



## SunFed Ranch Beef Protocols

SunFed Ranch (SFR) is dedicated to sourcing the healthiest and most environmentally beneficial grass-fed beef by selectively promoting and supporting ranchers across the United States (domestic) who raise domestic 100% grass-fed beef per SFR standards. Accordingly, SFR beef will always adhere to the following set of attributes:

- 100% grass-fed forage based domestic production – no cereal grain ever
- Pasture Centered Always on pasture – no cereal grains fed ever
- No antibiotics and no added hormones ever
- Regenerative agricultural practices to promote pasture health/recovery/vitality
- Animal Welfare 3<sup>rd</sup> party Certified; GAP or HFAC Certified Humane approved

Additionally, all cattle entering the SFR program must be fully documented and have traceability to birth. Adherence to SFR standards and protocols will be controlled by SFR and certified by third-party audit. These protocols detailed herein are both complementary to and augmentations of the HFAC/GAP Beef Cattle Standards that are the basis to the SFR Animal Welfare requirements.

At SFR, we believe that grass-fed beef done right – raised with care, provided proper nutrition, integrated into regenerative land management practices, harvested humanely and cleanly – will provide health benefits to our consumers, can create stronger resilience for our ranchers, improve cattle health, and help reverse climate change. These protocols are the basis for our definition of “doing grass-fed right.”

These SFR Beef Protocols were developed under guidance and input from:

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## Grass-fed Standards

### **Grazing and Foraging**

Cattle must **always** be on pasture with continuous access to forage during the growing season. Only cases of extreme weather or dire conditions permit and require cattle to be removed from pasture for their well-being. Any such instances shall be specifically documented and forwardly reported.

### **Permissible Feed**

Grass-fed cattle under this program are to have a diet that consists entirely of grass and other forages. Limited feed supplements are permissible for animal health including molasses, kelp, and apple cider vinegar. Mineral supplementation is permitted and encouraged for animal health. All vitamin and mineral supplements must be free of grain and grain by-products.

Incidental ingestion of seeds naturally attached to grass and forage, on an exception basis only, shall be documented and reviewed for program eligibility. Any intentional feeding of cereal grain is **prohibited** and will result in exclusion from grass-fed status and program eligibility.

### **Prohibited Feed**

Any grain, grain by-products or any form of feed concentrate is explicitly **prohibited**, including but not limited to barley, corn, oats, rye, rice, soy, triticale, wheat, millet, sorghum, and spent distiller grain. Grazing the plants that produce these grains in their pre-seed growth stage is permissible. Feeding cattle urea is **prohibited**.

## Cattle Attributes

### **Genetics**

Cattle permissible within the SFR program must be primarily of British/Continental decent and suitable to the environment in which they are raised. Bos Indicus (Brahman influenced) breeds are **prohibited**.

### **Age**

Grass-fed cattle take longer to mature and achieve optimal weight than cattle raised in confined feeding operations. Accordingly, we target harvest when cattle are between 24 and 36 months of age.

### **Hormones and Growth Promotants**

Bovine growth hormones or any exogenous hormone, whether supplied via injection, implants, or any manner is **prohibited**. Additionally, the use of ionophores and beta-agonists is **prohibited**.

## **Antibiotics**

The use of antibiotics in cattle, whether in the form of injection, bolus or an ingredient in feed or water, is **prohibited**. Producers shall treat sick cattle with antibiotics where needed per veterinary recommendation, and treated animals must be marked for exclusion from the SFR program. Producers may utilize a variety of methods to identify treated animals, so long as it is consistent, documented, and auditable. These methods may include:

- Ear tagging the treated animal
- Notching an existing ear tag
- Electronic ear tag with records on the individual animal

Any animal that has lost its tag must be classified as treated and removed from the SFR program, unless adequate records exist to determine that the animal was not treated.

## **Vaccination**

A vaccination program for program cattle is **required** for animal welfare and must be tailored to the localized environment of the ranching operation. Appropriate vaccinations are critical to the health of cattle and shall be recommended by consulting veterinarians based on localized conditions and health risks. This is to ensure cattle health and humane treatment.

