2025 Animal Welfare Metrics & Guidance for Beef

Meat Institute
Nourishing Today
Sustaining Tomorrow
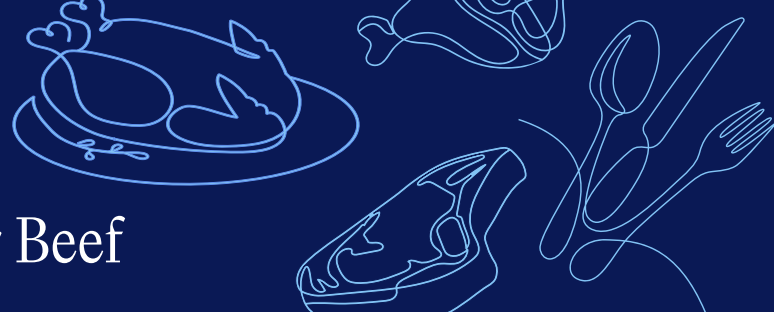
Report data for the prior calendar year.

Metrics in this focus area will be displayed based on the designation of slaughter or further processor and type of protein for each establishment.

Resources provide information to assist in meeting the metric or to help define criteria for the metric.

Resources may be a known standard, policy, practice, program, and/or recognized best practice.

Foundational Metrics (Baselines)

For the statements below, enter a number representing how many of the establishments you are reporting for that would answer "Yes". Example: Reporting for 3 establishments and all are yes type 3. If metric applies to 1, type 1. If none, type 0.

B1. Demonstrate compliance with applicable animal welfare transport regulations. (SLAUGHTER)

Yes: The Company knows the applicable animal welfare transport regulations. Policies and/or procedures are in place based on program guidance. If regulatory action is taken, such as USDA taking an action of NOIE or Suspension, as long as corrective actions are put in place and action is lifted in response an establishment could answer yes.

B2. Demonstrate compliance with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act and all pertinent regulations derived from that act (9 CFR part 313). (SLAUGHTER)

Yes: The Company has programs and policies in place to adhere to the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act and 9 CFR part 313.If regulatory action is taken, such as USDA taking an action of NOIE or Suspension, as long as corrective actions are put in place and action is lifted in response an establishment could answer yes.

Achievement Metrics

When answering these achievement metrics to indicate "yes," type the number of establishments for which you are reporting that would say yes. Within the achievement metrics, we use a commit, track, deliver, made public framework. This framework is to show the company's or establishment's progression as it relates to meeting this metric and possibly going above and beyond the metric (deliver/made public).

In general, across all focus areas unless clarified under the metric, the following will be the guiding definitions for commit, track, deliver, made public, not applicable, and choose not to report.

- **Commit (C)** – Means internally the company has stated a commitment to the metric.
- **Track (T)** – Means internally the company has a mechanism for measuring/recording/reporting information supporting this metric.
- **Deliver (D)** – Means the company is meeting the internal goal(s) or commitment(s) pertinent to this metric. For some metrics, Deliver may refer to using the information to identify opportunities for improvement and demonstrate a gap closure or going above and beyond meeting the metric.
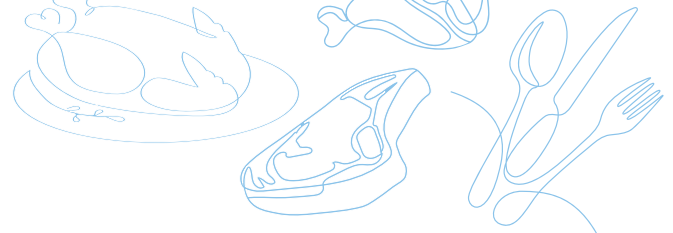
- **Made Public (P)** – At the company level, information regarding this metric has been published, printed, or posted publicly displaying the company's commitment to this metric externally. Examples: posted on the company website; included in an ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) report; etc.
- **N/A** – Not Applicable
- **Not Reporting (NR)** – Choose not to report.

Definitions (unless otherwise clarified in the metric):
- Supplier: who the Establishment receives a product and/or service from.
- Customer: who the Establishment sells a product and/or service to.

The question mark (?) after each metric provides guidance on how to report for each individual metric. If there is nothing specific to that metric for interpretation assistance, then the definitions of commit, track, deliver, and made public as written above prevail.

Example: If you are reporting for 3 establishments, the max number you can input is 3.

