random farm inspections by third party, professional verification officers. An independent, armslength review panel determines farm certification status.
Antibiotics	Permitted for veterinary treatment and in feed.	Prohibited from feed. Permitted only for veterinary treatment.	Prohibited from feed. Products from animals treated with antibiotics cannot be sold or marketed as organic.
Hormones	Prohibited in all poultry. Permitted in livestock.	Prohibited for growth promotion. Permitted only for treatment of disease (e.g. relating to reproductive disorders such as cystic ovaries).	Hormone treatment used only for therapeutic reasons (under vet supervision). If hormone not listed within the standard is used, the animal loses organic status.
Feed	Specified risk materials (SRMs) prohibited by law. Feeding of proteins to same species prohibited.	All feeding of mammalian and avian proteins prohibited.	Feeding of mammalian or avian slaughter by-products prohibited. Feed must be certified as organic to national organic standard.
Tail-Docking & Beak Trimming	Permitted, except for tail docking in dairy cattle.	Tail docking of dairy cows prohibited. Tail docking of pigs and sheep, and beak-trimming of hens permitted only when absolutely necessary. When permitted, the procedure is further regulated.	Tail docking of dairy cows prohibited. Tail docking of pigs and sheep, and beak trimming of hens permitted only when absolutely necessary to control problem behaviour.
Other Painful Procedures	No requirements for anaesthetic or analgesic. Pain control required for all dairy cattle surgeries.	Pain mediation requirements in effect for dehorning and castration.	Pain mediation required for dehorning dairy cattle. For all other procedures (e.g. castration, branding) pain mediation is recommended.
Confinement Housing	Continuous confinement housing permitted for pigs, dairy cows, and hens.	Battery cages for hens, tie stalls for cows, and gestation stalls for sows prohibited. Farrowing stalls for sows permitted for 28 days maximum.	Battery cages for hens, and gestation / farrowing stalls for sows prohibited. Allows tie stalls for lactating dairy cows, temporary confinement as per 6.8.2 of the standard.
Environmental Enrichment	Insufficient for performance of natural behaviours in pigs and poultry.	Nest boxes, perches, bedding / rooting material required.	Nest boxes, perches, bedding / rooting material required.
Animal-based assessment	Generally not assessed. Some animal care programs highly recommend practices such as the monitoring of lameness.	Evaluated by farmer and inspector. Methods of assessment include: gait scoring for broiler chickens and turkeys, and body condition scoring for dairy cows and sheep. As standards are revised, further animal-based assessments will be included.	Generally assessed, but there are no formal requirements for assessment by farmer or verification officer. Poor conditioning could lead to decertification.
Access to Pasture*	Not required.	Required for dairy and beef cattle and sheep (post weaning).	Required for most species, except pigs, breeding males and young animals. Exceptions due to emergency situations, stage of production and health, safety or well-being.
Inside Space Allowance	Sows: 2.3m ² /animal Growing pigs: up to 0.81m ² /animal (fully slatted) to 1m ² /animal (solid floor) Turkeys: 36 to 40 kg/m ² Broilers: 17 to 21.5 birds/m ² (31 to 38 kg/m ²) Caged Laying hens: 20.7 birds/m ² (brown hens) to 23 birds/m ² (white hens) Laying hens: 5.26 hens/m ² (all litter) Laying hens: 10.52 hens/m ² (fully slatted floors)	Sows: 3.5m ² /animal Growing pigs: up to 1m ² /animal Turkeys: 36 kg/m ² Broilers: 17 birds/m ² (30kg/m ²) Laying hens: 5.26 hens/m ² (all litter) Laying hens: 9.09 hens/m ² (partially slatted floors)**	Sows in group pens: 3 m ² /animal Sows & Piglets: 7.5m ² /sow & litter Growing pigs: up to 1.3 m ² /animal Turkeys: 26 kg/m ² Broilers: 10 birds/m ² (21 kg/m ²) Laying hens: 6 hens/m ² (partially slatted floors allowed; dry bedding required)
Animal Handling	Electric prods permitted***. No other specific requirements.	Animals are to be handled humanely. Electric prods prohibited. Birds to be carried in prescribed manner.	Animals are to be handled humanely; electric stimulation prohibited.
Transport times (maximum)	52 hours for cattle and 36 hours for pigs and poultry.	24 hours for cattle and pigs and 12 hours for poultry.	Duration of transportation shall be as short as possible; no specific requirements.

*Free range and free run production offer different animal welfare benefits. Outdoor access provides behavioural opportunities but can leave animals (particularly poultry) vulnerable to predation and disease. ** Partially slatted floor barns for laying hens require a minimum inside area of space for scratching and foraging behaviour. Area required is different for free run or free range barns.

*** Dairy cattle = only in emergencies.