



Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW Standards for Bison

The Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW (AWA) seal is a hard earned badge of difference and demonstrates the farmer's commitment to the care of their animals, the land and the local community. Farmers in this program will be distinguished by a humane and conscientious attitude towards the animals in their care as evidenced by physical audit and development of detailed plans and records of farm practices. Farmers in the program agree to a minimum of one visit a year from A Greener World (AGW) staff or agents, with the possibility of additional visits if deemed necessary, to confirm compliance with the standards during various seasons and to allow observation of animals in different phases of life. Participation in the program is on an annual basis and must be renewed each year.

The premise of the AWA standards is that animals must be allowed to behave naturally. The following standards allow animals the opportunity to perform natural and instinctive behaviors essential to their health and well-being. Provisions are made to ensure social interaction, comfort, and physical and psychological well-being.

The AWA program is voluntary. The standards do not supersede national government or state legislation.

AGW recommends that farmers have the *Guide to Understanding Our Standards and Standards and Program Definitions* documents at hand while reading these standards.

1.0 OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION

1.0.1 The individual or entity seeking AWA status for their livestock must own and have management control of the animals.

1.0.2 The individual or entity seeking AWA status must produce a livestock product for sale or trade that is eligible to carry the AWA seal.

Note: If the primary market is selling/trading livestock as pets, animals for 4H, FFA, show animals or pack animals or marketing meat from animals slaughtered at non-compliant slaughter facilities the farm cannot be AWA. See also section 14.1 if the primary market is breeding animals.

1.0.3 The AWA Standards must be met for all the animals or birds of the species for which use of the label is sought. Farmers using "split" or "dual" systems, in which some animals or birds of one species are simultaneously kept in systems that do not meet AWA Standards must have a plan that demonstrates clear separation and traceability of operations. The plan must address:

1.0.3.1 Physical Separation

1.0.3.2 Financial Separation

1.0.3.3 Operational Separation

Note: The Dual Production Plan template must be filled out for determination of compliance if an operation has a split or dual system. AGW's dual production policy is intended to support operations in expanding AGW-certified production. An operation must show that they are either operating separate businesses or distinctly separate product lines. A farm is not required to seek approval for all the species they manage simultaneously. If a farm has split or dual systems of the same species and cannot demonstrate clear traceability, AGW maintains the right to refuse to audit or certify the farm.

1.0.4 AWA is a birth to slaughter program. Meat sold under the AWA label or logo must come from animals that have been certified as being raised to AWA standards and slaughtered using a method and at a location that has received written approval from AWA.

1.0.4.1 If the farm does not intend to market meat from some or all of their animals under the AWA label, but owns or has control of an animal when it is slaughtered, the slaughter process must meet the AWA Slaughter Guidelines for Red Meat.

1.0.5 The certified farm may participate in networks, co-operatives or marketing groups in order to market livestock products as AWA as long as each member is audited as meeting all other requirements listed in these standards.

1.0.6 All those working with animals must be competent to carry out the tasks required of them.

Note: This standard applies to contract and temporary workers as well as full time employees and family members.

2 BREEDS AND ORIGIN OF ANIMALS

2.0 Breeds and Origin – General Standards

2.0.1 Breeds and strains must be chosen with consideration of their ability to thrive in the prevailing climatic conditions of the farm, in pasture-based, free range, outdoor systems.

2.0.2 Cloned or genetically engineered animals are prohibited.

Note: This includes the use of cloned or genetically engineered breeding stock, the offspring of clones or genetically engineered animals and semen from cloned or genetically engineered animals.

2.0.3 Breeding replacements may come from farms that are not certified by AWA but must be of a suitable breed or type for pasture based production under these standards.

2.0.4 A record of the source, date of purchase and number of breeding animals must be kept.

2.0.5 **Recommended** Wherever possible the farm should run a closed herd.

Note: A closed herd is one where no animals are brought onto the farm from external sources. Farms that do not have the genetic diversity or the expertise to achieve this should partner with experienced breeders to source their animals and learn more about selection criteria.

2.0.6 Rescue animals and animals sold as culls from other herds cannot be bought into the AWA herd.

Note: If an experienced farmer is asked to participate in rescue activities they must contact AGW as soon as possible and preferably before rescue animals arrive on farm to discuss their options. Rescue animals cannot be used or marketed as AWA.

2.1 The Bison Breeding Herd

2.1.1 Not allocated.

2.1.2 Artificial insemination of bison is prohibited.

Note: Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

2.1.3 The ability to successfully give birth independently must be taken into account in modifications over time to herd genetics.

Note: In order to score this standard the auditor will assess the number of assisted births.

2.1.4 Embryo transfer and knowingly using the semen or progeny of animals produced by embryo transfer is prohibited.

Note: The prohibition on use of embryo transfer extends to a single generation. In other words, if the sire or dam of an animal was produced by embryo transfer then that animal cannot be bought into the AWA herd. New farms with existing livestock produced by embryo transfer should contact AGW for further advice.

2.1.5 In breeding programs, attention must be paid to breed characteristics that will improve welfare such as udder health, susceptibility to lameness, and longevity.

2.1.6 – 2.1.7 Not allocated.

2.1.8 Breeding or cross breeding with animals outside the genus of Bison is prohibited.

2.2 Not allocated

2.3 Animals Raised for Meat

2.3.1 Feeder or store bison to be raised for meat must only be obtained from AWA farms.

3. HEALTH MANAGEMENT

3.0 Health Planning and Preventative Management

Health and management planning increases both positive welfare and productivity.

3.0.1 Animal management must be focused on promoting health rather than treating disease.

3.0.2 Each farmer in the AWA program must establish contact with a qualified expert such as a veterinarian. The qualified expert must be familiar with:

3.0.2.1 The animals on the farm.

3.0.2.2 The health requirements of the state.

3.0.2.3 Methods to maximize animal health and welfare.

3.0.3 **Recommended** Each farmer should schedule regular preventative care visits by a qualified expert.

