# Notice of Change
# Revised Workbook and Reference Manual

**Announcement:** Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) has issued a revised proAction® Workbook and Reference Manual dated October 2026. The documents and additional information are available on the proAction website (www.dairyfarmersofcanada.ca/en/proaction) and replace the July 2023 versions. This Notice of Change outlines the revised requirements and provides farmers with advance notice to make any necessary adjustments on their farms.

Of note, the majority of the changes in the revised Workbook and Reference Manual reflect the updated requirements in the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle (March 2023)*, but improvements have been incorporated across all modules to reflect continuous improvement opportunities identified since the last Workbook and Reference Manual publication in July 2023.

**Effective Date:** The effective date of the changes in validations is April 1, 2027.

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**List of Changes to proAction Requirements**

Note: FS = Food Safety  AC = Animal Care  LT = Livestock Traceability  BIO = Biosecurity  EN = Environment

| October 2026 Requirement | Comparison to July 2023 Requirement |
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| **New Requirements** | |
| AC21: Do you ensure that lactating cattle housing, including flooring:<br>a) Is maintained in good condition with sufficient traction to minimize injury and lameness?<br>b) Allows cattle to easily stand up, lie down, adopt normal resting postures and groom themselves?<br>c) Provides a resting surface with enough bedding to achieve insulation, dryness, and comfort?<br>d) Permits cattle to have visual and physical contact with other cattle? | New<br>Previously, lactating cattle housing was evaluated through cattle assessment results, but additional elements warranted a new requirement to capture all housing aspects in one place.<br>Demerits requirement |

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| e) Provides fresh air and prevents the buildup of harmful gases, dust and moisture, and reduces the risk of heat and cold stress?<br>f) If tethered, allows lactating cattle to rest in a head back position? | |
| AC22: Do you ensure cattle are not housed in stanchions? | New<br>Major/minor requirement |
| AC23: Do newly built barns allow for:<br>a) Lactating and/or dry cows to have daily, untethered freedom of movement and social interactions year-round?<br>b) Cows to calve in an area that allows them to turn around? | New<br>Major/minor requirement<br>Newly built = construction started on or after April 1, 2024.<br>Minimum of one hour per day of daily untethered freedom of movement that allows for social interactions (nose-to-nose contact is acceptable for cattle in individual box stalls) with other cattle if it is safe to do so. |
| AC24: Do you provide opportunity for freedom of movement for cows during the production cycle (calving to calving)? | New<br>Demerits requirement<br>In tie stall barns where construction of the facility began prior to April 1, 2024, cows must be provided an opportunity for unrestricted movement for a minimum of 55 days in a production cycle, consecutive or not (exercise must be a minimum of 1 hour per day). |
| LT9: For animal move-out (departure of an animal from the farm, excluding on-farm animal disposal or export):<br>Are you reporting the information to the national traceability database?<br>*Information must be reported within 7 days of the event. | New<br>Demerits requirement |
| **Revised Requirements** | |
| AC1: Do you ensure that ANY housing systems, for unweaned calves:<br>a) Is maintained in good condition to minimize injury and lameness?<br>b) Allows calves to easily stand up, lie down, turn completely around, stand fully upright | Sub-bullets (a) and (e) are new.<br>Indoor housing requirements are new.<br>Outdoor housing requirements are new.<br>In (b), includes ability for calves to turn completely around, stand fully upright and groom themselves. |

