



## **ANIMAL WELLBEING POLICY**

### **Ensuring health and contentment for the livestock we give**

#### **Why Send a Cow needs an animal wellbeing policy**

It is important that Send a Cow strives to ensure that the animals it provides are well looked after.

- Our donors want to be assured that the animals they are helping us to buy will be well and humanely cared for.
- Providing good care for livestock is integral to Send a Cow's approach. Their animal's health directly affects the level of benefits that Send a Cow livestock is able to provide for recipients.

Send a Cow recognises, however, that it is counterproductive to make demands of recipient families that are beyond their reach financially.

#### **Our basic requirements**

As a basic requirement, we expect all the animals we give to enjoy the five freedoms promoted by the Farm Animal Welfare Council.

**1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst** - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

**2. Freedom from Discomfort** - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

**3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease** - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

**4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour** - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

**5. Freedom from Fear and Distress** - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

#### **And in more detail ...**

These freedoms translate into the following requirements, taken largely from the *Animal Well-Being Guidelines* of our partner organisation Heifer International.

#### ***Purchase***

Preference should be given to animals already acclimatised to the local area.

They should be purchased from reputable vendors, where they will have been well cared for.

Animals should be given only to families able to care adequately for them.

### ***Transport***

Animals should be transported in vehicles that are safe and provide adequate space – all animals should be able to stand in a normal posture.

Poultry should be transported in cages of adequate size.

Prior to transport, animals should be adequately fed and watered.

During transport, or while being walked to their destination, animals should be sheltered from extremes of heat, rain, sunlight and cold.

Care should be taken when loading and unloading. Animals should not be beaten or otherwise abused.

### ***Handling***

Management practices such as castration or dehorning should be performed by skilled technicians and at as young an age as possible.

Farmers should always be fully trained in animal handling before they receive their livestock.

Animals should be humanely handled, penned and tethered in any market.

Animal neglect and abuse should not be tolerated.

### ***Housing***

Separate pens should be provided for animals of different species.

When tethered or in pens, animals should always have enough space to move, stretch and lie down in comfort.

All shelters should be adequately lit and have enough air movement to allow bedding to dry.

All animals should be able to lie down in dry and wind-proof conditions.

Bedding should be provided to prevent skin abrasions and pressure sores. It should be kept clean and dry, and changed frequently.

Exercise should be provided for tethered animals at least once a day.

## ***Nutrition***

A sufficient amount of clean water should be made available at least twice daily in containers that are easily reached by the livestock in question.

Nutritious feed should be made available several times daily in mangers that are easily reached by the livestock in question.

Quantities and type of feed should be determined by the type of work and production of the animal.

Newborn animals should receive an adequate amount of colostrum as early as possible after birth.

Animals should not be given to families who are unable to feed them adequately.

## ***Breeding***

Breeds should be developed that are appropriate to the region and system in which they will be raised. Breeding to enhance growth should not undermine natural disease resistance.

Cross-breeding should be used only when the recipient family will be able to manage and care for their animal's improved offspring.

Animals should be allowed to reach an appropriate age and size before entering breeding programmes.

Adequate nutrition and drinking water must be provided to pregnant and lactating females and breeding males.

Pregnant animals should not be used for draft or other work.

Birth areas should be kept clean and dry.

Families should keep breeding records in order to be prepared for the birth of the offspring.

## ***Disease prevention and treatment***

All possible steps should be taken to minimise the risk of disease.

Drenching and de-worming programmes should be scheduled on a routine basis for all animals, including poultry.

Farmers should be attentive to the state of their animals' health, and administer appropriate treatment when necessary.

All medicines should be used in accordance with label directions.

Care should be taken in the correct choice of antibiotic medications. They should be used only when they are essential to the health of the animal.

### ***Draft animals***

Proper equipment and rigging or tack must be used.

The proper load for the age and size of the animal should be used.

Young animals should be started in training only when they are the right age and size.