## **Traceability**

All cattle in the SFR program **must have** full documentation and traceability to birth. All parties involved with the raising, care, and harvest of the cattle must be known to SFR. Each party must identify and document that they raised and treated the cattle in accordance with SFR and HFAC/GAP protocols. Cattle without documented history for the entire duration from birth to harvest are prohibited in the SFR program.

Electronic (RFID) ear tags are the preferred form of cattle identification, though not required. Commonly used livestock ear tags work well when matched with robust documentation on a per-animal basis. Complete history—from birth to slaughter—of cattle provenance, medical treatment, and grass-fed status shall be always available for audit and inspection.

## Cattle Management

### **Weaning**

Calves in this program are to stay with their mothers for at least 6 months after birth. Low stress weaning methods are compulsory within the program and are in the best interest of the calf and its growth. Fenceline weaning offers a humane and stress-reducing approach to weaning. Additional considerations and recommendations can be found in Appendix 2 of the HFAC Beef Cattle Welfare Standards.

## Handling

The core principle behind specific cattle handling procedures detailed in the HFAC/GAP Cattle Welfare Standards is animal stress avoidance and stress mitigation. Cattle are herd animals and prefer to stay together as a herd. Human handlers shall act as herd leaders where possible, rather than mimic predator-like behavior such as chasing and cornering. In all settings, moving cattle at a slow, comfortable pace is essential to reduce injury and minimize animal stress. Stress minimization promotes healthier and stronger growth. Thorough training of handlers is the basis for effective and humane animal handling.

Tips for better handling related behaviors in cattle -

- Keep in visual contact with other cattle.
- Try to ensure loading ramps and handling chutes are designed to minimize the animals seeing distractions outside of the working area. If cattle can see moving objects and people through the sides, it may impede their movement forward.
- Check for chains, backstops, dogs, or people distractions if cattle are not moving easily.
- It may help to make sure the area you are moving the cattle into is adequately lit.
- Paint the handling facilities a single uniform color because cattle may balk at a sudden change in color.
- Cattle have a wider range of hearing than most humans. Noisy gates and other equipment can cause cattle to balk and resist moving forward.

## Body Condition

Grass-fed cattle perform best when provided with a steady plane of nutrition allowing them to grow healthily and consistently. Genetics, quality of feed/forage, environmental conditions and seasonality all play into determining appropriate fat cover on an animal. Producers in this program will use a scoring method to monitor and document the body condition of the cattle to focus attention on animal health and wellbeing.

The broadly utilized Beef Cattle Body Condition Scoring (BCS) is based around a 1-9 scoring rubric outlined as follows:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Appearance</u>	<u>Condition</u>
1	emaciated	skeletal
2	poor	very thin with bony protuberance
3	thin	thin fat cover
4	borderline	light fat cover over ribs, shoulder, hip
5	moderate	light fat cover over all body parts
6	good	medium fat cover
7	very good	frame fat cover is balanced
8	fat	fat deposits, tailhead, dewlap
9	obese	excessive fat deposits, tailhead, etc.

A score of 3 or higher is required for participation in the SFR program, with a score of 5-7 being appropriate for grass-fed cattle at time of harvest. Cattle with a BCS of 1 or 2 are considered mal-treated/mal-nourished and fall outside the parameter set forth within HFAC/GAP Cattle

Welfare Standards. Individual animals with a BCS of 1 or 2 shall receive veterinary attention and may be reintroduced to the program per veterinary recommendation.

### **Feed and Water Access**

Cattle must have unrestricted, continuous access to nutritious, wholesome, and clean feed and water always. Standing/attached forage must be plentiful and appropriate for the age and growth of the animal or must be complemented with hay-based feed to ensure cattle access to clean and balanced nutrition per the National Research Council's *Nutrient Requirements of Beef Cattle*. Written records of all feed provided to cattle beyond grazing and forage shall be kept, including details of feed ingredients and percentages thereof, as well as overall feed quantity.

All feed supplied to cattle must have adequate fiber and protein to maintain proper rumination and ensure cattle health. Feed shall be clean, free of mold, and supplied in a manner to ensure equitable access that most appropriately mimics grazing and foraging, both for cattle and land health.