Note: AGW will provide support and assistance in achieving this standard.

3.0.4 A health plan emphasizing prevention of illness or injury must be prepared in consultation with the farm's qualified expert advisor to promote positive health and limit the need for treatment. It must address:

3.0.4.1 Avoidance of physical, nutritional or environmental stress.

3.0.4.2 Lameness.

3.0.4.3 Climatic considerations.

3.0.4.4 Vaccinations and other methods to cope with prevailing disease challenges.

3.0.4.5 Biosecurity measures.

3.0.4.6 Nutrition.

3.0.4.7 Environmental impacts, including manure management and run-off.

3.0.4.8 Pasture management.

3.0.4.9 Exclusion of predators and control of rats and mice.

3.0.4.10 Euthanasia.

3.0.4.11 Mastitis.

3.0.4.12 Johne's disease.

Note: See Standard 11.1.2 for recommendations on review/update of plans.

3.0.5 If there is disease or known risk of disease on farm vaccines must be used.

Note: In order to help eliminate or reduce vulnerability to disease and the need for antibiotics at therapeutic levels, AGW encourages the appropriate use of vaccines on an individual or group basis for prevention of disease.

3.0.6 Action must be taken to address any causes of lameness.

3.0.7 **Recommended** Farmers should participate in recognized disease eradication programs.

Note: AGW supports management to eliminate or reduce the risk of certain diseases and farmers are therefore encouraged to engage with programs that seek to achieve this. Recognized schemes could be national or state wide and could cover diseases such as Johne's.

This standard may become required for specific diseases when a funded and functioning program is available.

3.1 Treatment

3.1.1 Any sick or injured animals on the farm must be treated immediately to minimize pain and distress. This must include veterinary treatment if required.

3.1.1.1 Homeopathic, herbal or other non-antibiotic alternative treatments are preferred.

3.1.1.2 If alternative treatments are not suitable or not effective or if a veterinarian has recommended antibiotic treatment, this must be administered.

3.1.1.3 Withholding treatment in order to preserve an animal's eligibility for market is prohibited.

Note: The discovery of untreated injured or ill animals may be grounds for removal from the program.

3.1.2 The sub-therapeutic and/or non-therapeutic use of antibiotics, or any other medicines, to control or prevent disease or promote growth, is prohibited.

3.1.3 Growth hormones or the use of any other substances promoting weight gain are prohibited.

Note: Probiotics to promote positive health are permitted.

3.1.4 Non-therapeutic use of substances to induce estrus (heat) is prohibited.

3.1.5 Records must be kept of the administration of veterinary medical products.

3.1.5.1 Date of purchase.

3.1.5.2 Name of product.

3.1.5.3 Quantity purchased.

3.1.5.4 Identity of the animals treated.

3.1.5.5 Reason why animals were treated.

3.1.5.6 Number of animals treated.

3.1.5.7 Date when treatment started and finished.

3.1.5.8 Withdrawal time.

3.1.6 Animals treated with an antibiotic must not be slaughtered to produce meat for the AWA program before a period of time has passed that is at least twice the licensed withdrawal period of the antibiotic used.

3.1.7 Animals treated with any off-label medication must not be slaughtered to produce meat for the AWA program until at least seven days after medication, or an alternative withdrawal as advised by a veterinarian.

3.1.7.1 Animals must not be treated with any medications prohibited for food animal use.

3.1.8 Any surgical procedure not covered by these standards must be carried out by a veterinarian.

3.1.9 A competent person may use a dart gun loaded with a sedative to anesthetize the animal when the rancher has a concern about an individual and examination and/or treatment cannot otherwise take place.

3.2 Parasites

3.2.1 The primary methods of preventing parasite infestations must be pasture management or rotation and bedding management and removal.

3.2.2 If prevention has not been effective, medicine regimens must be implemented to effectively control worms, lice, mange and any other parasites.

Note: AGW recognizes that some parasites that are a threat to bison can only be managed through preventative treatment. The parasite, the treatment and the justification must be noted in the herd health plan.

3.2.3 The use of organophosphates and other products with the same or a similar mode of action is prohibited.

Note: An exception to the standard above may be considered if other treatments have been shown to be ineffective. Please refer to the AGW paper on organophosphate and non-organophosphate type products.

3.2.4 **Recommended** Fecal samples to monitor internal parasite burdens should be taken at least annually.

3.2.5 Fecal samples must be reviewed by a competent person.

3.2.6 **Recommended** Fecal samples should be taken during the growing season when animals are out on pasture.

3.3 Euthanasia

Note: When local or national authorities order the killing of a herd or or if any large-scale euthanasia is about to take place to eradicate disease, AGW must be notified as soon as possible.

3.3.1 Animals experiencing pain or suffering from which they are unlikely to recover must be promptly euthanized on the farm in a manner that renders the animal immediately insensible to pain.

Note: Please contact AGW if further information on appropriate methods of euthanasia is required.

3.3.2 Euthanizing bison in a way that causes unnecessary pain or suffering is prohibited. Prohibited methods include:

3.3.2.1 Electrocution.

3.3.2.2 Suffocation.

3.3.2.3 Exsanguination without prior unconsciousness.

3.3.2.4 Poison.

3.3.2.5 Blow to the head by blunt instrument.

3.3.2.6 Bow and arrow.

3.3.3 Not allocated.

3.3.4 **Recommended** AGW recommends that euthanasia of bison is carried out using a high powered hunting rifle.

Note: Please contact AGW if further information on appropriate methods of euthanasia for bison is required.

4. ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

4.0 General Animal Management

4.0.1 - 4.0.2 Not allocated

4.0.3 All bison must be thoroughly inspected no less than every third day.

Note: During the inspection the welfare of each animal must be observed. If any animal is not in a state of well-being, it must be cared for immediately and corrective measures must be taken. During a time of increased risk to health and welfare, inspections must be increased as necessary to protect the animal's well-being.