Only animals of similar size and strength should be used as a team.

Work hours should be reduced during extremely hot or otherwise adverse weathers. When the weather is particularly hot and/or humid, animals should be worked mainly early or late in the day.

Animals should not be worked when they are heavily pregnant, sick or injured.

### **From words into action**

The following support, training and follow up procedures and practices – all of them standard throughout our programmes - are aimed at ensuring that the animals we give remain as healthy and contented as possible.

### **Working with the community**

Send a Cow works with and through community groups.

- Each group is expected to take overall responsibility for ensuring that all animals given by Send a Cow to their members are well looked after.
- Send a Cow's participatory way of working with groups ensures that members receiving animals understand their responsibilities as livestock keepers, and our expectations of their commitment to the animal's wellbeing.
- Send a Cow helps groups to set up revolving credit funds to help with treatment costs.
- Since each recipient is expected to pass on the first female offspring of the animal they have been given, the group has an interest in the wellbeing of each animal.

### **Preparation for receiving livestock**

All farmers receiving livestock have gone through a long process of preparation, to ensure that they are ready to look after their animals well.

- Base line surveys are carried out to make sure that recipients receive animals which they will be able to manage well, and for which they have sufficient land.
- We take care to adapt our programme to the resources available where we are working, and the situation there. We:
  - assess climate and geographic conditions and select appropriate animals;
  - assess traditional practices and adapt, adopt and encourage those that contribute to animal wellbeing, and work to change those that do not.
- All recipients are inspected to make sure they have grown sufficient fodder before they receive their animal.
- All recipients are inspected to make sure they have correctly constructed a shed or pen suitable for the animal they are about to receive.

## **Training**

Training in animal care is a major part of the “package” provided by Send a Cow.

- All recipients are trained in basic animal health requirements and management before they receive their animal.
- All recipients are trained in good handling, feeding, watering and bedding practices before they receive their animals.
- All recipients are to be trained in growing fodder plants and fodder trees appropriate to the needs of the animals they are to receive.
- All recipients are trained in the construction of livestock housing that that offers the animal opportunity to enjoy all the five freedoms outlined above.
- Further training is provided in animal care issues identified by Send a Cow in consultation with community groups is provided, including prevention and cure of basic diseases, and the use of drugs and vaccinations.
- All the above training and preparation is overseen and followed up by trained personnel engaged by Send a Cow.

## **Follow-up**

Send a Cow does not “give and go”. It knows that caring for livestock is a demanding and responsible task, and it funds support and monitoring by professionally qualified staff.

- After receipt of animals follow up visits are made to recipients by Send a Cow extension staff, with specific responsibility to make sure that they are putting into practice what they learned in their training, and generally maintaining good animal care practices with their gift and any offspring.

- Regular monitoring of progress of Beneficiaries, Extension staff and Groups through quarterly reporting to and periodic direct farm visits by, SAC Country Programme staff and SACUK staff, to assist good practice delivery.

## **Staffing**

Send a Cow employs only staff with relevant qualifications and experience on its programmes.

- All Send a Cow projects are linked with one or more of the following support resources for animal wellbeing:
  - Qualified extension worker with animal husbandry training
  - Qualified vet (or access to district, government and private veterinary services)
  - Trained community animal health worker

## **Networking**

Contact with government and other initiatives gives people opportunities to learn new skills and gain access to new markets. This encourages them to look after their animals well and keep them healthy and productive.

In all our activities Send a Cow seeks to maximise animal wellbeing in whatever way we are reasonably able to, with the resources available. Training in animal husbandry and wellbeing are increasingly being recognised and sought after in the countries where we work, because of the improved productivity resulting. We aim to create a “virtuous circle”, with healthy, well fed and cared for animals resulting in healthy, well-fed people, who are then even better able to care for their animals.

Where animals are poorly managed, Send a Cow reserves, and sometimes claims, the right to take back any poorly managed animal and give it to another, more caring, beneficiary.