- If 3 of 3 of the establishments have committed to the metric, enter 3.
- If only 2 of 3 establishments are tracking the metric, enter 2.
- If only 1 establishment has delivered on the metric, enter 1.
- If the answer is no for all establishments reported on, enter zero.

Reminder: In the reporting module, you will only see metrics relating to the protein AND whether an establishment was designated as a slaughter and/or processing facility. If an establishment is incorrectly displaying as slaughter or further processor contact your Company Verifier. They can make changes to the establishment type under Company Setup. Below look for SLAUGHTER or FURTHER PROCESSOR (see A8 & A9) after each metric.

	C	T	D	P	NA	NR

A1. A written company program for animal welfare during transport is in place. (SLAUGHTER)

ANIMAL TRANSPORT

- **Commit** – A written company program is in place with a method in place to ensure adherence to the program and initiate corrective actions for deviations. Will likely include measures to communicate the program to and resolve concerns with internal and/or third-party transporters.
- **Track** – A process is in place to monitor adherence to the company program. Monitoring should cover all production shifts.
- **Deliver** – Monitoring demonstrates adherence to the company program and reconciliation of corrective actions for deviations.
- **Made Public** – Examples: Information about the company animal welfare program is available on a website, shared upon request, part of a supplier program, in a sustainability report, etc.
- **N/A** – This metric isn't pertinent to the establishment(s) and/or company.
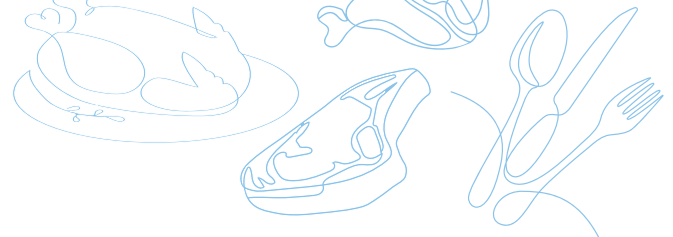
C	T	D	P	NA	NR

ANIMAL TRANSPORT

A2. At a minimum, annually passes an accredited third-party NAMI Animal Handling Transport Audit conducted by a certified auditor. (SLAUGHTER)
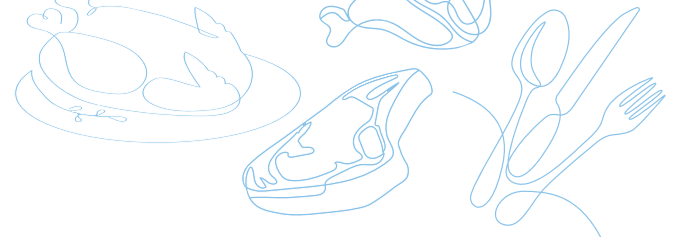
- **Commit** - A goal has been established to conduct and pass an accredited third-party audit annually at the slaughter establishment(s).
- **Track** - A passing third-party audit is conducted annually at the establishment(s).

  » Note: This metric contributes to:
    - the industry's packer-processor Animal Welfare Goals
    - Protein PACT goal: Providing the best animal care; and
    - US Roundtable for Sustainable Beef's 2025 Packer/Processor Sector Target

- **Deliver** - During the entire calendar year, the establishment(s) does not fail a third-party audit or if there was a failure, the establishment passed the re-audit with sufficient corrective actions in place. An establishment does not deliver on this metric if the audit failure was because of observed acts of abuse.
- **Made Public** - Examples: Information about the company animal welfare program is available on a website, shared upon request, part of a supplier program, in a sustainability report, etc.
- **N/A** - This metric isn't pertinent to the establishment(s) and/or company.

Note: Updates and name change to the NAMI Animal Handling Transport Audit which will be the Meat Industry Animal Welfare Transport Audit.

- For 2024 - 2026 Reporting, on calendar years 2023-2025 respectively, this metric references the NAMI Animal Handling Transport Audit.
- For 2027 Reporting, establishments implementing in calendar year 2026 and beyond please reference the Meat Industry Animal Welfare Transport Audit (which replaces the NAMI Animal Handling Transport Audit). The new Audit allows for more than a pass/fail score.
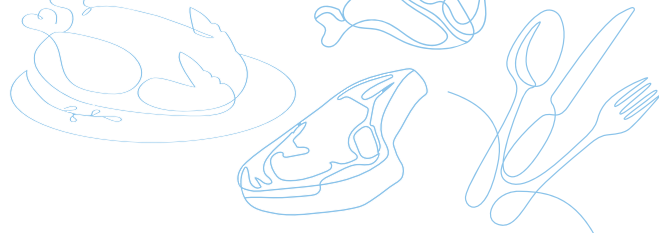
Resources:
- Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit
- PAACO Certification https://animalauditor.org/