4.0.2 – 4.0.3 Not allocated.

4.0.4 Animals must be maintained at body condition score 4 or above on a 1-9 scale or body condition score 2 or above on a 1-5 scale.

4.0.5 Breeding animals must not exceed body condition score 7 on a 1-9 scale or body condition score 4 on a 1-5 scale.

4.1 Not Allocated.

4.2 Group Management

4.2.1 – 4.2.4 Not allocated.

4.2.5 Housing adult bison bulls separately from the herd, other than for reasons of veterinary treatment is prohibited.

Note: This does not preclude removing bison bulls from the main herd during calving season, but they should be maintained on separate pasture areas during this time and not housed.

4.2.6 The social dynamics and family group development within a herd of bison must be acknowledged. Disruption of the herd dynamics, adding to or taking away, must be addressed with consideration for the following criteria.

4.2.6.1 New animals must be allowed a period of time no less than two weeks to become familiar with the ranch from a small pasture or large holding pen.

4.2.6.2 New animals must be allowed to form a family group consisting of the new arrivals before introducing that group to the established herd.

4.2.6.3 **Recommended** New animals should be exposed to daily humane and or machine interaction in quarantine so as to become familiar with the routines of the ranch and ranch personnel.

4.2.6.4 **Recommended** At the time of assimilation with the existing herd, behaviors observed during assimilation should be documented.

4.2.6.5 Exposing newborn bison calves to the behaviors that occur during the assimilation of new animals to the herd is prohibited.

4.2.6.6 Bison must be allowed the ability to separate into stable subgroups at will.

4.3 Breeding and Calving

4.3.1 As far as is possible a competent person must monitor calving from a distance to ensure health and welfare of the newborn calf and its mother are maintained.

4.3.2 -4.3.5 Not allocated

4.3.6 Bison must be allowed to calve outdoors on pasture.

4.3.7 A clean environment with sufficient space must be provided for calving.

Note: See the specified space allowances in section 8.1.

4.4 Not allocated.

4.5 Artificial Rearing

Note: AGW acknowledges the fact that in the majority of instances no human interactions with bison calves are possible or desired. If a calf has to be artificially reared the following standards apply

4.5.1 – 4.5.7

4.5.8 Milk replacer containing antibiotics, growth promoters and/or any animal by-products aside from milk protein is prohibited.

Note: If the welfare of a calf could be compromised and evidence can be submitted that suitable products are not available an allowance is in operation to allow milk replacers which do not meet the standard above.

4.5.9 All nipples and other feeding equipment must be cleaned regularly.

4.5.10 – 4.5.14 Not allocated.

4.5.15 Calves must have continuous access to high quality fresh forage from seven days of age onwards.

Note: Access is recommended from day one.

4.5.16 Not allocated.

4.5.17 The rancher must have a plan of management and the equipment to deal with orphaned bison calves.

4.5.18 Removal of bison calves from the herd must be documented by the ranch.

4.5.19 Rescued bison calves must be held in a clean bedded pen that protects them from extreme weather, is predator proof and out of sight and sound from the cow so as to reduce stress for both.

4.6 Weaning and Separation of Calves.

4.6.1 **Recommended** Husbandry systems that allow young calves to remain in the herd with their mothers until weaning occurs naturally are recommended.

4.6.2 Not allocated

4.6.3 Newly weaned or separated calves must be kept in groups of familiar animals.

4.6.4 Not allocated.

4.6.5 In cases where natural weaning is not practical separation of the calf from its mother must involve methods designed to cause as little stress as possible.

4.6.6 After separation calves and their mothers must either be kept in adjacent pens where they can see, hear and sniff/lick each other or be completely out of sight and hearing of each other.

4.6.7 Feed for freshly weaned calves must be clean and appealing.

4.6.8 Not allocated.

4.6.9 **Recommended** Artificially reared calves should not be weaned from milk before they are 12 weeks of age.

4.6.10 Artificially reared calves must not be weaned from milk before they are six weeks of age.

4.6.11 Weaning bison calves at less than six months of age is prohibited (see 4.6.16).

4.6.12 The average weaning age of bison calves in the herd must be a minimum of seven months.

4.6.13 – 4.6.15 Not allocated.

4.6.16 In exceptional circumstances when the health and welfare of the bison calf or the mother would otherwise be compromised, calves may be weaned before six months of age. A record must be kept of each instance and the reasons for this early weaning.

4.6.17 **Recommended** Bison calves should not be weaned until 90% of their hair coat has turned to their adult color.

4.6.18 **Recommended** Weaning of bison calves should be timed so that the calves are not exposed to temperatures of 95° F degrees or 35° C or more.

4.6.19 **Recommended** To reduce the risk of pneumonia or other illness bison calves should not be exposed to dusty conditions at weaning

4.6.20 **Recommended** Weaned bison calves should be held in the weaning pen for at least two weeks time before they are turned out or relocated.

4.7 Castration

4.7.1 – 4.7.6 Not allocated.

4.7.7 Castration of male bison is prohibited.

4.8 Other Physical Alterations

4.8.1 Tail docking is prohibited.

4.8.2 Dehorning is prohibited. Horns may be tipped as long as the living tissue inside the horn is not being cut.

4.8.3 Not allocated.

4.8.4 Spaying of heifers is prohibited.

4.8.5 – 4.8.16 Not allocated.

4.8.17 Disbudding bison is prohibited.

4.9 Identification

4.9.1 Where identification is required it must not cause harm to the animal.

4.9.1.1 **Recommended** The preferred method for permanent identification is Sub-Cutaneous Radio Frequency Identification.

4.9.1.2 **Recommended** The preferred method of temporary identification is non-toxic paints or dyes.