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| (without touching the top of the enclosure), adopt sternal and lateral resting postures and groom themselves?<br>c) Provides a resting surface with enough bedding to achieve insulation, dryness, comfort, traction, and cleanliness?<br>d) Permits calves to have visual contact with other cattle?<br>e) Provides fresh air and prevents the buildup of harmful gases, dust and moisture, and reduces the risk of heat and cold stress?<br>f) If group housing, provides a bedded area large enough to allow all calves to rest comfortably at the same time?<br>Do you ensure that INDOOR housing for unweaned calves:<br>g) Does not include tethering?<br>h) Do you have a plan for transitioning to pair/group housing by 2031?<br>Do you ensure that OUTDOOR housing for unweaned calves:<br>i) Allows physical contact with other calves?<br>j) If tethered, allows calves to have access to an area out of the hutch and must include a collar? | In (c) includes insulation, dryness, comfort, traction, and cleanliness.<br><br>Indoor housing is defined as housing that involves a roofed structure with four closeable sides. Calf hutches located under a roofed structure with four closeable sides would be considered indoor housing and must abide by the indoor unweaned calf housing requirements.<br>Outdoor housing is defined as housing that does not involve a roofed structure with four closeable sides. Calf hutches located under a roofed structure with less than four closeable sides would be considered outdoor housing and must abide by the related outdoor unweaned calf housing requirements. |
| AC2: Do you ensure that housing for weaned heifers, including flooring:<br>a) Is maintained in good condition to minimize injury and lameness?<br>b) Allows heifers to easily stand up, lie down, adopt normal resting postures (including in a head back position) and groom themselves?<br>c) Provides a resting surface with enough bedding to achieve insulation, dryness, comfort, traction, and cleanliness?<br>d) Permits heifers to have physical contact with other cattle?<br>e) Provides fresh air and prevents the buildup of harmful gases, dust and moisture, and reduces the risk of heat and cold stress? | Includes flooring.<br>Sub-bullets (a), (e) and (f) are new.<br>In (b), includes grooming.<br>In (c) includes insulation, dryness, comfort, traction, and cleanliness.<br>In (d) requires physical contact (previously was visual contact). |

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| f) If tethered, allows heifers to rest in a head back position? | |
| AC3: Do you ensure that breeding bull housing, including flooring (if applicable to your farm):<br>a) Is maintained in good condition to minimize injury and lameness?<br>b) Permits bulls to easily stand up, lie down, turn around, adopt normal resting postures, groom themselves and mount safely?<br>c) Provides a resting surface with enough bedding to achieve comfort, traction, and cleanliness?<br>d) Provides fresh air and prevents the buildup of harmful gases, dust and moisture, and reduces the risk of heat and cold stress? | Includes flooring.<br>Sub-bullets (a) and (d) are new.<br>In (b), includes ability to turn around and groom themselves.<br>In (c) includes comfort, traction and cleanliness. |
| AC18: Do you ensure that dry cattle housing, including flooring:<br>a) Is maintained in good condition to minimize injury and lameness?<br>b) Allows cattle to easily stand up, lie down, adopt normal resting postures and groom themselves?<br>c) Provides a resting surface with enough bedding to achieve insulation, dryness, comfort, traction and cleanliness?<br>d) Permits cattle to have visual and physical contact with other cattle?<br>e) Provides fresh air and prevents the buildup of harmful gases, dust and moisture, and reduces the risk of heat and cold stress?<br>f) If tethered, allows dry cattle to rest in a head back position? | Includes flooring.<br>Sub-bullets (a), (d), (e) and (f) are new.<br>In (b), includes grooming.<br>In (c) includes insulation, dryness, comfort, traction and cleanliness. |
| AC4: Do you ensure that dry cattle and lactating cattle housing provides adequate stocking densities? | Free-stall stocking density reduced from 1.2 cows per stall to does not routinely exceed 1.1 cows per usable stall.<br>Bedded pack pens stocking density reduced from 11$m^2$ (120 $ft^2$) per cow to 9.3$m^2$ (100 $ft^2$) per cow, but scrape alley is no longer included in the square footage calculation. |