Clean, fresh drinking water must always be available to cattle. Grazing cattle should not have to walk long distances to access water: less than ½ mile in steep, rough terrain up to 2 miles in smooth, flat terrain. Environmental considerations and local, state, and federal laws must be adhered to if using rivers, ponds, or streams as a water source for cattle.

### **Animal Health Plan**

Under consultation of a veterinarian, an Animal Health Plan (AHP) shall be established in consideration of breed, environment, age, and cattle attributes. The AHP must address cattle nutrition, vaccination, parasite control/prevention, infectious disease, and pain management. In addition, the AHP shall outline protocols surrounding biosecurity, procedures for handling non-ambulatory cattle, and a euthanasia plan for emergencies. The AHP must be kept up to date with changing conditions and all records of medical/animal health procedures must be documented and available for review.

## Land Management

### **Farm Plan**

SFR requires that every farming/ranching operation develop and maintain a Farm Plan. This plan serves as a central repository for all records, checklists, land management practices, water management practices, restorative agricultural practices, maps, pest control methods, standard operating procedures, emergency procedures, and internal policies. The farm plan should include clear practices for measuring and tracking soil health, specifically encompassing soil organic matter content, water infiltration, and biological activity and diversity. This Farm Plan shall be made available for review to SFR.

### **Regenerative Agricultural Practices**

Regenerative agricultural practices implemented through grazing must be documented in the Farm Plan. Actively and intentionally managing grazing practices is key to quality grass-fed beef

both for cattle health and continuous soil improvement. Adaptive Pasture Managed Grazing as compared to continuous grazing mimics historical herd movements driven by predator activity. Within this, concentrated herds are observed grazing pasture more uniformly for a limited period before moving to new pasture. This pattern allows for optimal plant/forage generation, regeneration, and health. Pasture managed via rotational grazing increases yields and soil vitality, all while reducing need for additional fertilizers and external inputs.

Soil health is the basis of restorative agriculture. To distill the science, we follow *The Five Principles of Soil Health*, as detailed by Jay Furher, NRCS Soil Health Specialist:

### **The Five Principles of Soil Health**

Principle 1: Maintenance of soil armor/soil cover

Principle 2: Minimization of soil disturbance

Principle 3: Promotion of plant diversity

Principle 4: Continual live plant/root

Principle 5: Livestock integration

#### **Principle 1 – Soil Armor**

*Soil armor, or cover, provides numerous benefits for cropland, rangeland, hayland, gardens, orchards, road ditches, and more. Let's take a closer look at some of the soil armor benefits:*

- *Controlling Wind and Water Erosion – armor protects soil from wind and/or water as it moves across the soil surface. It holds the soil in place along with valuable soil organic matter and nutrients.*
- *Evaporation Rates – armor reduces soil evaporation rates, keeping more moisture available for plant use.*
- *Soil Temperatures – armor helps soil maintain a more moderate range of soil temperatures, keeping soil warmer in cold weather, and cooler in hot weather. Like us, the soil food web functions best when soil temperatures are moderate.*
- *Compaction – rainfall on bare soils is one cause of soil compaction. When rainfall hits the armor instead of bare soil, much of the raindrop energy is dissipated.*
- *Suppresses Weed Growth – limits the amount of sunlight available to weed seedlings.*
- *Habitat – provides a protective habitat for the soil food web's surface dwellers.*

#### **Principle 2 – Minimizing Soil Disturbance**

*Soil disturbance can generally occur in different forms:*

- **Biological disturbance**, such as overgrazing, limits the plant's ability to harvest CO<sub>2</sub> and sunlight.
- **Chemical disturbance**, such as over application of nutrients and pesticides, can disrupt the soil food web functions.
- **Physical disturbance**, such as tillage.