4.9.1.3 Ear tagging, tattooing and freeze branding are permitted methods of identification.

4.9.2 Not allocated.

4.9.3 Marking bison by cutting/notching the dewlap is prohibited.

4.9.4 Ear marking by cutting/notching the ears of bison is prohibited.

4.9.5 Hot branding is prohibited.

Note: Flank or rump branding may be carried out when required by state law or by financial institutions, breed societies or when there is a risk of theft or unintentional mixing with other herds. If both hot iron and freeze branding are permitted, freeze branding must be used when practical. Please AGW office to discuss any requirement to brand.

5 Not Allocated.

6. FOOD AND WATER

6.0 – General Food and Water Standards

6.0.1 Animals must have free access to clean, fresh water at all times.

6.0.2 Animals must have a feeding plan that will guarantee a varied, well-balanced and wholesome nutritional regime appropriate for their age.

6.0.3 A list of ingredients or sample tear tags from all feed, feed blocks and mineral blocks used on farm must be made available to the AWA representative.

6.0.4 Food and water must be distributed in a way that eliminates competition.

6.0.4.1 If the ranch or ranch operations cannot accommodate the nutritional needs of subordinate bison, they must be sorted from the herd and allowed to form their own subgroup. This does not apply to nursing calves.

6.0.5 Feeding meat or animal by-products is prohibited,

6.0.5.1 Feeding fishmeal and other aquatic products to bison is prohibited.

6.0.6 **Recommended** Farms should be Certified Non-GMO by AGW.

Note: See www.agreenerworld.org for further information.

6.0.7 **Recommended** Farms that are not seeking Certified Non-GMO accreditation should avoid genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or derivatives of GMOs, including GMO feed and veterinary and health care products containing GMOs or their derivatives as well as the growing of genetically engineered crops.

6.1 Food and Water for Bison

6.1.1 To ensure proper rumen function bison must be provided with at least 70 percent long fiber roughage/forage in their diet on a daily dry matter basis from weaning onwards.

6.1.2 Not allocated.

6.1.3 Any changes in diet must be carried out gradually to minimize rumen problems.

6.1.4 The nutritional regime and pasture management plan must take into account the added nutritional requirements of lactating animals (see also 6.0.2 and 7.0.8).

6.1.5 Feedlots and other types of confinement feeding operations are prohibited.

6.1.6 **Recommended** Wild or natural water sources are recommended in regions of extreme summer heat so as to allow bison to perform the natural behavior of swimming and mud wallowing.

6.1.7 Wild ponds must be checked on a routine schedule to ensure that no bison are stuck or in jeopardy.

6.1.7.1 Frozen wild water sources must be checked often to ensure that no bison are in jeopardy from falling through the ice.

6.1.7.2 Any bison discovered dead in a wild water source must be removed immediately so as not to contaminate the water source.

Note: As an indigenous species, the bison utilize and deal with wild water sources as part of performing their natural behavior.

6.1.8 **Recommended** Livestock feeds should minimize ingredients that are in direct competition with human nutrition.

Note: Feeds that are in competition for human nutrition include soy and grains.

7 PASTURE ACCESS

7.0 General Pasture Access Standards

The aim of good pasture management is to satisfy the herd's food-seeking behaviors. Animals must be able to explore the ground and their natural environment.

For management of animals in extreme weather please see sections 7.5 and 8.0.

7.0.1 Continuous outdoor pasture access is required for all bison.

7.0.2 – 7.0.3 Not allocated.

7.0.4 **Recommended** Range areas should be used in rotation. Both extensive and rotational grazing systems are permitted.

7.0.5 The amount of outdoor area must be such that the health and welfare of the animals and pasture quality is maintained.

7.0.6 Pasture areas and the fencing that surrounds them must be designed and maintained so they do not pose a risk, or inflict injury on the animals.

Note: This includes keeping pastures free of old fencing, old farm machinery and any other debris that could cause injury.

7.0.7 Animals must have access to pasture areas that are well drained and clean.

7.0.8 A pasture management plan must be in place that addresses the specific farm site. It must ensure that:

7.0.8.1 The nutritional requirements of grazing animals can be adequately met through grazing and appropriate supplementation.

7.0.8.2 Not allocated.

7.0.8.3 The composition of the pastures does not create health problems for the animals.

7.0.8.4 Animals have access to fresh, clean pasture that has not become polluted with manure.

7.0.8.5 The location of water, shelter, and feeding areas is addressed.

Note: See Standard 11.1.2 for recommendations on review/update of plans.

7.0.9 Soil testing must be conducted at least every three years.

Note: Farmers with extensive, unfertilized range lands and/or farming land on short term lease agreements should contact AGW for guidance on appropriate soil testing intervals.

7.0.9.1 **Recommended** Annual soil testing should be carried out in any pastures where manure is spread.

7.0.10 **Recommended** Annual testing of pasture or forage nutritional content is recommended (see also 6.0.2).

7.0.11 Herbicides and pesticides may only be used when weeds or pests cannot be practically controlled by other means.

7.0.12 Herbicides and pesticides must be mixed, used and disposed of according to manufacturer's instructions to avoid environmental contamination.

7.0.13 Animals must not be grazed or kept on land within 21 days of direct application of herbicides or pesticides.

7.0.14 The use of any manures or fertilizers for pasture land that are bought in from off-farm must be justified by soil testing and crop nutritional need.

7.0.15 Waste from on-farm slaughter, and the remains of animals that die or are euthanized on farm must be properly composted before it is applied to pasture.

7.0.16 Fish fertilizers must come from sustainable sources.

7.0.17 After the application of fish fertilizer, the composted remains of animals that die or are euthanized on farm or slaughter waste to pasture there must be an interval of at least one month, or until all visible signs of the application have disappeared (whichever is longer), before animals graze the land.

Note: Permission may be granted to graze the land prior to one month after application of composted animal remains, slaughter waste or fish fertilizer if it can be demonstrated that animals will not be exposed to any trace of the fertilizer.

