CODE OF PRACTICE
ON THE FARM

CATTLE

January 2024

Contents

“Man is obliged to show gratitude and respect to animals.
Healthy and safe food can only be obtained from healthy animals
kept in conditions that guarantee the highest possible level of welfare.”

1. Introduction

"SOKOŁÓW" SA is one of the largest companies in Poland engaged in slaughter and meat processing. It has been a pioneer of change for many years and sets new, increasingly higher standards in the industry. The greatest ambition of "SOKOŁÓW" SA is to produce food in a responsible and sustainable manner and to meet the growing expectations of both customers and consumers. "SOKOŁÓW" SA, as one of the leaders, remembers its duties and responsibility towards the environment. The basic values of "SOKOŁÓW" SA emphasize continuous commitment and responsibility for striving to improve production conditions, food safety, sustainable development and animal welfare in cooperation with suppliers.

"SOKOŁÓW" SA has eight modern production plants. Three plants slaughter pigs, two slaughter cattle, and the remaining three plants only process raw materials. The highest quality raw materials are used for production, obtained in cooperation with cattle producers and suppliers. Maintaining animal welfare at the stage of breeding, transport, reception of animals, storage and slaughter is the basis of our treatment of cattle. Employees who handle live animals in plants must participate in cyclical training on the humane treatment, welfare and behavior of animals and their physiological needs.

"SOKOŁÓW" SA has been working closely with farmers, suppliers for years and is looking for new solutions, support and knowledge by participating in meetings and conferences with scientists and organizations in the agricultural sector.

"SOKOŁÓW" SA, in cooperation with producers, suppliers, customers and consumers, applies animal welfare requirements in standard production. These requirements are mainly based on current legislation and industry suggestions but can be extended to enable special product concepts with a higher sustainable agriculture and animal welfare status.

The Code of Practice implements and supplements the Animal Welfare Policy of "SOKOŁÓW" SA and is an expression of the implementation of the sustainable development strategy of the Danish Crown Group. It was created to define the requirements for producers and suppliers supplying animals to "SOKOŁÓW" SA. Compliance with the Code of Practice is a very important condition of cooperation for cattle suppliers.
This document is updated on an ongoing basis based on the applicable provisions of national and European Union law or the requirements of "SOKOŁÓW" SA in accordance with the version history.
The organizational unit responsible for the development and ongoing updating of the Code of Practice is the Sustainability and Animal Welfare Office "SOKOŁÓW" S.A.

2. Sustainability

"SOKOŁÓW" SA is committed to achieving the goal of low emission, environmentally and climate neutral sustainable production of the highest quality beef.

To meet social expectations, "SOKOŁÓW" SA creates valuable products for customers and Consumers.
Sustainable Agriculture is an element of Sustainability and includes all activities in both plant and animal production that limit the impact on the environment or are in harmony with the natural functioning of given environments.
An important role is to maintain the economic aspects of production, as well as to obtain social acceptance for its implementation.

3. General Animal Welfare Principles

Animal Welfare is defined as the state of physical and mental health achieved in optimal environmental conditions. This means that the breeding method meets the basic needs of animals, primarily in terms of nutrition, access to water, providing the company of other animals and living space, as well as prevention and treatment.

3.1 The Five Freedoms Principle

The pillar of animal welfare is the "Five Freedoms" principle, recognized and respected worldwide, included in the Animal Welfare Code. It was developed by English specialists from the Farm Animals Welfare Council. It is the basis for many national, EU and international legal acts.

Five Freedoms:
1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst** - through constant access to fresh drinking water and an appropriate diet needed for full health and strength.
2. **Freedom from discomfort** – by providing appropriate living conditions, including shelter and a comfortable space for relaxation.
3. **Freedom from pain, injuries and diseases** – through prevention, quick diagnosis and appropriate treatment.
4. **Freedom to express natural behavior** - by providing sufficient space, appropriate conditions and the company of animals of the same species.
5. **Freedom from fear and stress** - by providing care and treatment that does not cause animal mental suffering.

