



COWS FIRST™



**MEISTER CHEESE COMPANY
ANIMAL WELFARE PROGRAM**



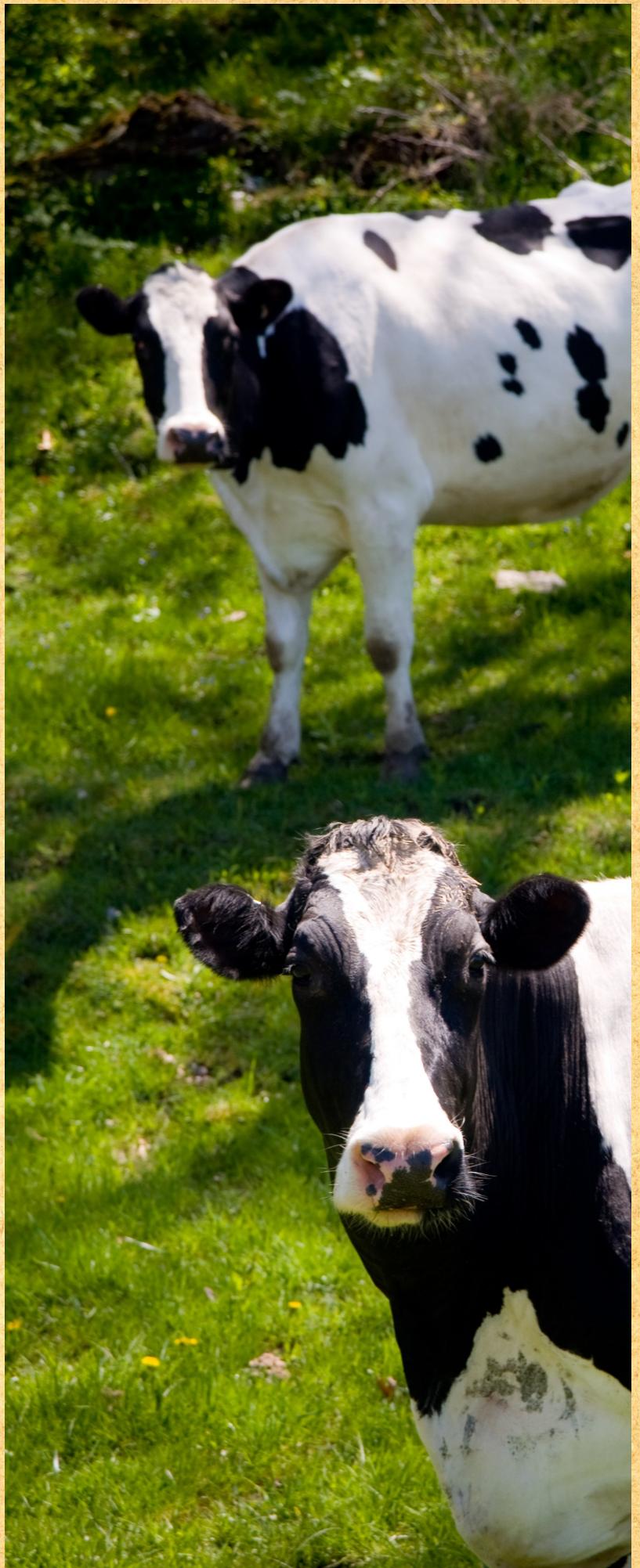


WHAT IS **COWS FIRST™?**

We are proud to partner with dairy farmers who combine the respected traditions of iconic farming with the methods of modern technology. We call it Cows First™. Our dairy farmers treat their cows like family, while adopting modern technology and the knowledge of animal nutrition and science.

Treating animals fairly is important. Cows treated well produce the highest quality milk. Dairy farmers who employ our one-of-a-kind Cows First™ protocol ensure cows always have access to shelter, pasture, and fresh water. Our dairy farmers don't dock tails or use growth hormones. When cows are treated fairly, their milk is of the highest standard. High quality milk allows us to produce high quality cheese in a sustainable manner.

That's why Meister Cheese Company pays premium prices to farms that follow our Cows First™ protocol and have the same enthusiasm as we do for sustainable agriculture. After all, we're in this together.





ABOUT COWS FIRST™

Participating dairy farmers are regularly audited to ensure compliance with our unique standards. And, for their efforts, farmers receive higher prices for their milk.

Here's what our partnering dairy farmers agree to:

PASTURE ACCESS

- * All milking cow herds must have daily unfettered access to pasture.