7.0.18 **Recommended** Manures and fertilizers that can have a negative effect on soil microbial life and/or which contain heavy metals should be avoided.

7.0.19 Water sources on the farm must be managed and maintained to prevent environmental pollution.

7.0.20 Land must be managed to avoid erosion.

Note: AGW understands that even with the best management some erosion due to the activities of pasture based livestock may occur. This standard is scored against the steps farmers take to try to avoid and/or minimize erosion risks rather than the presence or absence of erosion on the farm. A complete absence of any erosion is desirable – but it is accepted that it may not always be possible.

7.0.21 Pastures must not be degraded by overgrazing and/or other management techniques.

7.0.22 Non-point pollution and other local environmental standards must be met.

7.0.23 Pasture areas on which animals have been out-wintered or that are otherwise worn out or denuded must be restored.

7.0.24 Not allocated.

7.0.25 Spraying neonicotinoids on pasture land owned or managed by the approved farm is prohibited.

7.0.26 **Recommended** Neonicotinoids should not be sprayed on any land owned or managed by the approved farm.

Note: There is increasing evidence that neonicotinoids not only adversely affect bees, but other wildlife. These products are already prohibited in many countries and AGW will continue to monitor published research on this topic.

7.1 Pasture for Bison

7.1.1 The activity of the animals must not cause more than 20% of the pasture area they are kept on to be denuded.

7.1.2 Animals and pastures must be managed to avoid the risk of bloat.

7.2 – 7.4 Not Allocated.

7.5 Exclusion from Pasture

For the purposes of these standards AGW defines exclusion from pasture as the following:

- Shutting animals into a house or barn.
- Keeping animals outdoors, outside of the growing season, on a sacrifice pasture (or similar).
- Keeping animals outdoors when pasture is covered to the point that animals cannot access vegetation (e.g. when pasture is snow covered).

Animals who have been properly selected for the specific climate conditions will voluntarily choose to go outdoors in all but the most extreme weather. However when exclusion is in the best interest of the animal the standards in the following section and those in section 8 must be met.

7.5.1 Animals may only be removed from pasture and housed when their welfare would otherwise be negatively affected.

Note: Acceptable reasons for removal from pasture could include the following: extreme weather, emergencies; for example wildfires.

7.5.2 If there is planned removal of animals from pasture for any length of time OR in an emergency where removal from pasture exceeds 28 days, the farmer must put into place a written plan for animal management. It must include:

7.5.2.1 Triggers for housing such as temperature, precipitation or soil condition.

7.5.2.2 Space available to each housed animal.

7.5.2.3 Facilities available to house the animals. These must include lying areas, loafing areas, feeding areas and space to enable animals to fulfill their behavioral needs.

7.5.2.4 Triggers for animals to be returned to pasture.

Note: It is not acceptable to use a particular date during the year as a trigger for either housing or return to pasture. Triggers should relate to the identified risk to the welfare of the animals under particular climatic or environmental scenarios.

8 HOUSING AND SHELTER

AGW recognizes that the housing of bison in the US is likely to be only in the rare event of rearing orphan calves. Any other housing of bison may impact negatively on their welfare. In other climates bison may be housed when it is of benefit to their welfare.

The ranch must observe the natural behavior of the bison herd on the ranch and by doing so, learn from the bison how to best allow them to utilize the natural shelter available on the ranch such as trees, swales, hills, ponds, rivers and lakes.

8.0 General Housing Standards

Shelter for bison may be provided by natural features such as shade, trees, or by buildings. Housing may also be used as shelter.

8.0.1 In climatic regions where their thermal comfort may be negatively impacted, bison must have continuous access as required to housing or shelter that protects them from weather extremes, including high winds, sleet and heavy snows, and sun.

8.0.2 Not allocated

8.0.3 In extreme weather there must be a means to feed and water animals in a sheltered environment.

8.0.4 Shelters and housing must be positioned away from areas of run off or potential run off.

8.0.5 Shelters and housing must be well ventilated and allow fresh air to enter.

8.0.6 Shelters and housing must allow natural light to enter.

8.0.7 All housing and other facilities (such as feeders and water troughs) must be designed and maintained in such a way that they do not pose a risk, or inflict injury or damage to the animals.

8.0.8 Animals must not be subjected to dim and/or continuous lighting or kept in permanent darkness.

8.0.9 In the daytime, the animals must always be able to see each other, their food and water sources, as well as their surroundings clearly.

8.0.10 Inspection of animals must be possible at any time day or night.

8.0.11 Use of artificial light must not extend the maximum day-length beyond 16 hours.

8.0.12 When animals are shut into housing or shelter any artificial light must be distributed evenly.

8.0.13 Not applicable

8.0.14 Shelters and housing for bison must have solid floors.

Note: Floors may be natural - the surface of the ground or pasture - or artificial. An area of wire or slat under a drinker will be deemed drainage not a floor.

8.0.15 – 8.0.16 Not allocated.

8.0.17 Animals at all times must have an area available that provides dry footing so they are not forced to stand in mud or manure.

8.0.18 Accommodations must be constructed so that they can be easily and effectively cleaned.

8.0.19 Manure must be removed from housing or shelters on a regular basis.

8.0.20 – 8.0.21 Not allocated.

8.0.22 The house or shelter must be managed to eliminate ammonia, dampness and mold.

Note: The human nose can detect ammonia at levels of 5ppm upwards. If the farmer can smell ammonia action must be taken to eliminate the source.

8.0.23 Liquefaction of manure and liquefied manure handling systems are prohibited.

8.0.24 Close confinement in cages, crates or by tethering is prohibited.

8.0.25 Temporary close confinement or tying up (tethering), which may be required for vaccination, weighing, feeding, milking, marking or veterinary procedures, is permitted. This must be noted in the farm plan or recorded at the time.