Compliance with applicable laws regarding welfare, humane treatment of animals and providing them with the best possible conditions at all stages of production and marketing are the strong priorities of "SOKOŁÓW" S.A.

3.2 Animal Welfare Management

Within the structures of the Raw Materials Division of "SOKOŁÓW" S.A., the Sustainability and Animal Welfare Office was established, whose task is to implement strategic goals for the development of animal welfare, proper organization and coordination in the field of animal welfare on farms, transport and slaughter plants, and to introduce solutions that reduce the negative impact on the climate and environment in the supply chain of "SOKOŁÓW" S.A.
In addition to Sustainability and Animal Welfare Office, there are teams that deal with animal welfare:

- The Beef Purchasing Office - through field representatives - is responsible for communicating animal welfare requirements for farmers, suppliers and carriers, as well as enforcing and verifying compliance with animal welfare in the process of turnover and delivery to the plant.

- Plant Animal Welfare Inspectors, who are responsible for verifying compliance with animal welfare rules from arrival at the plant, through unloading, animal holding and slaughter.
- The Heads of the Slaughter Department and the Heads of the Lairage organize and are responsible for the proper course of the process of receiving, holding, and slaughtering livestock.

To meet the requirements of customers and consumers, a quality management system and HACCP procedures are in place throughout the company. This system is the foundation for other systems implemented in the "SOKOŁÓW" SA plants, such as BRC, IFS and the ISO 14001 standard, which consider meeting the highest standards, including compliance with the principles of animal welfare. Having them is a condition for cooperation with our most demanding customers.

3.3 Legal Acts

- Act of August 21, 1997, on animal protection (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 1580, as amended),
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of February 15, 2010, on the requirements and procedures for keeping farm animal species for which protection standards are specified in the European Union regulations (Journal of Laws of 2010, No. 56, item 344, as amended),
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of June 28, 2010, on minimum conditions for keeping farm animal species other than those for which protection standards are specified in European Union regulations (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1966),
- Council Directive 2008/119/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves (Codified version) (OJ EU L. of 2009, No. 10, p. 7, as amended).,
- Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related activities and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 (Journal of Laws of the European Union of 2005, No. 3, page 1, as amended).

4. Key animal welfare issues in breeding

Trought cooperation with farmers and suppliers, "SOKOŁÓW" SA strives to ensure an increasingly higher level of animal welfare. Together, we strive to ensure that animals are healthy, safe and kept in appropriate conditions.

Employees monitor the level of cattle welfare during fattening, loading, transport, unloading at the plant, and until slaughter.

"SOKOŁÓW" SA strives to ensure that animals that come to its plants develop properly, and that their biological and behavioral needs are met.

Particular attention is paid to ensure that all animals are treated humanely throughout their lives and that animal welfare is always at the highest possible level.

4.1 Requirements for buildings, facilities and equipment

Animals have ensured welfare when the buildings and breeding systems meet their basic needs, primarily in terms of necessary living space, nutrition, access to water, treatment,

maintenance hygiene, room microclimate, light conditions, providing the company of other animals, preventing injuries, ensuring shelter from bad climatic conditions.

The farm where animals are kept must be registered, meet the appropriate legal requirements and have the necessary technical and organizational infrastructure. It is important that the places where animals are kept have clearly defined boundaries (gate and fence) and the surrounding area is properly maintained.
To provide animals with optimal development conditions and a high level of well-being, the buildings and rooms in which they are kept must have a safe structure that does not pose a threat to their health and life. Protruding elements, sharp surfaces and edges are not allowed.
All materials used to construct rooms, pens, boxes, stations, partitions, floors, feeders, drinkers and additional equipment should be easy to clean, wash and disinfect.
The floor in cattle rooms should be hard, even and stable, and its surface should be smooth and non-slip.
Depending on the scale of production, the building should have at least one emergency exit.