C	T	D	P	NA	NR

ANIMAL TRANSPORT

A3. Participates in country- and species-specific transportation programs. (SLAUGHTER)

- **Commit** - Company has identified & committed to participating in country- & species-specific transportation programs, such as:
  - » USA:
    - BQAT (Beef Quality Assurance Transport) for Beef;
  - » Canada:
    - CLT (Canadian Livestock Transport) for Beef and Pork; etc.
  - » Supplier(s) could utilize an independent program (could be internal or by third-party) that is comparable to an industry standard and/or meets the intent of the metric but would need to be verified by the company.
- **Track** - Company has a program in place to verify transporters have current training in the identified program(s).
  - » Programs can be verified by an affidavit, letter of guarantee, or third-party audit.
- **Deliver** - The program is implemented to ensure ALL transporters have current training prior to delivery with program components that include approving or verifying compliance of training.
- **Made Public** - Examples: Information about the company animal welfare program is available on a website, shared upon request, part of a supplier program, in a sustainability report, etc.
- **N/A** - If selected, a text box will ask why this metric isn't pertinent to the establishment(s) and/or company.

Resources:
- Beef Quality Assurance Transportation Training & Certification https://bqatransportation.beeflearningcenter.org/
- Canadian Livestock Transport https://campus.animalhealthcanada.ca/

LIVE ANIMAL HOLDING & SLAUGHTER

A4. Implements a comprehensive Animal Welfare Program based on the NAMI Animal Handling Guidelines. (SLAUGHTER)

- **Commit** - A written program is in place with a monitoring component to measure adherence to the program and initiate corrective actions for deviations. The program addresses aspects of animal welfare as outlined in the Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit.

Note: A program that has been designated as robust by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) would likely meet the criteria.

- **Track** - Internal monitoring is conducted regularly to measure adherence to the program. Monitoring should cover all production shifts.
- **Deliver** - Monitoring demonstrates adherence to the program and timely reconciliation of corrective actions for deviations.
- **Made Public** - Examples: Information about the company animal welfare program is available on a website, shared upon request, part of a supplier program, in a sustainability report, etc.
- **N/A** - If selected, a text box will ask why this metric isn't pertinent to the establishment and/or company.

Resources:
- Meat Institute's Animal Handling Guidelines & Audit
- USRSB Packer Processor Toolkit

LIVE ANIMAL HOLDING & SLAUGHTER

A5. At a minimum, annually passes an accredited third-party NAMI Animal Handling Audit conducted by a certified auditor. (SLAUGHTER)

- **Commit** - A goal has been established to conduct and pass an accredited third-party audit annually at the slaughter establishment(s).
- **Track** - A passing third-party audit is conducted annually at the establishment(s).
  - » A certified auditor could be trained through PAACO or a similar program.
  - » Note: This metric contributes to the industry's 2025 Animal Welfare goal.
- **Deliver** – During the entire calendar year, the establishment(s) does not fail a third-party audit or if there was a failure, the establishment passed the re-audit with sufficient corrective actions in place. An establishment does not deliver on this metric if the audit failure was because of observed acts of abuse.
  - » For 2024 - 2026 Reporting, on calendar years 2023-2025 respectively, this metric references the NAMI Animal Handling Transport Audit.
  - » For 2027 Reporting, establishments implementing in calendar year 2026 and beyond please reference the Meat Industry Animal Welfare Transport Audit (which replaces the NAMI Animal Handling Transport Audit). The new Audit allows for more than a pass/fail score.
- **Made Public** – Examples: Information about the company animal welfare program is available on a website, shared upon request, part of a supplier program, in a sustainability report, etc.
- **N/A** - If selected, a text box will ask why this metric isn't pertinent to the establishment and/or company.

Resources:
- Meat Institute's Animal Handling Guidelines & Audit
- PAACO Certification https://animalauditor.org/

A6. Have an employee(s) on staff or consultant that maintains third-party animal handling and welfare training based on the NAMI Animal Handling Guidelines. (SLAUGHTER)

- **Commit** - A goal has been set to employ at least one designated certified auditor for the company who evaluates training of animal behavior or equivalent.
- **Track** - Records are kept to document whether the individual(s) has and maintains third-party certification.
- **Deliver** – If the establishment meets Track, the establishment meets Deliver.
- **Made Public** – Examples: Information about the company animal welfare program is available on a website, shared upon request, part of a supplier program, in a sustainability report, etc.
- **N/A** - If selected, a text box will ask why this metric isn't pertinent to the establishment and/or company.