8.0.26 Maintenance and housekeeping routines must be in place to minimize any potential problems from rats or mice.

8.1 Space Allowances in Housing and Shelter

Space allowances for housing and shelter have been set to allow all animals to move around freely and have sufficient space to lie down allowing for the behavioral structure of the herd.

8.1.1 The following space allowances are required in housing or shelter:

Bison: Minimum indoor bedded lying area:

Calves up to 220lbs (100kg)	48 sq. feet	4.5 sq. meters
Bison between 220-440lbs (100-200kg)	81 sq. feet	7.5 sq. meters
Bison between 440-770lbs (200-350kg)	129 sq. feet	12.0 sq. meters

Bison between 770-1100lbs (350-500kg)	162 sq. feet	15.0 sq. meters
Bison over 1100lbs (500 kg)	33 sq. ft per 100kg live weight	3.0 sq. meters per 100kg live weight

Bison: Minimum additional loafing area when animals are excluded from pasture:

Calves up to 220lbs (100kg)	36 sq. feet	3.3 sq. meters
Bison between 220-440lbs (100-200kg)	60 sq. feet	5.7 sq. meters
Bison between 440-770lbs (200-350kg)	96 sq. feet	9.0 sq. meters
Bison between 770-1100lbs (350-500kg)	120 sq. feet	11.1 sq. meters
Bison over 1100lbs (500 kg)	24 sq. ft per 100kg live weight	2.25 sq meters per 100kg live weight

8.2 Not Allocated

8.3 Temporary Separation and Hospital Pens

8.3.1 There must be provision of a safe place for sick or injured animals to recover, free of competition.

8.3.2 If injured animals are separated from the herd they must only be kept apart until such time they can rejoin the group without adversely affecting either the health or welfare of the individual or the herd.

8.3.3 Animals must not be kept apart from the herd unless briefly required for veterinary procedures or to recover from an illness or injury.

8.3.4 The pen or enclosure for temporarily housed animals must meet the space requirements in section 8.1.

8.3.5 Not allocated.

8.3.6 At minimum, pens used for the treatment of sick animals must be cleaned between each use.

8.3.7 Adult bison must never be kept in isolation.

Note: If an individual adult animal needs to be removed from the herd for any reason at least one other companion animal must be removed with it.

8.3.8 Bison calves must not be kept in isolation unless they are hand reared orphan calves in which case they must have regular interaction with humans and/or suitable companion animal.

Note: The companion animal for an orphan calf need not necessarily be another bison.

8.4 Bedding

8.4.1 In housing, bedding must be available to bison at all times.

8.4.2 – 8.4.3 Not allocated.

8.4.4 Bedding must be clean, dry, mold-free and replenished as needed.

8.4.5 Bedding must not cause discomfort or harm to the animals. Particular attention must be paid if sand is chosen as bedding.

8.4.6 **Recommended** Bedding with straw or cornstover is preferred for bison.

8.4.7 Bedding from timber-based products sourced from chemically treated wood is prohibited.

8.4.8 There must be enough bedding to ensure the comfort of all bison.

9 REMOVAL OF ANIMALS FROM THE APPROVED FARM

9.0 Removal of Animals from the Approved Farm – General Standards

These standards only apply to animals that the approved farmer retains ownership of when they are moved off the approved farm.

9.0.1 When AWA livestock are removed from the approved farm they must be kept to AWA standards until such time they leave the ownership of the approved farm or farmer.

9.0.2 There must be a separate and specific plan for maintaining animal health and welfare, transport, biosecurity and continued compliance with the AWA standards while animals are removed from the approved farm.

9.1 Temporary Removal of Approved Animals from the Approved Farm

9.1.1 AWA livestock will only retain their status when temporarily removed from the approved farm for the following reasons:

9.1.1.1 Male animals used for breeding.

9.1.1.2 Female animals taken to be naturally served.

9.1.1.3 Movement of animals in an emergency.

9.1.2 Not allocated.

9.1.3 Not allocated.

9.1.4 If AWA breeding animals are hired or taken to farmers that are not AWA the approved farm must ensure that the farm they are transferring the animals to is aware of the relevant standards for management and can meet them.

10 PREDATORS AND RODENTS

10.0 Protection from Predators

10.0.1 All animals must be protected from predators and poachers.

10.0.2 If livestock guardian dogs are used their management must meet the AWA guidelines for guardian or herding canine management.

10.0.3 If other guardian animals are used they must be suitable for guardian duties.

10.0.4 Guardian animals must be chosen with consideration of their ability to thrive in the prevailing climatic conditions of the farm, in pasture-based, free range, outdoor systems.

10.0.5 In the event that exclusion is unsuccessful and predation remains an issue, live trapping may be used.

10.0.6 Live traps must be checked twice daily.

10.0.7 All other forms of traps are prohibited.

10.0.8 All snares and leghold traps are prohibited.

10.0.9 The use of poisons against predators is prohibited.

10.0.10 If live trapping is not possible or is not successful then as a last resort lethal control of specific animals may be carried out when these are causing an immediate threat to farm livestock.

10.0.11 If there is a continuous threat from predators that cannot be managed by live trapping advice must be sought from AGW regarding a control program.

10.0.12 Lethal control/euthanasia of predators must result in instantaneous irreversible unconsciousness and death.

10.0.13 If a predatory animal has been euthanized to protect the animals on the farm, there must be records kept of the species in question, number of animals, and euthanasia method.

10.1 Control of Rats and Mice

10.1.1 Glue boards for the control of rats and mice are prohibited.

10.1.2 Licensed rodenticides placed such that non-target species have no access to them may be used for the control of rats or mice.

10.1.3 Lethal control/euthanasia of live trapped rodents must result in instantaneous irreversible unconsciousness and death.