Rodent control
Farm breeding animals should have a rodent protection program. The presence of rodents in the barn means threats such as contamination of feed, damage to equipment, and the spread of various diseases.
The most common method of rodent control is chemical treatment. In addition to selecting a specific substance and attractant, choosing the right place to spread the poison is very important. Rodent control stations should be located both inside and outside buildings, in places where rodents stay and move. There should be a plan on the farm indicating the location of rodent control stations and a register containing the name and date of application of the measure.

4.2 Space requirements in buildings

It is important that the surface where animals stay is appropriate. It is necessary to provide animals with freedom of movement, the ability to lie down and stand up, access to feed and water, and to meet their physiological needs.
The law specifies the dimensions of individual and group pens depending on how cattle are kept.

Minimum space in group pens without designated resting areas and without bedding:

Animal category	Body weight [kg]	Pen area [m^2/pcs.]
Heifer over 19 months of age and up to 7 months of pregnancy	-	2.00
Heifer aged 6 – 19 months	-	1.60
Beef cattle	to 300	1.30
Beef cattle	area 300	1.80

Minimum areas in the loose housing system, without designated bedding areas:

Animal category	Body weight [kg]	Surface pen [m ^{2}/pcs.]
Cow and heifer over 7 months of pregnancy	-	4.50
Heifers over 6 months of age, but no longer than up to the 7th month of pregnancy	-	2.20
Beef cattle	to 300	1.60
Beef cattle	area 300	2.20

Minimum dimensions of pens for cattle kept in a tie-stall system:

Animal category	Station dimensions [m]	
	Length	Width
Cows and heifers over 7 months of pregnancy	1.60	1.10
Heifers over 6 months of age, but no longer than up to the 7th month of pregnancy	1.5	1.0
Beef cattle weigh up to 300 kg	1.30	0.80
Beef cattle weigh over 300 kg	1.45	0.95

Minimum areas in group pens for calves:

Animal category	Pen area [m ^{2}/pcs.]
A calf weighing up to 150 kg	1.50
A calf weighing over 150 to 220 kg	1.70
A calf weighing more than 220 kg	1.80

Requirements for technological partitions, passages and communication openings
Technological partitions include feeding ladders, ties, pen partitions and all types of fences in livestock buildings. They must be adapted to the appropriate animal category in terms of height, clearance, strength, etc. to fulfill their role.

When designing communication corridors, gates, passages and doorways, the dimensions of animals, people and means of transport should be considered.

Passage corridors should be equipped with solid walls, without stairs and steps. They should not narrow and should not have sharp bends.

4.3 Environmental requirements in buildings

Functional and operational solutions of livestock buildings are subordinated to the organization of work and animal production technology. An important element in the production cycle is microclimatic conditions in animal housing. Therefore, livestock buildings are also intended to provide an appropriate environment that enables the proper development of animal organisms.

Environment shaping in the animal housing depends on the following factors:

- temperature of livestock rooms,
- relative humidity,
- chemical composition of air,
- sunlight.

Temperature and relative humidity

The temperature and humidity in livestock buildings and the requirements for the recommended range depend mainly on the age and group of animals. They should be maintained at an optimal level to ensure the most favorable conditions for growth and development.

Too high temperature in rooms may cause thermal stress, which manifests itself in an increase in the number of breaths, decreased appetite, reduced milk production, and deteriorated fertility. It can also lead to decreased immunity and even heat stroke. Too low temperature increases production costs, exposes animals to cold and consequently increases their susceptibility to infections.

Increased air humidity may have a negative impact on their health, e.g. promote the development of lung diseases, mycosis and rheumatic diseases. However, too low humidity has a negative impact on the respiratory tract, irritating the mucous membranes and causing dust to become suspended in the air.

Temperature and humidity levels are not regulated by law, but based on experience and good production practice, the optimum humidity for all groups kept in one room has been determined, which is 60-70% and the temperature optimum is within the range of 4-16 °C.