*A typical soil is approximately 45% mineral (sand, silt, and clay), 5% soil organic matter, 25% water, and 25% air. The water and air portions exist in the pore spaces between the soil aggregates. Over time, tillage implements reduce and remove the pore spaces from our soils; restricting infiltration and destroying the biological glues which hold our soils together.*

*Ultimately tillage results in one or more of the following:*

- *water erosion – transporting soil, nutrient, and water to offsite locations, which negatively impacts water quality and quantity.*
- *wind erosion – transporting soil, and nutrients to offsite locations, which negatively impacts air quality, human health, and animal health.*
- *ponding water – which stays saturated on the surface for long periods of time, a result of reduced infiltration and increased runoff.*
- *crusting easily, which restricts plant emergence.*
- *soil organic matter depletion.*

### Principle 3 – Plant Diversity

*The Journals of Lewis and Clark describe the northern plains landscape as having abundant plant diversity. Numerous species were observed, working together as a plant community to provide forage for large herbivore populations. Our soil was built over geological time in this environment.*

*However, settlement of the plains brought agriculture, which resulted in the polyculture perennial landscape being replaced by a monoculture annual landscape. Where the soil food web used to receive carbon exudates (food) from a diversity of perennial plants harvesting sunlight and carbon dioxide; it now receives carbon exudates from only one annual plant at a time.*

*We can start to mimic the original plant community by using crop rotations which include all four crop types. Diverse crop rotations provide more biodiversity, benefiting the soil food web, which in turn improves rainfall infiltration and nutrient cycling, while reducing disease and pests. Crop rotations can also be designed to include crops which are high water users, low water users, tap root, fibrous root, high carbon crops, low carbon crops, legumes, and nonlegumes to name a few.*

*The following lists the four crop types with a few common crop examples of each:*

- *Warm Season Grass – corn, sudan, and millet.*
- *Warm Season Broadleaf – sunflower, and soybean.*
- *Cool Season Grass – wheat, oat, barley, and rye.*
- *Cool Season Broadleaf – flax, pea, and lentil.*

*Diverse crop rotations mimic our original plant diversity landscapes. They are important to the long-term sustainability of our soil resources and food security.*

### Principle 4 – Continual Live Plant/Root

*Our perennial grasslands consist of cool season grasses, warm season grasses, and flowering forbs. Consequently, adaptable plants can grow during the cool spring and fall weather, as well as the summer heat. Allowing for a continual live plant feeding carbon exudates to the soil food web during the entire growing season.*

*Our cropland systems typically grow cool or warm season annual cash crops, which have a dormant period before planting and/or after harvest. Cover crops can fill in the dormant period and provide the missing live root exudate, which is the primary food source for the soil food web. Cover crops may be incorporated into a cropping system as annuals, biennials, or perennials. Cover crops can address several resource concerns:*

- *Harvest CO<sub>2</sub> and sunlight, providing the carbon exudates to the soil food web.*



- *Building soil aggregates and pore spaces, which improves soil infiltration.*
- *Cover the soil, controlling wind and water erosion, soil temperature, and rainfall compaction*
- *Catch and release of inorganic nutrients, improving water quality.*
- *Salinity management.*
- *Wildlife food, habitat, and space.*
- *Livestock integration.*
- *Adding crop diversity, pollinator food and habitat*
- *Adjusting the cover crop combination's carbon/nitrogen ratio, to either accelerate or slow decomposition.*

#### *Principle 5 – Livestock Integration*

*Animals, plants, and soils have played a synergistic role together over geological time. In recent years, animals are playing a reduced role due to being placed in confinement and fewer farms now include livestock as part of their overall operation.*

*Why do we want to return livestock to the landscape?*

- *Fall or winter grazing converts high carbon annual crop residue to low carbon organic material, balancing the carbon/nitrogen ratio and managing our crop rotation residue for no-till seeding.*
- *Spring or summer grazing annual and/or perennial plants with short exposure periods followed by long recovery periods; allows the plants to regrow and harvest additional sunlight and CO<sub>2</sub>.*
- *Reduce nutrient export from our cropland and hay land fields. In lieu of transporting feed to a feed lot, we can reverse the roles and have the livestock graze the material in place. Recycling most nutrients, minerals, vitamins, and carbon.*
- *Manage weed pressure by grazing in lieu of an herbicide.*
- *Grazing cover crops and/or crop residues allow us to take the livestock off the perennial grasslands earlier in the fall. Extending the grass recovery period and providing a higher livestock nutritional diet.*
- *Grazing reduces livestock waste associated with confinement; helping manage our water quality and nutrient management concerns. Allowing cattle and sheep to be herbivores by securing their energy needs from plants.*