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| | **Note:** effective April 1, 2031, stocking density must not routinely exceed 1 cow per usable stall. |
| AC5: Do you ensure that the calving area (prior to and after delivery of calf):<br>a) Provides a resting surface with enough bedding to achieve insulation, dryness, comfort, traction, and cleanliness?<br>b) Is separated from the lactating herd?<br>c) Provides enough space for the cow to be assisted? | In (a), includes insulation, dryness, comfort, traction, and cleanliness.<br>Sub-bullets (b) and (c) are new.<br>**Note:** Effective April 1, 2029, cattle must calve in loose housed maternity pens, yards, or pastures that permit them to turn around. |
| AC6: Do you have a designated area for the segregation and treatment of sick, lame and injured cattle and does it include enough bedding to achieve insulation, dryness, comfort, traction, and cleanliness? | Includes lame cattle.<br>Includes enough bedding to achieve insulation, dryness, comfort, traction and cleanliness.<br>**Note:** The "hospital" area should be separate from the calving area, but this is not required. |
| AC7: Use of electricity for crowd gates and tie stall trainers:<br>a) Do you ensure that crowd gates are not electrified?<br>For tie-stall barns, are electric trainers:<br>b) Adjustable and positioned correctly to enable normal eating, standing, and lying behaviour?<br>c) Only used when needed to train or retrain individual cattle? | New requirement for crowd gates (sub-bullet (a)).<br>In (b), clarification on intended outcomes.<br>Sub-bullet (c) is new.<br>**Note:** no longer includes a maximum voltage for electric trainers.<br>**Note:** Trainers in Automatic Milking Systems are not included in this requirement. |
| AC8: Have you established and implemented a Standard Operating Procedure for colostrum feeding management, calf feeding and calf weaning? (SOP 8) | New and revised required elements:<br>• Daily minimum milk volumes for newborn calves reduced from 20% to 15% birth weight, and 20% birth weight from 7 days old on.<br>• New: If calves are left with their dam or using nurse cows, ensure each calf receives adequate milk daily to meet growth and health needs, and monitor the cow-calf group to prevent competition and ensure all calves nurse effectively.<br>• New: Calves must be gradually weaned over at least a 5-day period, and they must be at least 8 weeks old before weaning is complete. |

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| AC9: Do all cattle receive daily access to feed:<br>a) In sufficient quantity that is adequate for maintaining body condition, health, vigour, promotes satiety, and is palatable?<br>b) In a manner that provides adequate linear feed bunk space? | Expanded from heifers to apply to all classes of cattle except for lactating cows which are assessed through the Body Condition Score component of the Cattle Assessment.<br>Includes satiety, palatability and feed bunk space. |
| AC10: Do all cattle have access to a clean and palatable water source in sufficient amounts to meet their needs? | Includes palatability and sufficient amounts. |
| LT4: Are you recording and reporting animal birth information to the national traceability database?<br>* Birth information must be recorded within 7 days of the event or before the animal leaves the farm, whichever occurs first.<br>* Birth information must be reported within 45 days of the event or before the animal leaves the farm, whichever occurs first. | No added requirements, as LT3 (recording births) was combined into LT4. |
| AC11: Have you established and implemented a Standard Operating Procedure for animal health practices (e.g. disbudding/dehorning, castration, supernumerary teat removal, hoof trimming, severe acute clinical mastitis treatment) that includes appropriate pain control where required? (SOP 9) | Adds hoof trimming and severe acute clinical mastitis to the SOP.<br>If a procedure is performed exclusively by a veterinary professional, it does not need to be described in detail in the SOP, but it should still be clearly noted along with the name, role, and contact information of the professional responsible.<br>Adds following elements:<br>• All personnel completing animal health practices must demonstrate skills and/or knowledge on the procedure that has been developed through training, experience, or mentorship, or a combination thereof.<br>• Branding is not acceptable.<br>• Disbud calves before two months of age.<br>• Castration:<br>o Properly and safely restrain the calf. State the method used to restrain the calf in your SOP.<br>o Calves should be castrated as early as possible. |

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| | ○ Castration pain control clarified to require, at minimum, a local anesthetic and systemic analgesic.<br>• If removing extra teats:<br>○ Properly and safely restrain the animal. State the method used to restrain the animal in your SOP.<br>○ It must be done as early as possible and using pain control.<br>• Hoof trimming:<br>○ Properly and safely restrain the animal. State the method used to restrain the animal in your SOP.<br>○ Inspect feet and claws and trim as required to promote a normal gait and minimize lameness.<br>○ In the event of therapeutic hoof trimming, state the strategies used to relieve pain and pressure on the affected area.<br>○ In the event of an invasive hoof trim, administer pain control.<br>○ Treat infectious hoof conditions to control the infection.<br>• Mastitis treatment: A systemic analgesic must be given in addition to treatment of cows with severe acute clinical mastitis. |
| AC12: Do you provide prompt medical care for cattle that are sick, injured, too thin (BCS ≤2), lame, experiencing dystocia, in pain or suffering? | Elevated from a Demerits requirement to a Major/minor requirement.<br>Adds dystocia and the following elements:<br>• Cattle provided medical care must be monitored at least twice a day.<br>• Cattle must be regularly observed for signs of lameness or leg injuries.<br>• To identify animals experiencing dystocia, cattle close to calving must be monitored at least daily.<br>• Cattle must be moved to calve in a designated calving area. |