Chemical composition of air

Animals staying in a closed livestock building emit carbon dioxide when breathing. The carbon dioxide content in buildings is much higher than its content in the atmosphere and may have a negative impact on animal health.

A similar effect on cattle has ammonia produced in the process of decomposition of urea present in excreted urine and putrefaction of undigested protein residues present in feed. Increased levels of ammonia in the air may lead to damage to the upper respiratory tract and lungs. A decrease in appetite is also observed in animals staying in rooms with increased levels of this gas.

Another harmful gas that may be present inside livestock buildings is hydrogen sulfide. It is produced because of the breakdown of proteins containing sulfur amino acids. When present in high concentrations, it paralyzes the central nervous system, causes inflammation of the mucous membranes of the respiratory system and conjunctivitis.

The permissible concentration of harmful gases cannot exceed the standards given below:

- Carbon dioxide (CO_2) concentration should not exceed 3000 ppm,
- Ammonia (NH_3) concentration should not exceed 20 ppm,
- Hydrogen sulfide (H_2S) concentration should not exceed 5 ppm.

The basic condition for maintaining the concentration of harmful gases and dust at a level that is not harmful to animals is properly functioning ventilation, which also eliminates unpleasant odors.
Properly functioning ventilation is intended to remove toxic gases, dust and excess heat and moisture, and to introduce fresh air into the building. With automatic ventilation in the barn, emergency ventilation should also be used, usually natural, gravity ventilation. A recommended additional element should also be a warning alarm system, which allows for quick activation of emergency ventilation in a situation that requires it.
A good and proven solution is the use of power generators (automatic or manually started).
Air exchange should remain at a level that is not harmful to animals.

It is recommended that the air exchange be:

- 90 m3/1 pc. /h in winter,
- 350 – 400 m3/1 pc. /h in the summer.

Sunlight exposure
The optimal amount of sunlight has a positive effect on the development of animals, has a bactericidal effect and has a positive effect on the animal's body.

Lighting
Proper lighting of livestock housing ensures optimal conditions for keeping animals and enables efficient handling and supervision of the pens in which they stay.

The basis of good lighting is the even distribution of its intensity in the livestock housing. It is recommended that natural lighting be provided in pens where cattle are kept (windows, skylights) and, if necessary, supplemented with artificial lighting corresponding to daylight hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and with an intensity of 20 - 30 lux.

Noise
The high level of mechanization (feeding, excrement removal, ventilation system, gates, valves) is the cause of the noise. Noise can cause anxiety in animals, especially when it occurs suddenly. This may result in animal falls. No animal should be exposed to constant or unexpected noise. The noise level should not exceed 85 dB.

Providing access to water
Cattle, like other farm animals, require unlimited access to fresh, clean and safe drinking water that will not pose a threat to their health and well-being. From the age of 2 weeks, they should have unlimited access to it. The need for animals to drink water applies to both winter and summer conditions. In winter, this applies to access to water itself by

limiting the risk of it freezing or providing water at too low a temperature. In summer, the need for access to fresh water prevents heat stress.
Watering devices should be installed in a way that protects water against spilling and contamination, and the arrangement should enable animals to have conflict-free access to water. Watering equipment must be made of materials that are harmless to animals and human health. Drinkers should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

Nutrition
Cattle feeding is based mainly on succulent roughage produced on the farm. In summer, there is mainly green fodder, and in winter, silage (e.g. whole corn plants, meadow grass, vetch + rye, beetroot leaves) and root crops (e.g. sugar beet, semi-sugar beet, fodder beet, turnip, turnip, carrot) with hay and cereal straw. Additionally, the feed dose is balanced with the addition of concentrated feed (e.g. cereal grains, wheat bran, rye, beet pulp, legume seeds, post-extraction meals, rapeseed cake) and minerals or mixtures from feed companies.