*How do we return livestock to the landscape?*

- *Winter and fall grazing cover crops and annual crop residues.*
- *Summer grazing a full season cover crop, allowing adequate plant recovery, followed by a second grazing during the fall or winter.*
- *Winter feeding on hay land fields by rolling out bales or bale grazing.*
- *Seed rotational perennials, graze and manage as part of the crop rotation.*

In adherence to the principles of soil health, SFR has created a set of management practices to help ranchers and farmers restore pasture vitality and increase their yields:

### **The Five Management Practices for Pasture Vitality**

Practice 1: Graze the pasture

Practice 2: Promote biodiversity

Practice 3: Sustain soil cover

Practice 4: Tread lightly on the soil

Practice 5: Monitor and track soil health

#### **Practice 1 – Graze the pasture**

*Ranchers must commit to grazing their pastures annually with ruminant animals.*

Proactively integrating ruminant animals onto pasture is essential to improving pasture resilience and vitality. Grasses and forage depend on grazing animals to effectively trim and control the biomatter they produce, and to provide additional soil nutrients through natural fertilization. Additionally, the hoof prints left behind create depressions that aid in water capture and water infiltration, as well as erosion control.

Specific approaches to introducing grazing animals will depend on the land and the environmental conditions, but some practices are broadly applicable across landscapes:

- Cattle are high-volume grazers and a good choice for regenerating soil in compromised pastureland. Their frame as compared to the cervid family of ruminants (deer, elk, moose, caribou, etc.) allow for them to be easily contained by traditional fencing or high tensile electric fencing. The same holds true compared to larger bovid ruminants of North America (bison), whereby traditional fencing is inadequate.
- Rotational grazing, also called management-intensive grazing, is a best practice for land management and soil creation. Careful and intentional pasture rotation allows the rancher to graze down paddocks to a targeted point (about 4 inches of residual forage) and then let the paddock rest for optimal plant recovery. This practice stimulates plant growth above (forage) and below ground (root system). The living root and additional organic matter in the soil (humus) sequesters carbon from the atmosphere and provides habitat for microbiological activity in the soil.

#### **Practice 2: Promote biodiversity**

*Ranchers must commit to planting or sustaining diverse mixtures of perennial grasses and annual crops to promote rather than diminishing biological diversity.*

Just as it is important for humans to eat a balanced diet, it is critical to animal health to ingest a varied diet. For cattle and other grazing animals, that means a breadth of grasses and other forages. In turn, pasture needs to host and sustain a diverse selection of plants to propagate diverse microbiology responsible for breaking down and spreading nutrients throughout the soil system.

- Diversity of forage – the rancher can plant a variety of plants to create a balance of nutrients available for forage, a diversity of root types and root systems

underground, a diversity of drought resistance, and resilience to seasonal temperature and moisture fluctuations.

- Diversity of microorganisms – a diverse array of plants will attract and sustain a breadth of microorganisms within the soil. Among them, fungi, bacteria, algae, and protozoa, will help with the decomposition and storage of organic matter into more available and consumable nutrients for the plants and insects.
- Diversity of insects and animals – with a healthy soil will come macrofauna such as worms, beetles, and spiders. These species will aerate the soil, move nutrients around and attract other animals such as birds and bats. Flowering plants will attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies that will in turn play a part in the balanced ecosystem. Cattle and other foragers will eat and distribute plant nutrients as a pivotal component of the food chain.

Destroying or killing of any portion of this balanced ecosystem will result in an imbalance which will in turn open the system to dominant species to take over such as weeds, fungi, or dominant insects.