Resource:
- Meat Institute's Animal Handling Guidelines & Audit
- PAACO https://animalauditor.org/
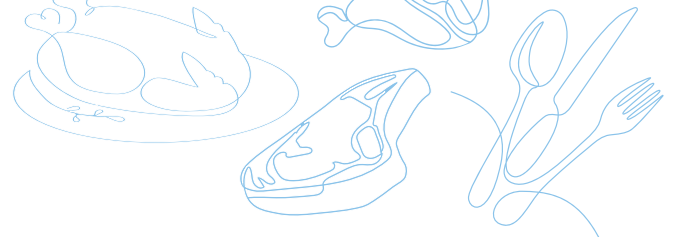
A7. Maintains a written company animal welfare policy that requires direct live animal suppliers implement an animal welfare program that includes employee training and specific standards for animal care. (SLAUGHTER)

Reminder: This metric and A8 are similar. A7 is for establishments that slaughter. A8 is for establishments that further process.

- **Commit** - A company policy is in place to source from direct (immediate) live animal suppliers (examples: livestock markets, feeders, producers, etc.) that implement animal welfare programs, such as:
  - » USA:
    - Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) https://www.bqa.org/
    - National Dairy FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) Program https://nationaldairyfarm.com/
    - Livestock Market Association (LMA) Animal Handling Modules https://www.lmaweb.com/Membership/Services/animal-handling-sustainable-practices
  - » Canada:
    - Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) http://www.verifiedbeef.ca/
    - Ontario Corn Fed Beef (OCFB) Quality Assurance Program https://ontariocornfedbeef.com/ocfb-qa-manual/
    - Dairy ProAction https://www.dairyfarmers.ca/proaction/how-it-works/overview
  - » Supplier(s) could utilize an independent program (internal or comparable) that meets the industry standard and/or the intent of the metric but would need to be verified by the company.
- **Track** - A program is in place to verify suppliers are implementing the program.
  - » Programs can be verified by an affidavit, letter of guarantee, or third-party audit.
  - » Note: This metric contributes to the
    - industry's packer-processor Animal Welfare Goals
    - Protein PACT goal: Providing the best animal care
    - US Roundtable for Sustainable Beef's 2025 Packer/Processor Sector Target
- **Deliver** - All suppliers provide proof of implementation prior to delivery.
- **Made Public** - Examples: Information about the company animal welfare program is available on a website, shared upon request, part of a supplier program, in a sustainability report, etc.
- **N/A** - If selected, a text box will ask why this metric isn't pertinent to the establishment and/or company.

LIVE ANIMAL HOLDING & SLAUGHTER
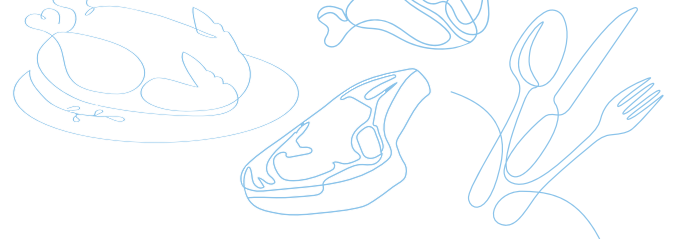
C	T	D	P	NA	NR

A8. Maintains a written company animal welfare policy that requires direct suppliers (slaughter establishment) to implement a comprehensive Animal Welfare Program. (FURTHER PROCESSOR)
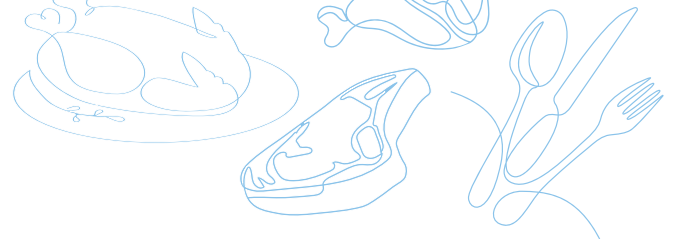
Reminder: This metric and A7 are similar. A7 is for establishments that slaughter. A8 is for establishments that further process.

