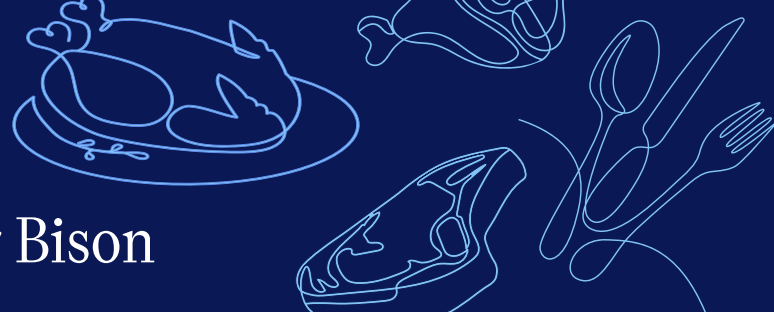# 2025 Animal Welfare Metrics & Guidance for Bison

Report data for the prior calendar year (2024). 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)
None

Achievements

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
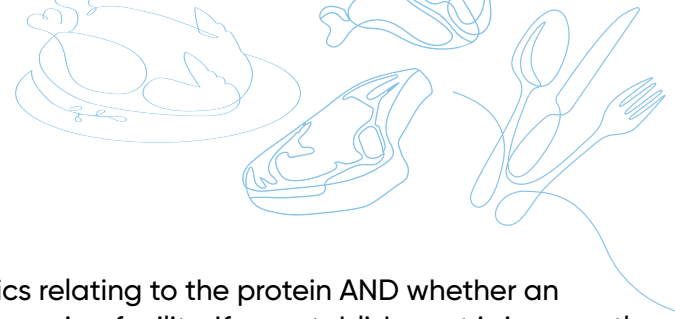- **Not Reporting (NR)** – Choose not to report.

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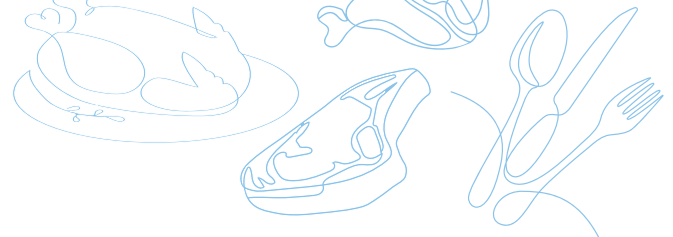
Example: If you are reporting for 3 establishments, the max number you can input is 3.

- » 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 the 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** - If selected, a text box will ask why this metric isn't pertinent to the establishment(s) and/or company. **Resource:** • Canadian Resource for transportation of animals including to slaughter: Health of Animals Regulations: Part XII: Transport of Animals-Regulatory Amendment Interpretive Guidance for Regulated Parties https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/humane-transport/health-of-animals-regulations-part-xii/eng/1582126008181/1582126616914

C	T	D	P	NA	NR

ANIMAL TRANSPORT

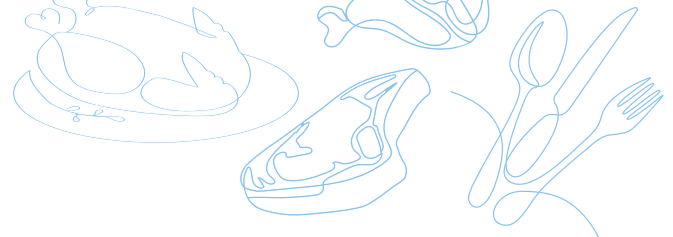## A4. Implements a comprehensive Animal Welfare Program. (SLAUGHTER)

- **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 https://www.meatinstitute.org/Animal_Welfare/Guidelines_and_Audits
  - » Note: Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit do not currently specifically address bison. You can use these guidelines as best practice for what may be considered for the establishments/company.
  - » A program that has been designated as robust by 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 Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit https://www.meatinstitute.org/Animal_Welfare/Guidelines_and_Audits
- USRSB Packer Processor Toolkit https://www.usrsb.org/Media/USRSB/Docs/ usrsb_ packerprocessortoolkit.pdf