11 RECORDS AND RECORD-KEEPING

This section lists the records and plans that must be maintained on farm and the sections where they can be found. All records and plans must be in a physical form that can be shown to the AGW auditor. Verbal plans and records are not acceptable

Note: For new farmers entering the program a period of 12 months will be provided to put the program plans and records in place. Please contact AGW if you require assistance. AGW also provides templates for plans and records.

11.0 Written Records

11.0.1 Each farm must maintain, and provide the auditor access to, records to demonstrate compliance with AWA standards.

11.0.2 Records must be kept of the purchase, sale or transfer of AWA animals and products (e.g. hides, meat etc.).

11.0.3 Records must be kept of mortalities and culls including the cause for these where known.

11.1 Written Plans

AGW requires the following written plans in addition to the emergency plan detailed in this section. See the relevant standard number for more information:

- Health plan; standard 3.0.4
- Pasture management plan; standard 7.0.8
- Transport plan; standard 13.0.1

11.1.1 A plan to care for or house animals in emergency situations must be prepared and be understood by all of those working on the farm.

11.1.1.1 The plan must consider the welfare of the animals during a fire. In shelters or housing with restricted access (a single door or doorways), a fire plan must be established with escape routes to the outdoors, available from the interior of the shelter, to allow all animals to be evacuated quickly. In shelters or housing with restricted access, a method to extinguish the fire (fire extinguisher, water source) must be readily accessed. Animals must be kept from direct access to electrical wiring and heat sources as a fire prevention measure.

11.1.1.2 The plan must ensure welfare of the animals is maintained in any potential climatic extreme such as floods, snow storms, or drought.

11.1.1.3 The plan must ensure welfare of the animals is maintained during any potential disruption of services or mechanical breakdown, such as water supply cutoff and breakdown of feeding or ventilation machinery.

11.1.1.4 The plan must ensure the welfare of animals is maintained during transport to include actions to be taken in the event of an accident or vehicle breakdown.

11.1.2 **Recommended** All plans for animal management should be reviewed at least annually or whenever changes to farm management practices occur, whichever is most frequent.

Note: This standard applies to the health plan (standard 3.0.4); pasture management plan (standard 7.0.8); emergency plan (standard 11.1.1) and transport plan (standard 13.0.1).

12 HANDLING

12.0 Handling Bison

12.0.1 Efforts must be made to develop positive relationships between the farmer and animals through gentle handling.

12.0.2 All handling areas accessed by the animals must provide good traction, be well drained and kept clean and free of ice in the wintertime.

12.0.3 The use of hot prods or electric shocks is prohibited.

12.0.4 Abuse or maltreatment of animals is prohibited.

12.0.5 All animals must be moved in a calm and consistent manner. Stress from loud noises and rapid movements must be minimized.

12.0.6 All chutes and other facilities for loading must be designed to minimize stress to the animal and ensure that animals can breathe normally as they proceed through the loading process.

12.0.7 Herding dogs must be well trained.

Note: Farmers who regularly train herding dogs must AGW to discuss compliance with the standard above.

12.0.8 If working dogs are used their management must meet the AWA guidelines for guardian or herding canine management.

Note: Working dogs include herding dogs and livestock guardian dogs.

12.0.9 Animals must not be used for sport.

12.0.10 All bison handling systems must be constructed to take account of the behavior of the species with the flow of bison through the system created by a series of release triggers.

13 TRANSPORT

13.0 Transport - General Standards

This section applies to all transport of animals including to slaughter, around the farm, between farms or delivery to farm.

13.0.1 A plan must exist to ensure that welfare of the animals is maintained during transport. The plan must include:

13.0.1.1 Transport of animals to the farm.

13.0.1.2 Transport of animals around the farm

13.0.1.3 Transport of animals off the farm to other farms, to receive veterinary attention or to slaughter.

Note: See Standard 11.1.2 for recommendations on review/update of plans.

13.0.2 All animals must be healthy, ambulatory and uninjured to be transported unless they are being transported to receive veterinary treatment.

13.0.3 The person transporting the animals must ensure they are transported without delay to their destination.

13.0.4 A competent individual must take responsibility for ensuring that animals do not suffer any injury or distress at any point immediately before, during and after transport.

13.0.5 All subcontractors, handlers and truckers must adhere to AWA standards.

13.0.6 If delays during transport or unloading upon arrival at destination are anticipated, loading and transport must not commence until those complications are resolved.

13.0.7 During transport, all animals must be protected from harm and thermal stress.

13.0.8 In the event that any animals suffer injury or distress during transport they must be treated or euthanized as soon as practically possible.

13.0.9 Ventilation must be provided that allows the animals to breathe fresh air while on the transport vehicle.

13.0.10 Overcrowding during transport is prohibited. The following space allowances in transport are required:

Weight of bison	Space per bison
Up to 100lbs (45kg)	4 sq. ft (0.37 sq. m)
Up to 240lbs (110kg)	6 sq. ft (0.55 sq. m)
Up to 440lbs (200kg)	9 sq. ft (0.84 sq. m)
Up to 1200lbs (545kg)	13 sq. ft (1.20 sq. m)
Over 1200lbs (>545kg)	16 sq. ft (1.50 sq. m)

13.0.11 The transportation vehicle must be thoroughly cleaned and dried prior to loading.

13.0.12 All animals must have continuous access to water until the point of loading.

13.0.13 To avoid the spread of Malignant Catarrhal Fever it is prohibited to use a transportation vehicle for bison that has been used for ovine or caprine transportation less than 14 days prior to loading the bison.

13.1 Transport of Bison

13.1.1 Transporting downed animals is prohibited.

13.1.2 **Recommended** Animals should not be transported in isolation.

13.1.3 The transport vehicle must be constructed or bedded to prevent animals slipping.

13.1.4 Injured or lame animals must not be sold at auctions and if sent off farm must go directly to slaughter.

13.1.5 Injured or lame animals who are able to travel must not be sent to slaughter in the same compartment as healthy animals.