- **Commit** – A policy is in place to source from direct (immediate) suppliers that implement a comprehensive Animal Welfare Program (see Resource below).
  - » Supplier to be defined as a slaughter establishment.
  - » Aim of this metric: Raw material suppliers implement a comprehensive Animal Welfare Program.
- **Track** – A program is in place to verify suppliers who slaughter implement a comprehensive animal welfare program AND that suppliers who don't slaughter but provide meat products have an animal welfare policy in place. Letters of guarantee or affidavits would suffice.
  - » Note: This metric contributes to the
    - industry's packer-processor Animal Welfare Goals
    - Protein PACT goal: Providing the best animal care
    - US Roundtable for Sustainable Beef's 2025 Packer/Processor Sector Target
- **Deliver** – All suppliers provide proof of implementation prior to delivery.
- **Made Public** – Examples: Information about the company animal welfare program is available on a website, shared upon request, part of a supplier program, in a sustainability report, etc.
- **N/A** – If selected, a text box will ask why this metric isn't pertinent to the establishment and/or company.

Resource:
- Meat Institute's Animal Handling Guidelines & Audit

LIVE ANIMAL HOLDING & SLAUGHTER

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

A9. Participates in species-specific stakeholder initiatives (e.g., industry welfare committees) to improve animal well-being. (SLAUGHTER) (FURTHER PROCESSOR)

- **Commit** - Company has identified and committed to participating in species-specific stakeholder initiatives, such as:

  » Meat Institute Animal Welfare Committee
  » State Beef Council
  » NCBA (National Cattlemen's Beef Association)
  » USRSB (US Roundtable for Sustainable Beef)
  » A veterinary association
  » Or similar at a regional or state level

- **Track** - Records are kept documenting regular participation such as attendance; working on subcommittees or task forces; and/or knowledge contributions at meetings, conferences, etc.

- **Deliver** - Company engages in any of the following activities to advance continuous improvement in animal welfare: Works with an external animal welfare advisor/committee; Conducts/invests in projects dedicated to advance animal welfare (e.g., technology and innovation);

  » If selected, a text box for more information will appear. By providing information on project investments – new research and innovations this keeps the Meat Institute's Animal Welfare Staff in the loop.

- **Made Public** - Posting participation on social media; having conversations with customers (e.g., restaurants, retailers, etc.) about animal welfare related topics; conversing with fellow packer/processor colleagues in the animal welfare space to stay informed on the latest information and innovations.
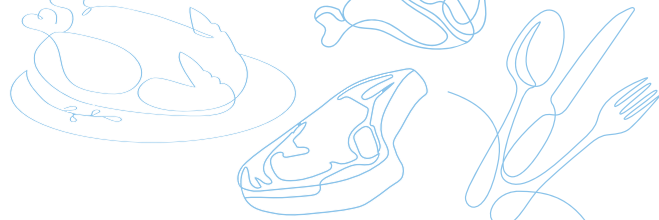
Animal Welfare Goal

By year's end of 2025, 100% of members who handle animals will pass third party animal transport and handling audits. (A2 Track; A5 Track) AND all members will require all suppliers to implement [an animal welfare program that includes] employee training and species-specific standards for animal care (A7 Track; A8 Track).

Success of this metric will be collected during the 2026 reporting window gathering industry data from our slaughter and processing companies' 2025 calendar year operations.

Animal Welfare Resources:
- Meat Institute's Animal Welfare Page & Committee info https://www.meatinstitute.org/Animal_Welfare
- Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit https://www.meatinstitute.org/Animal_Welfare/Guidelines_and_Audits
- Meat Institute's Animal Welfare Policy Templates for Packers and Processors https://www.meatinstitute.org/2024_Animal_Welfare_Templates_ProteinPACT
- USRSB Packer Processor Toolkit

2024 to 2025 Metric Updates
- Resource Link Updates
- Protein PACT goal language.
- Guideline and name change: NAMI Animal Handling Guidelines to Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit

2023 to 2024 Metric Updates for Beef, Pork, Lamb, Veal:
- Task force made major changes
- B1 – Clarified what a "yes" means.
- B2 – Clarified what a "yes" means.
- A3 and A7 – Clarifying C, T, D,
- A5 – Clarified how re-audits apply to Deliver.
- A7 – Clarified "direct"
- A8 – Clarifying C, T,
- A9 – Clarifying C, T, D, MP to better align with some other industry frameworks and gain more information on new innovations and research happening in the AW space.
- Adding the 2025 AW Goal and how Meat Institute will be measuring its success.
- Animal Welfare Task Force reviewing policy samples for Meat Institute Members to consider using or for an example of what your company policy could be to assist in meeting A7 & A8