Feed for cattle should be adapted to the requirements of the animal, its age, body weight and physiological needs. Cattle must be fed at least twice a day. When kept in groups, animals should have simultaneous access to feed, unless electronic feed dispensing from stations is used. Each farmer is obliged to prepare food for his groups of animals. Recipes for the produced feed must be available not only for inspection purposes, but above all in the event of a sudden absence of the person handling the animals. Feeding equipment must be designed, constructed, located and maintained in a manner that minimizes the possibility of feed poisoning (contamination).
If you produce feed yourself, you must meet all quality, hygiene and legal requirements. If purchased, feed used to feed cattle must come from feed companies guaranteeing high quality and compliance with applicable legal regulations.

Please remember that each calf should receive colostrum as soon as possible after birth, but no later than 6 hours after birth. Colostrum contains antibodies and other essential ingredients that activate the immune system and significantly affect the survival and subsequent production efficiency of animals.

4.4 Animal housing systems

Cattle maintenance systems result from the existing infrastructure and should consider not only the possibility of achieving high production results, but above all, ensure adequate animal welfare.
Maintenance systems will vary depending on the direction of production.
Maintenance systems can be divided into:

- pasture with access to shelter from unfavorable weather conditions - beef cattle,
- pasture and alcove - beef cattle,
- alcove with or without access to a paddock - fattening animals, dairy cows.

The alcove system includes the following maintenance systems:

- free-stall housing system
- loose housing – group pens,
- tie-stall housing system

Fattening cattle may be kept in tie-stall housing system when their body weight exceeds 150 kg.

In each system you can distinguish:

- breeding on litter (deep, shallow),
- breeding on slats (full, half slatted).

The bedding-free system reduces the workload for daily animal care. Moreover, it is a beneficial solution for farms with limited access to litter. Taking animal welfare into account, a bedding system is a better solution.

Research shows that in a bedding-free system, many more injuries and abrasions occur to animals skin than in a bedding system. Fractures of limbs are also more common there. As required by law, calves until the second week of their life must be kept on bedding that should be comfortable, clean and dry. Older animals, both calves and fattening animals, can be kept either on litter or without litter. In addition, calves over 8 weeks of age must be housed in groups, until then, if they are housed individually, the walls of the pen should allow visual and physical contact with other calves.

All housing systems must comply with the requirements of EU and national law and ensure appropriate animal welfare.

It is recommended that animals have access to a run or enclosure whenever possible. Spending time on pastures, paddocks or stables has a positive effect on the condition and health of animals. In addition, cattle then could more fully display natural behaviors.

"SOKOŁÓW" SA recommends that, with animal welfare in mind, loose cattle housing systems should be promoted. Loose systems allow animals to more fully express their natural behaviors and have a positive impact on their health and production results. This should be considered when designing and constructing new facilities. In the case of old barns, it is recommended to gradually move away from tie-stall housing system whenever possible.

5. Zootechnical treatments

All treatments performed on animals in the supply chain of "SOKOŁÓW" SA must be performed in accordance with EU and national law, with due care and in a way that minimizes the animal's suffering and stress.

5.1 Decornization

Performing procedures such as dehorning on animals is not recommended in the supply chain of "SOKOŁÓW" SA. Dehorning calves can only be performed for the safety of people and other animals, to prevent mutual mutilation. Although the legislation does not regulate the method of dehorning, it is recommended to perform it as soon as possible, as soon as the horn buds become visible (no later than by the second month of the calf's life) and using local anesthesia.

5.2 Tail docking

"SOKOŁÓW" SA does not recommend docking the tails of cattle in any type of breeding, both for dairy and meat production.

5.3 Castration

Castration in cattle is a procedure performed sporadically in Poland. It involves the removal or permanent damage of the testicles in young male animals.

According to the regulations in force in our country, surgical castration can only be performed by veterinarians, other methods are referred to as so-called medical procedures and can be performed by qualified and trained personnel.

It is important that castration is carried out in the most humane way, respecting animal welfare, animals should be monitored during recovery and provided with appropriate breeding and care conditions.