ANTIBIOTICS & GROWTH HORMONES

- * No artificial hormones are allowed to increase milk production
- * Antibiotics may only be used to treat sick animals. Milk from those animals must be withdrawn.

VEGETARIAN DIET

- * Feed must be free of animal and avian-based byproducts
- * Fresh water should always be available

ANIMAL WELFARE

- * Cows must score 2 or above in the Journal of Dairy Science 1989 body condition scoring chart for Holstein dairy cows and below a 3 in the UC Davis Locomotion Scoring Tool
- * Tail docking is prohibited
- * Cow behavior is never punished with intentional striking
- * Free-stall barns must have a stall for each animal
- * Loose housing must have adequate bedded space for all cows to lie down at the same time.

** See page 5 for full Standard Operating Procedures*





WHY PARTICIPATE IN COWS FIRST™?

Meister Cheese Company supplies a growing list of national retail and foodservice companies who are demanding high quality cheese produced in a sustainable manner. This demand stems from consumers, who in turn are demanding transparency in the food chain. Consumers are willing to pay a little extra for food that comes from animals that experience a comfortable and contented life. That's why we developed the Cows First™ program; to meet the demands and expectations of our customers. And that's why we're willing to pay a premium for milk produced using Cows First™ protocols.



“The foundation of the Cows First™ Program and Meister Cheese being a third generation company just seemed like the right fit for us. Our grandfather envisioned having a grassroots family farm with profitability. And that's exactly what the Cows First™ Program has allowed us to achieve.”

**- JEREMY & MICHELLE WINKERS,
MILK SUPPLIERS TO MEISTER CHEESE CO.**



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Animal Welfare
 - a. There should be no animals that score below a 2 as referenced in the Journal of Dairy Science 1989 body condition scoring chart for Holstein dairy cows.
 - b. There should be no animals that score above a 3 as referenced in the UC Davis locomotion scoring tool.
 - c. The docking of tails is prohibited. If tails were docked prior to the dairies participation in the pasture dairy program these cows are considered eligible and can be grandfathered in to the program.
 - d. Cows determined to be lame should be kept in the closest available pasture or pen within the proximity of the milking parlor to avoid further complications.
 - e. Animals must have access to shelter, housing or wind breaks that will provide adequate protection from the elements during severe weather.
 - f. Free-stall barns must have a stall for each animal.
 - g. Loose housing must have adequate bedded space for all cows to lie in a recumbent position at the same time.
 - h. Tie stalls and/or head stanchions may be used only while actively milking or attending to cows (i.e. veterinary procedures).
 - i. There is a zero tolerance policy towards the cruelty of animals. Any handler of livestock found to be abusing animals will be immediately removed from the pasture program.
 - j. Animals that are sick must be treated and an attempt must be made to bring the animal(s) back to healthy state.
2. Calf Welfare (see attachments for further detail)
 - a. Protection from the elements during calving; newborn calf receives colostrum to adequately support needs.
 - b. Calf housing – maintained cleanliness, adequate in size, maximum of 90 days then moved to weaning areas.
 - c. Feed/water – fed daily in sufficient quantities, clean water readily available for each calf.
 - d. Sub-Therapeutic Antibiotics – Rumensin and Bovatec are the only sub-therapeutic antibiotics permitted.
 - e. Vegetarian Diet – 100% vegetarian diet free of animal by-products with the exception of milk fed to calves.
 - f. Growth Promotants – administration of growth hormones is prohibited (please read through attachment).
 - g. Lighting (pre-weaned) – calves at least 2 lux of light during the natural diurnal cycle of daylight.
 - h. Lighting (post weaned) – post-wean calves require daily access to the natural diurnal cycle of daylight.
 - i. Weaning – maximum of 90 days in solidarity, weaned calves are encouraged to have daily access to pasture just the same as cows, but not required.
 - j. Castration – must be castrated no later than 120 days from birth; approved methods: surgical, banding and burdizzo.
 - k. Dehorning – If horns are to be removed it should be performed no later than 60 days of age. Approved methods are electric, hot iron, and chemical. Both electric and hot iron requires a veterinarian approved anesthetic to be administered to the calf prior to the procedure. A lidocain block is recommended.
 - l. Tail Docking – The removal of any part of the tail is prohibited, just the same as cows.
 - m. Insect Control – effective control strategy to prevent needless suffering and the contamination of feed and water.
 - n. Euthanasia – after unsuccessful treatment(s) and unable to return to a healthy state; last resort to prevent further suffering.
3. Antibiotics
 - a. Antibiotics can only be used in accordance with observed withdrawal schedules.
 - b. Ionophores such as Rumensin or Bovatec are to never be administered to heifers entering, or cows currently in the milking herd. Cows that were administered Ionophores prior to participating in the pasture program are eligible and can be grandfathered in.
4. Growth Promotants
 - a. Administration of growth hormones, including natural hormones, synthetic hormones, estrus suppressants, beta agonists, rBST or other synthetic growth promotants is prohibited. Lutalyse is not considered a growth promotant.
5. Vegetarian Diet
 - a. Animal by-products-mammalian and avian by-products are never allowed to be fed to heifers entering, or cows currently in the milking herd. Pay careful attention to purchased lick tubs, pre-mixes, overall rations, etc. to ensure animal by-products-mammalian and avian by-products are not included. By-products from cheese whey have been approved for use.
6. Pasture Access
 - a. Pasture is defined as ground covered with a 50% intact rooted grass system. All milking cow herds must have daily unfettered access to pasture. Exceptions to pasture access would be inclement weather (flood/excessive wet weather mud, excessive snow, ice, and/or cold) or for those cows that are lame or are soon to calve.
 - b. If the milking cow herd has had more than 20 consecutive days without access to pasture the producer must notify their field representative. The field representative will notify Meister Dairy of the situation and together, with the producer, develop a timeline for corrective action(s).