Canadian Resources:
- Sanitary Requirements for Export of Cattle or Bison from Canada to the United States of America HA1941 (Amended 2021-07-06) https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/ exports/bovine/united-states-of-america-ha1941/eng/1390922086620/1390922087479
- Safe Food for Canadians Act – Humane Treatment at slaughter https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2018-108/page-9.html#h-844719
- Preventative Control Plan (like US Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program) https://inspection. canada.ca/preventive-controls/preventive-control-plans/eng/1512152894577/1512152952810
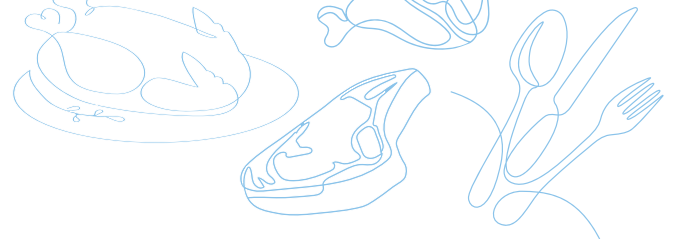
LIVE ANIMAL HOLDING AND SLAUGHTER

A7. Maintains a written company animal welfare policy that requires direct live animal suppliers to implement an animal welfare program or code of practice, 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/
    - 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/
    - Canadian Bison Association & National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Bison https://www.nfacc.ca/bison-code-of-practice
  » 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.

- **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.

Note: This metric contributes to the:
- Meat Institute's packer-processor Animal Welfare Goals
- Protein PACT goal: Providing the best animal care

LIVE ANIMAL HOLDING AND SLAUGHTER

A8. Maintains a written company animal welfare policy that requires direct suppliers (slaughter establishment) to implement a comprehensive Animal Welfare Program. (FURTHER PROCESSORS)

Reminder: This metric and A7 are similar. A7 is for establishments that slaughter. A8 is for establishments that further process.
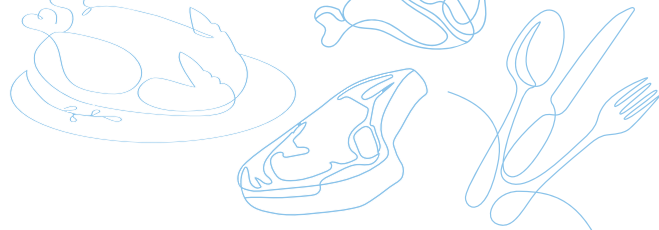
- **Commit** - A policy is in place to source from direct (immediate) suppliers that implement a comprehensive Animal Welfare Program *(see Resource below)*.
  - » Supplier to be defined as a slaughter establishment.
  - » Aim of this metric: Raw material suppliers implement a comprehensive Animal Welfare 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.
- **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.

Note: This metric contributes to the:
  - » Meat Institute's packer-processor Animal Welfare Goals
  - » Protein PACT goal: Providing the best animal care

Resource:
- Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit
  https://www.meatinstitute.org/Animal_Welfare/Guidelines_and_Audits

C	T	D	P	NA	NR

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

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

- **Commit** - Company has identified and committed to participating in species-specific stakeholder initiatives, such as:
  » Meat Institute Animal Welfare Committee
  » National Bison Association and/or state/regional association(s) or initiatives.
  » Canadian Bison Association or a provincial Bison Association(s).
  » 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; 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 keep's the Meat Insitute's Animal Welfare Staff in the loop.
- **Made Public** - Posting participation on social medial; 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.

Meat Institute's Packer-Processor Animal Welfare Goals

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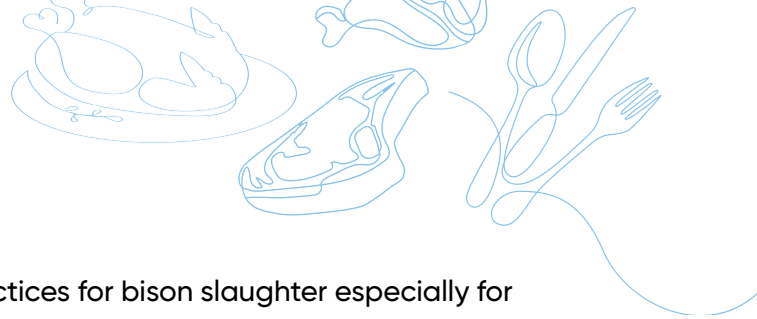
Success of this metric will be collected during the 2026 reporting window gathering industry data from our slaughter and processing companies' 2025 calendar year operations.

General Resources for Animal Welfare:
- 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

2024 to 2025 Updates
- Protein PACT Goal language.
- Changes to naming of and roll-out of NAMI Animal Handling Guidelines to Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit

For Strategic Vision Committee & Foundation follow-up:

- Could the Foundation look into facility design best practices for bison slaughter especially for multispecies facility best practices.
- LCA for Bison to help with SBTs reporting?

Resource Development:

- Task Force suggested the Bison Committee help create a written code of process template for industry use as resource on A1.
- A6. Meat Institute to work with and/or monitor for a certification that is in place by 2025 to help meet this metric.