5.4 Hoof correction

Hoof correction in cattle is a zootechnical procedure aimed at improving the structure and health of the animal's hooves. Proper hoof care is important to ensure optimal animal welfare. Regular monitoring and appropriate management of nutrition, housing and hygiene help prevent problems and maintain healthy hooves in cattle. If cattle are unable to consume them naturally, correction should be carried out regularly. Overgrown hooves can lead to lameness and more serious health problems, as well as problems with animal movement.

6. Care for sick and injured animals

Sick or injured animals should be given proper care and, if necessary, isolated from other animals. If the animal owner is unable to help them, call a veterinarian immediately. The consultation, diagnosis and recommendations of the veterinarian must be recorded in the animal treatment book. Each building should be able to isolate animals if their health requires it. Sick animals should be provided with a dry, comfortable surface, preferably with bedding.

7. Disposal of dead animals

Animal falls may be a consequence of injuries, infections, developmental defects or other accidental events, e.g. crushing or stillbirth. All these animals must be removed from the property immediately. It is necessary to designate an appropriate place for dead animals and a safe access route for their collection. After each collection, the storage area should be thoroughly washed and disinfected.

8. Use of antibiotics and prohibited substances

The use of growth-stimulating substances and the preventive, metaphylactic and routine use of antibiotics in the supply chain of "SOKOŁÓW" SA is strictly prohibited.

The use of antibiotics can only be ordered and performed by a veterinarian, considering the health and well-being of animals. After each use of antibiotics, it is essential to maintain the required withdrawal period before being sold for slaughter. "SOKOŁÓW" SA recommends that by improving environmental conditions, appropriate breeding, zootechnical and nutritional practices introduced on the farms of cooperating farmers, the use of antibiotics in animal breeding should be limited or abandoned.

9. Genetically modified animals

The use of genetically modified animals in the supply chain of "SOKOŁÓW" SA is strictly prohibited.

10. Preparing animals for sale - transport

Proper preparation of animals for sale and transport is one of the most important stages in animal trade.

A week before sale, it is recommended to use high-energy feed, rich in carbohydrates (e.g. molasses), proteins and fats, to accumulate muscle glycogen reserves in animals. The stress associated with animal handling has a negative impact on the pH value of meat. An animal

that is stressed uses large amounts of energy, which may result in loss of carcass weight, deterioration of its quality, and even death of the animal. After the body's energy reserves are exhausted, the processes responsible for lowering the pH value of the meat cannot occur in the muscles after slaughter. As a result, this contributes to the deterioration of meat quality. Meat with a high pH value is undesirable both in terms of appearance and palatability and is also less durable due to greater susceptibility to microbiological infections.

For reasons of hygiene, you should also take care of the proper condition of the cattle's skin and fleece. Animals should be clean enough to prevent microbiological contamination of the meat during post-slaughter processing.

Appropriate selection of animals for transport is an important factor in ensuring optimal welfare. Animals of different sizes and ages, sexually mature males and females, animals with and without horns, and animals hostile to each other should not be transported together. The exceptions are animals that come from one farm, were kept in common groups, are used to each other and separating them will cause stress, or if the females are accompanied by dependent young. Transport of animals should be consistent with the breeding system (loose farming system - in bulk transport, tie-stall farming system - tied in transport).

It is very important to remain calm during loading. It should also be remembered that rushing makes the situation worse. Animals worried about an unexpected and incomprehensible situation do not want to leave well-known pens where they feel safe. The resistance they put up is a natural defensive reaction.

10.1 Animal documentation

The producer is obliged to appropriately mark the animals with two ear tags or other identification methods included in the legal regulations: electronic ear tags or fetlock bands, ceramic capsules (boluses), implanted transponders, and prepare complete, correctly and legibly completed documentation:

- specifications for the collection and transport of cattle,
- passport (if available),
- food chain,
- list of earring numbers,
- other applicable

If markings other than two earrings are used at the time of sale of animals for slaughter, the Purchasing Department - Cattle Purchasing Office should be informed.