#### Practice 3: Sustain soil cover

*Ranchers must commit to keeping soil vegetated and covered.*

The diversity of life described above creates a balanced system that feeds and builds upon itself. However, it needs a base habitat in which to do so. Plants serve as the basis of the habitat for these other organisms. Keeping pastures and farmland planted with vegetation year-round is the best approach to protecting the organisms that build and sustain the soil. In addition to feeding this life, plants provide the following:

- Erosion control – plants hold the soil together with its roots. A heavy rain hitting bare soil will pool and run off the land, carrying with it that valuable topsoil.
- Water infiltration – plants roots serve as conduits to guide water into the ground. When heavy rain hits bare soil, it turns to mud and suffocates the aerobic organisms in the ground.
- Evaporation control – plants hold moisture in the ground, near their roots where they can utilize it when they photosynthesize. Bare soil leaches moisture into the air and eventually hardens and cracks allowing for further evaporation. The rapid change in humidity observed in bare soil creates more rapid temperature swings to which the insects struggle to adapt and face population decline.

#### Practice 4: Tread lightly on the soil

*Ranchers must commit to eliminate broadscale deep-tillage and herbicide/pesticide use to kill off pasture vegetation.*

Soil intrusion disrupts biological equilibrium. If every year, a major earthquake toppled each of our homes, we would face significant challenges as a human race. Our homes provide us shelter, create for a safe environment to raise our young, and allow us to store food and water to get us through the winter or other times of need. The soil represents this habitat for plants, insects, and microorganisms. Deep, broad, and frequently tilling the soil is akin to

that disastrous earthquake and requires significant time for recovery. Instead, farmers should leave the soil structure largely intact and integrate less intrusive farming practices.

- No-till production practices – with today’s advances in technology, there is little need to till the soil as there are seed drills that allow farmers to plant seeds into the ground with minimal soil disturbance. While still technically a tilling mechanism, these drills make small slits in the ground, deposit seeds at a predetermined rate, and push topsoil back over the seeds for germination.
- Minimize external inputs – Modern-day industrial agriculture is dependent on external inputs such as synthetic fertilizer, herbicides, and specialized seedstock. This dependency is costly and creates additional dependencies on subsidies. A farmer building rich topsoil is working to minimize external inputs. Over time, fertile ground will need fewer amendments, weeds will be managed as part of the balanced ecosystem, and the need for hybrid or herbicide-resistant seed will wane.

#### Practice 5: Analyze and track soil health

*Ranchers must commit to analyze and track their soil health for year-over-year changes in the following areas: organic matter content, water infiltration and retention, and biological diversity.*

Annual soil testing will help ranchers track soil health and monitor restorative pasture management results, where needed. Data from these tests must be collected and retained for review upon audit.

- Photographic plot analysis – once yearly, within the same month, a photographic assessment will be captured and analyzed to track soil productiveness and vegetation vigor. Factors such as total precipitation and degree days shall be factored in to normalize assessment results.
- Slake test – periodic soil structure evaluation via the Slake test methodology will capture valuable data on organic matter content and microbiome health within the soil. Year-over-year data from this series of tests will be captured and retained for historical analysis and soil improvement tracking.

## **Non-GMO**

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) shall not be planted in grazing pastures, sourced as feed for cattle, nor intentionally introduced into any portion of the grazing operation.

## Transportation and Processing

### **Cattle Transportation**

SFR expectations for cattle transportation fall in line with the requirements laid out in the HFAC/GAP Cattle Beef Welfare Standards. The objectives are clear: Animal transport systems

must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not subjected to unnecessary distress or discomfort. The transport and handling of livestock must be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in transport must be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.

Key aspects to the HFAC/GAP requirements for transportation include specific guidelines around the following:

- Loading and unloading of cattle must be conducted in a manner consistent with humane treatment standards, whereby cattle are moved calmly and efficiently.
- Ramps/alleys need to offer the animals good footing to prevent slipping and injury.
- Environmental elements that could cause cattle distress and agitation—such as excessive noise, foreign odors, and unfamiliar visual elements—need to be scrutinized and identified by the handlers to minimize and mitigate.
- Transportation of cattle shall not exceed 8 hours without specific review and approval by HFAC/GAP for any derogation.
- Detailed transportation records need to be kept and made available for review by SFR management. This includes all transport to harvest facilities, between ranches, and on-ranch transfers.