PASTURE DAIRY QUALITY AGREEMENT – CALF STANDARDS

The program requires that the following areas be addressed in the supplier's documented pasture dairy program for calves' animal welfare

1. Calving
 - a. Cows should calve in a specific area within the dairy that offers the most protection from adverse weather conditions.
 - b. A calf must not be separated from the cow until the calf has been able to nurse and receive sufficient amounts of colostrum to adequately support the newborn calf's needs for antibodies. If the calf is unable to nurse alternative sources of colostrum must be administered.
2. Housing
 - a. Calves separated from cows soon after birth and raised solitarily for an extended period of time must be provided with the following housing conditions.
 - * Protection from the elements using a sound shelter that provides shade, ventilation, warmth and bedding with an open entry way for the calf to move unencumbered from the shelter to the outside at will.
 - * The shelter must be large enough for the calf to move in any direction including lying down and standing without touching the sides or ceiling of the shelter.
 - * Bedding within the shelter must be clean and dry and be sufficient enough to allow the calf to remain comfortable during all weather conditions. A bedding of rocks, concrete, metal, glass or rubber is not permitted.
 - * Calves confined to an outdoor shelter must have freedom to access a 20sqft minimum outside area of earthen surface. Calves raised inside a barn must have access to a 30sqft minimum area per calf.
 - * Calves confined to an outdoor shelter or barn can be raised for a maximum of 90 days before they are required to move to outdoor group weaning areas.
 - * Outdoor shelters must be moved or disinfected after each calf to prevent harmful bacteria from infecting the next residing calf.
3. Feed/Water
 - a. Until weaning, calves must be fed milk or milk replacer every day in sufficient quantities to support the daily dietary needs of the calf.
 - b. Post weaning calves must be fed a forage or grain diet sufficient enough to meet the daily dietary needs of the calf.
 - c. Clean water must be made readily available for every calf.
4. Sub-Therapeutic Antibiotics
 - a. Rumensin and Bovatec are the only sub-therapeutic antibiotics permitted to be administered to calves for the prevention and treatment of coccidiocis.
5. Vegetarian Diet
 - a. All calves and cows must be fed a 100% vegetarian diet free of animal by-products with the exception of milk fed to calves.
6. Growth Promotants
 - a. The administration of growth hormones to calves, including natural hormones, synthetic hormones, estrus suppressants, beta agonists, rBST or other synthetic growth promotants is prohibited.
7. Lighting
 - a. Calves must have daily access to the natural diurnal cycle of daylight. Pre-weaned calves raised in a barn must have at least 2 lux of light during the natural diurnal cycle.
8. Weaning
 - a. Calves raised solitarily must be grouped with like herd mates at a maximum of 90 days from birth.
 - b. Weaned calves are encouraged to have daily access to pasture just the same as cows, but not required.
9. Castration
 - a. Bull calves must be castrated no later than 120 days from birth.
 - b. Approved castration methods are surgical, banding and burdizzo.
10. Dehorning
 - a. If horns are to be removed it should be performed no later than 60 days of age.
 - b. Approved methods are electric, hot iron, and chemical. Both electric and hot iron requires a veterinarian approved anesthetic to be administered to the calf prior to the procedure. A lidocain block is recommended.
11. Tail Docking
 - a. The removal of any part of the tail is prohibited.
12. Insect Control
 - a. An effective insect control strategy needs to be in place to prevent needless suffering and the contamination of feed/water.
13. Euthanasia
 - a. Any calf that is unable to return to a healthy state after treatment must be euthanized to prevent further suffering.
 - b. Approved methods are captive bolt or rifle using .22 caliber bullet