10.2 Assessment of animals for fitness for transport

Sick, injured animals or animals unable to move independently cannot be transported.
Persons responsible for loading should check the suitability of animals for transport well in advance. The main factors in the assessment should be:

- alertness and lively reaction of the animal,
- shiny, dry and well-kept coat,
- regular breathing,
- good condition of the animal,
- even distribution of body weight on all legs when standing and walking,
- straight back line,

- no obvious signs of pain.

Animal health condition that prevents transport:

- animals with a fracture of a limb or pelvis,
- animals with lameness that prevents weight bearing on the affected limb,
- animals that cannot stand up on their own,
- animals with large and deep wounds, with hemorrhages,
- animals suffering from severe general diseases, with visible symptoms of circulatory or respiratory system diseases,
- animals with severe inflammation, e.g. mastitis,
- animals with a prolapsed uterus or anus,
- pregnant females that are more than 90% or more of the expected gestation period or females that have given birth in the previous week,
- newborn animals whose umbilical cord wound has not yet healed completely.

10.3 Loading time

Loading time is very important. If possible, transport should be planned for the morning hours because the animals are not yet fed, and it is easier to move them.
Before sale, cattle should be rested and given enough good-quality feed. In the case of adult cattle, feed should be provided at least 12 hours before transport, and in the case of calves at least 6 hours before transport. In general, it is not recommended to limit access to water.

10.4 Preparation of the ramp

Appropriate securing of the ramps, disinfection and lining of the driving path (e.g. sawdust, straw, sand) will allow for efficient and safe loading of animals.
The loading ramp should allow animals to freely enter the vehicle. The angle of inclination should not exceed 26˚ when loading adults, 20˚ when loading calves.
You should also ensure that the lighting is of appropriate intensity so that animals move from darker to brighter places.
The light should be positioned in a way that prevents shadows and animals from being blinded. The animals will move smoothly without any obstacles in their way.

10.5 Loading of animals

Loading begins when the first animal leaves the pen at the farm, assembly point or animal resting point and ends when all animals are in the vehicle. Loading, as an element that rarely occurs in an animal's life, is very stressful and has a negative impact on the animals, both physically and mentally. The physical impact refers to, for example, aggression due to regrouping animals, fatigue and possible injuries caused by walking a distance or by obstacles in the pen or along the route. Psychological tension occurs because animals are forced to leave familiar surroundings and often encounter unfamiliar people.

11. Animal Transport

The transport process is one of the most stressful stages for animals due to the sudden change of environment. First, remember to ensure the highest possible level of welfare and that the animals transported are subject to legal protection. There are regulations in the European Union that regulate issues related to the transport of animals. Every animal experiences transport stress during transport. The degree to which it can be minimized largely depends on

the skills of the driver and the knowledge and experience of the carrier, as well as all staff involved in this process.

Animals are transported properly when they are provided with safe and humane transport conditions. A very important issue is proper transport planning. The route and transport time should be as short as possible. Animals must be provided with an appropriate level of safety during transport to avoid injury.

Additionally, all farmers, suppliers and carriers should remember the principles of biosecurity when handling cattle on farms, when loading and unloading, and about the obligation to wash and disinfect means of transport.

11.1 Transport during adverse weather conditions

During periods of high temperatures, special attention should be paid to the conditions in the vehicle; it is recommended that loading take place in the evening, at night or early in the morning. It should be ensured that the means of transport are equipped with efficient ventilation systems, temperature control systems and warning systems when the maximum temperature is reached for the animals being transported. It is recommended that vehicle roofs be white to prevent excessive heating of the vehicle.

During low temperatures, protect the vehicle against drafts, close all blinds, and optimally use the ventilation system to prevent the transported animals from cooling down.

The permissible temperature range is 5°C - 30°C (+/- 5 °C) depending on the outside temperature.