## **Cattle Processing**

SFR expectations for cattle harvest and processing fall in line with the detailed, best-in-class practices elaborately developed by North American Meat Institute (NAMI). Handling practices for cattle in holding pens after being unloaded from transport must be consistent with HFAC/GAP standards and observant of the intention to reduce animal distress through environmental observation and modification.

All harvest facilities utilized for SFR must:

- be inspected and approved through HFAC/GAP Inspection
- file and retain full traceability records on a per animal basis
- maintain proper sanitation and facility upkeep
- provide handler training on low-stress cattle management and movement
- be available for physical inspection by SFR with advanced notice of 48 hours

## Auditing and Inspection

### **Third-Party Auditing**

Annually, all ranching operations—from cow-calf operations, to backgrounders, to finishing operations—must be audited and approved by HFAC/GAP audit systems. Slaughter and processing plants must also be audited by HFAC/GAP for humane handling and dispatch, as well as complete segregation throughout the supply chain as required.

## SFR Inspection

Annually, SFR will perform inspections and audits either in partnership with HFAC/GAP or separately to validate claims and approve land management practices. All suppliers into the SFR program need to be explicitly reviewed and approved in writing by SFR.

## Non-Conformances and Corrections

Any non-conformance identified in the audit and inspection process must be documented and will be classified per the following schedule:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Result</u>
Oversight	Pasture maps are missing from Farm Plan	Corrective actions addressed within 48 hours, with no need for further on-site inspection
Problem	Soil erosion noted in pasture	Corrective actions addressed within 30 days, prompting follow-up audit and validation
Failure	Cattle are stressed due to inadequate access to water	Immediate suspension from SFR program

## Audit and Inspection Cadence

All producers in the SFR program will be audited annually through a combination of SFR Inspection and Third-Party Auditing, as outlined above. If non-conformances are identified, additional inspections, audits, and documentation review will be required as needed for program participation.

## Professional Resources

SFR engages with professionals throughout multiple segments of the industry to ensure the latest information on grass-fed systems, humane handling, and regenerative agricultural practices are available to program participants. Regular revision of the SFR Beef Protocols and additional training presented to program participants is often based on new developments in health, nutrition, humane handling, and agricultural developments offered to SFR by outside professional advisors and industry experts.

Colorado State University College of Agricultural Sciences: <https://agsci.colostate.edu/>

Humane Farm Animal Care (Certified Humane®): <https://certifiedhumane.org/>

The Savory Institute: <https://savory.global/>

North American Meat Institute: <https://www.meatinstitute.org/>

Non-GMO Project: <https://www.nongmoproject.org/>

The Carbon Underground <https://thecarbonunderground.org/>

Impact Ag Partners: <https://www.impactag.com.au/>

Global Animal Partnership: <https://globalanimalpartnership.org/standards/beef/>



Humane Farm Animal Care DBA Certified Humane® is a registered 501(c) 3 nonprofit certification organization headquartered in the Metropolitan Washington DC area and dedicated to improving the lives of farm animals in food production from birth through slaughter.

The goal of the program is to improve the lives of farm animals by expanding consumer awareness, driving the demand for kinder and more responsible farm animal practices. When you see the **Certified Humane® Raised & Handled logo** on a product you can be assured that the food products have come from operations that meet precise, objective standards for farm animal treatment. To see a “Comprehensive Standards Comparison Chart”, please access the HFAC document portal at <https://certifiedhumane.org/how-we-work/comparison-chart-2/> .

The Humane Farm Animal Care Standards have been developed to provide the only approved standards for the rearing, handling, transport and slaughter of Beef Cattle for use in the Certified Humane® program. These standards incorporate scientific research, veterinary advice, and the practical experience of farmers. The standards are based on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) guidelines, current scientific information and other practical standards and guidelines recognized for the proper care of animals.

Animal welfare is improved when livestock managers adhere to the following:

- Access to wholesome and nutritious feed
  - Appropriate environmental design
- Caring and responsible planning and management
- Skilled, knowledgeable, and conscientious animal care
  - Considerate handling, transport, and slaughter