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| AC20: Have you established and implemented a Standard Operating Procedure for managing down cattle? (SOP 10) | Clarification added on appropriate electric prod use and milking:<br>• An electric prod may be used, in consultation with a veterinarian, a maximum of twice during a single assessment of the animal's ability to rise, and only on the rear flank and upper rear leg, when necessary to determine her likelihood of recovery.<br>• An animal must not be repeatedly encouraged to move once she has demonstrated she cannot get up or move.<br>• Lactating cows that require milking must be milked to prevent mammary engorgement where they are located, if safe to do so.<br>**Note:** Farms that do not have prods have the option to state in their SOP that prods are not used on the farm. Consultation with the veterinarian is done when developing the SOP; however, the veterinarian does not need to be consulted at each down cow assessment. |
| AC13: Have you established and implemented a Standard Operating Procedure for euthanasia? (SOP 11) | Changes to calibres of firearms for calves and mature cattle. Other euthanasia methods remain acceptable.<br>New and revised required elements:<br>• Personnel responsible for performing euthanasia must be trained and competent in all aspects of euthanasia methods used on farm.<br>• Equipment used for euthanasia must be stored and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.<br>• Describe how to confirm unconsciousness (not necessary in SOP if done by a veterinarian or qualified professional)<br>• Describe how to confirm death.<br>**Note:** required elements must be included in the SOP. However, if euthanasia is carried out exclusively by a veterinarian or other qualified professional (e.g. deadstock service), the SOP does not need to include step-by-step details of the procedure, but it must clearly identify who is responsible and include their role and contact information |

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| AC14: Have you:<br>a) Had a cattle assessment conducted by an independent assessor on your milking herd for Body Condition Score; hock, knee and neck scores; and mobility score? (Record 7)<br>b) Documented and implemented an appropriate corrective action plan for results in the red zones to meet the program's timelines for continuous improvement? (Record 7b) | Mobility score calculation changed for gait scored cows only.<br>Cows scored as Monitor (gait score of 3) will impact the way mobility score is calculated. Up to 25% of the herd can be scored 3 without impacting the herd's overall colour zone. Any percentage higher than 25% will be added to the herd's overall Needs Corrective Action mobility score.<br>If more than 25% of the herd is scored as 3, the farm's overall assessment may be impacted. For example, if enough animals score a 3, the herd may end up in the Red or Dark Red zones for mobility, which require a Corrective Action Plan and, in the case of a Dark Red zone result, annual assessments at a higher sample size instead of biennial assessments. |
| AC15: Do you comply with the ban on tail docking unless medically necessary? | Revised wording of question for clarity.<br>Added pain control required for medically necessary tail amputation. |
| BIO1: In the past two years, have you completed the Biosecurity Risk Assessment with your veterinarian to identify and address biosecurity risks on your farm? (Record 6b)<br>As part of the Biosecurity Risk Assessment, have you:<br>a) Calculated your calf mortality for female calves aged 2 to 60 days. If greater than 10%, have you completed a corrective action plan (Record 6C)?<br>b) Reviewed your annual herd health records with your veterinarian? | Added requirement for annual herd health records to be reviewed with vet.<br>Added calculation of calf mortality for female calves aged 2 to 60 days. A corrective action plan must be completed if >10%.<br>Other revisions to the questionnaire's questions and scoring scale. |
| BIO2: Do you record notable disease events for all animals and maintain that record for a minimum of 3 rolling years? (Record 10) | Record retention changed from 1 rolling year to 3 years. |
| BIO3: Have you established and implemented an SOP, in consultation with your veterinarian, for vaccinating against specific disease of concern? (SOP 12) | Added ability to add multiple vaccine options in the SOP, not just specify one. |
| FS23: Have you established and implemented a Standard Operating Procedure for milking? (SOP 2) | New required element in SOP: Ensure that milking equipment is properly maintained. |