12. Unloading animals

12.1 Unloading animals intended for breeding

Unloading begins when you enter the unloading zone at the destination and ends when all animals are in the building, pens or other places intended for breeding a given species.
Unloading should be carried out calmly, efficiently and as quickly as possible after arrival at the destination.
Animals often arrive at their destination stressed and tired, so it is very important that unloading zones are properly prepared and that animal care staff have practical knowledge or are properly trained in animal care.
As with loading, remember to ensure appropriate lighting and the angle of the ramp to minimize the risk of injury to animals and enable them to disembark freely from the vehicle.
The unloading place should be roofed and protected against unfavorable weather conditions.
During unloading, animals should be carefully observed to assess their condition and health.
Employees handling animals should wear clothes in neutral colors, e.g. green, blue, gray, navy blue. Railings, window frames, doors and walls should be of a neutral color. Animals react badly to white, red, yellow, orange, as well as to any bright colors that create contrasts.

12.2 Key principles when on the premises – unloading at the lairage.

From the moment of entering the plant until leaving, the driver and other people in the vehicle must strictly comply with the orders and instructions given by employees and services operating at the plant.
The most important rules during unloading include:

- informing the lairage employee about the arrival of the of transport,
- proper positioning of the vehicle (e.g. at a ramp),
- checking the status of the indicated ramp (free, available for unloading with equipment adapted to the species and use group of unloaded animals),
- preparing and setting up safety equipment,
- proper handling of animals,
- use of handling devices available in the lairage,
- checking whether all animals have left the vehicle.

13. Handling of animals

When moving, animals should not be rushed, they should move at a leisurely pace. Noise and unnatural behavior should be avoided. First, it is forbidden to use force and aggression against animals.

Due to their strong herd instinct, cattle are easier to move in groups, especially those consisting of animals that know each other and have an established hierarchy.

13.1 Field of vision and comfort zone of animals

Cattle see completely differently than humans, they have a very wide field of vision (approx. 330˚), they are short-sighted, but they cannot see what is directly in front of them, and they also have a blind spot located just behind their rump. Cattle are sensitive to light contrasts and shadows. Cattle see poorly in good light but have good vision in low light intensity. The person moving animals must remember to avoid approaching animals from behind. Even though they cannot see what is behind them, they can hear because they have a very developed sense of hearing. A person centrally behind the animal causes it to panic.

It should also be remembered that each animal has its own escape zone, the so-called comfort zone around them. If the animal starts to turn away and backs away, it means that the animal's comfort zone has been exceeded.

13.2 Animal handling equipment

Equipment for moving animals should be limited to the minimum necessary. For this purpose, only dark plastic flaps, paddles, flags and screens should be used. Poles, rods or sharp objects must not be used. If the animal stops and does not want to move forward, the first thing you should do is stay calm and check the reason for the animal stopping. Under no circumstances should you hit or kick cattle or use prohibited objects.

It is not recommended to use objects that emit an electric impulse as tools for moving animals, both on the farm, during loading, unloading and during storage. The exceptions are situations where the life or health of people handling animals are at risk and when the animal is aggressive. When using the items mentioned above, please always comply with legal requirements.

14. Training

"SOKOŁÓW" SA cooperates with farmers, suppliers and carriers who, through many years of work or appropriate training, have extensive knowledge in the field of animal breeding, nutrition, transport and welfare.

"SOKOŁÓW" SA recommends systematically improving qualifications and expanding knowledge in the field of animal welfare and sustainable development. Thematic training

sessions are organized to meet the requirements of cooperation, responding to current needs, changing regulations and emerging more sustainable production practices. Both the Company's employees, farmers, suppliers, carriers and drivers participate in the training.

The presented Code of Practice is a collection of the most important issues regarding animal welfare on the farm and pre-slaughter trade in cattle. The legal requirements and recommendations included are intended to support farmers and suppliers in systematically improving the level of animal welfare and to meet the growing expectations of customers and consumers.

"Together we are creating a more sustainable future for food"