BODY CONDITION SCORING CHART

Body Condition Score	Vertebrae at the middle of the back	Rear view (cross-section) of the hook bones	Side view of the line between the hook and pinbones	Cavity between tailhead and pinbone	
				Rear view	Angled view
1 Severe underconditioning					
2 Frame obvious					
3 Frame and covering well balanced					
4 Frame not as visible as covering					
5 Severe overconditioning					



1.5 (A)



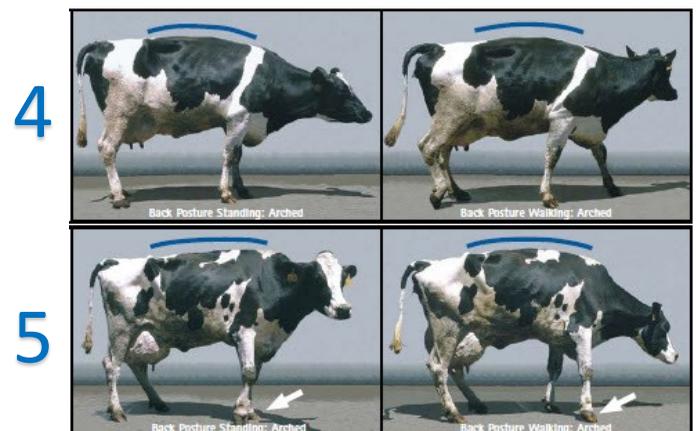
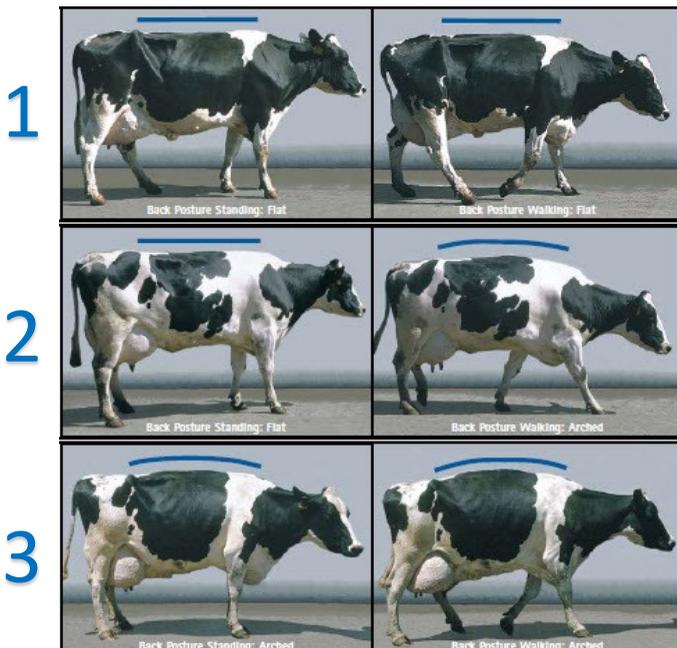
3 (B)



*EX-4(C)

UC DAVIS LOCOMOTION SCORING

SCORE	DESCRIPTION	BACK	ASSESSMENT
1	NORMAL	FLAT	Cow stands and walks with a level back. Gait is normal
2	MILDLY LAME	FLAT OR ARCH	Cow stands level backed, but develops an arched back to walk. Normal Gait.
3	MODERATELY LAME	ARCH	Arched back is evident while standing and walking. Gait is short strided.
4	LAME	ARCH	Arch back is always evident and gait is one deliberate step at a time. Cow favors one more legs/feet.
5	SEVERELY	3-LEGGED	Cow demonstrates an inability, or extreme reluctance to bear weight on one or more limbs/feet.





KINDRED CREAMERY

MUSCODA, WISCONSIN



MEISTER DAIRY COWS FIRST™ PROGRAM

PASTURE DAIRY QUALITY AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree to manage operations in accord to pasture raised protocols.

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SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