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| AC16: Do you handle cattle using low-stress handling techniques without the use of electric cattle prods? | Previous requirement (AC17) used to assess cattle handling moved here. |
| FS40 (AC): Have you established and implemented a Standard Operating Procedure for shipping cattle? (SOP 6) | New or revised required elements:<br>• Animals that are compromised, as defined by the Health of Animals Regulations Part XII must only be transported directly to the nearest suitable place (within 12 hours) with special provisions to receive care or be promptly slaughtered, except an assembly centre. Examples of compromised conditions are listed in Appendix IV of the Reference Manual.<br>• Do not transport unfit animals, as defined by the Health of Animals Regulations Part XII except for veterinary care under a veterinarian's direction. Examples of unfit conditions are listed in Appendix IV of the Reference Manual.<br>• Calves that are 8 days of age or less must only be transported with special provisions and directly to their final destination (not through an auction or assembly yard).<br>• Calves must only be shipped if they are free from signs of fever or disease and have a healed, uninfected navel.<br>• Lactating cattle must be transported in a manner to prevent mammary engorgement (e.g., transporting with suckling calf or the animal is milked at intervals to prevent mammary engorgement).<br>• Feed newborn calves at least 4 L (for a 45 kg (100 lb) calf) of colostrum prior to loading to ensure that they do not exceed 12 hours without feed, water, and rest before they reach their destination.<br>• Feed and water unweaned calves, as appropriate, prior to loading to ensure that they do not exceed 12 hours without feed, water, and rest.<br>• Feed and water weaned and older cattle prior to loading to ensure that they do not exceed 36 hours without feed, water, and rest. |

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| | • Confirm that the transporter is familiar with cattle behaviour and quiet handling techniques and has experience transporting cattle.<br>• Only experienced and trained handlers should load and unload cattle.<br>• Only experienced and trained transporters should be transporting cattle.<br>• Ensure ramps, gangways, chutes, and steps minimize the risk of an animal incurring injury such as tripping, slipping, or falling as per the Health of Animal Regulations Part XII. |
| EN2: Have you completed the questionnaire on soil health, greenhouse gases, water, biodiversity, and waste? | Added section on water and made other improvements for clarity, streamlining, and accuracy and updated scoring. |
| FS41 (AC, LT, BIO, EN): Do you ensure personnel have the competencies to carry out the procedures that they are responsible for in the following ways? Do you:<br>• Regularly train staff to implement all modules of the proAction program that relate to their duties?<br>• Train new staff in the implementation of the proAction program?<br>• Ensure staff have access to Standard Operating Procedures, corrective action plans and records that you have developed and maintained?<br>• Regularly supervise staff to ensure that they are following the proAction requirements? | Includes competency, requires supervision of staff, and clarifies scope of training that must be provided. |
| EN3: Is your milking centre wastewater managed with proper storage or a regulatory approved treatment system?<br>EN4: Is your manure storage adequate to avoid contamination of surface and ground water and to avoid spreading manure on frozen, snow-covered or saturated ground?<br>EN5: Do you manage nutrients on your farm to make optimal use of manure and/ or fertilizer on land? | Requirements remain the same but number of demerits that can be carried over for subsequent validations on this module are reduced from 5 to 4 (first validations will still be 10). |
| **Clarifications** | |

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|---|---|
| Overall | Edits were made throughout the Workbook and Reference Manual to correct errors, streamline information, add clarity or provide more information. |
| **Removed Requirements (i.e. July 2023 Requirement NO LONGER required in October 2026 version (note: effective April 1, 2027))** | |
| EN1: Environmental Farm Plans | Removed requirement, but expect the Environmental Questionnaire to expand in the future to fill the gaps. |
| LT3: Recording birth information | Removed requirement and combined into LT4 (recording and reporting birth information). |
| LT5: Recording animal move-ins | Removed requirement, but reporting requirement remains (LT6). |
| LT7: Recording tag retirement | Removed requirement, but reporting requirement remains (LT8). |
| FS37: Mercury thermometers and vacuum columns | Removed requirement. |
| AC17: Training animal handlers | Removed requirement and combined into AC16 (handling cattle). |