13.1.6 Animals from different farms must be separated in transport.

13.1.7 **Recommended** Animals from different social groups (pens) should be separated in transport.

13.1.8 Transport of animals must not exceed eight hours.

Note: A derogation may be granted if an approved slaughter plant is not available within eight hours travel from the farm.

Transport of breeding stock that are sourced or sold for genetic improvement is exempt from this standard.

13.1.8.1 Transport of calves within seven days of weaning must not exceed three hours.

13.1.9 Cows must not be transported off the farm within 8 weeks of expected calving.

13.1.10 – 13.1.11 Not allocated.

13.1.12 Before bison are transported the rancher must ensure that the end destination is aware of the estimated time of arrival of the bison and has a suitable area to immediately unload and water them.

13.1.13 If a sub-group of bison are being shipped that sub-group must be put together at least 24 hours prior to loading. The-sub group must be kept intact with no further sorting or splitting of the sub-group other than gate cuts for numbers of animals that the compartments of the transport vehicle accommodates.

13.1.14 In the event of a transport vehicle pull-unit breakdown, disconnecting the trailer and sourcing an operational pull-unit is preferred over unloading the bison and reloading them.

Note: The stress and trauma of unloading and reloading bison will far exceed a waiting period on the trailer.

13.2 Transport of Calves.

13.2.1 – 13.2.5 Not allocated.

13.2.6 Transportation of stabilized orphaned bison calves for the purpose of artificial rearing is permitted.

13.2.7 Transportation of any other bison calves before weaning age for any reason other than veterinary attention or emergency situations is prohibited.

14 SALE OR TRANSFER OF ANIMALS

14.0 Sale or Transfer of Bison

14.0.1 **Recommended** All animals should be reared on their farm of birth.

14.0.2 Animals must not be knowingly sold into systems prohibited by these standards.

14.0.3 Routine sale to feedlots is prohibited.

14.0.4 The planned use of stockyards and/or auction houses to sell animals is prohibited.

14.0.5 Animals must not be displayed or offered for sale or transfer at farmers markets, swap meets or similar venues.

Note: Delivery or exchange of animals at a farmers market or similar venue when the sale or transfer has been pre-arranged may be acceptable.

14.0.6 Animals sold live at the point of slaughter under the AWA label or logo must only be sold to customers who will take them to AWA slaughter plants.

14.0.7 Sale of calves to farms that have confinement, crated or slatted veal systems is prohibited.

14.0.8 Sale or transfer to slaughter when calves are less than four months of age is prohibited.

14.0.9 – 14.0.1 Not allocated.

14.0.11 **Recommended** AGW recommends that even if animals or animal products are not sold under the label or logo they are sold to other AWA farms and slaughtered at AWA slaughter plants.

14.0.12 Selling bison calves to new bison producers or growers without providing, with the animals, written information on bison husbandry, humane handling, and the AWA Bison Standards is prohibited.

14.1 Marketing Breeding Stock

If the farm advertises that any of their animals produced are suitable as breeding stock, the farm is a breeding stock operation and must meet the standards below.

14.1.1 The AWA breeding stock farm must produce animals that are suitable for pasture based production.

14.1.2 The AWA breeding stock farm must have a written breeding plan that covers the following points:

14.1.2.1 The overall breeding aims.

14.1.2.2 The protocol for selecting and matching sires and dams.

14.1.2.3 The criteria used to assess whether animals are suitable to be marketed as breeding stock

14.1.3 The AWA breeding stock farm must inform buyers about the AWA program.

15 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

15.0 Deviations

15.0.1 AGW must be informed immediately of any changes on farm that could result in a deviation from the standards.

Note: The farmer must inform AGW if they change slaughter plant from that which is listed on their certificate - even if the change is to another plant that has been reviewed and recommended by AWA.

15.0.2 Temporary deviations will be taken into consideration when unexpected circumstances that are not under the control of the farmer arise.

15.0.3 All other deviations from the AWA standards can be cause for reconsideration of the farmer's participation or removal from the AWA program and use of its seal, in conjunction with that farmer's products.

15.1 Derogations

15.1.1 If, in the opinion of the AWA Standards Board, a system meets all of the principles of the program but does not pass a specific standard or standards, derogation may be granted.

15.1.2 In order for a derogation to be granted, an inspection report must be submitted stating the deviation from the published standard, the reason for this deviation, the length of time this deviation from standards will occur and the welfare outcome should the derogation be granted.

15.1.3 Derogation may be granted for on-farm trials and case studies that deviate from the standards when the proposed outcome is a benefit to animal welfare and/or farmer education.

15.2 Complaints

15.2.1 A complaints record relating to complaints about AWA certified livestock or products must be maintained and be available at annual inspection. The record must list both the complaint and the action taken by the farm.

Note: The AWA program is accredited to ISO 17065 and it is a requirement of our certification that farms within the program maintain a record in the rare event that any complaint is made. AGW does not expect that farms in the program will receive complaints about their certified livestock or products, but if any are received they must be recorded along with the response from the farm.

16 SLAUGHTER

16.0 Slaughter of Bison

16.0.1 **Recommended** On-farm slaughter is recommended.

16.0.2 Not allocated.

16.0.3 Slaughterhouses receiving animals in the AWA program, or the process of slaughtering on-farm, must pass a review by the AWA program for pre-slaughter handling, stunning, and killing.

Note: For further details of the review requirements see the AWA Slaughter Guidelines for Red Meat.

16.0.4 **Recommended** The person delivering the animals to slaughter should stay with them to ensure that they are slaughtered according to AWA guidelines.

16.0.5 Downed animals must be euthanized where they lie in a manner that renders them immediately insensible to pain.

Note: Please contact AGW if further information on appropriate methods of euthanasia is required.

16.0.6 Meat from downed animals must not be sold or carry the AWA seal.

16.0.7 Slaughter of calves for meat at less than four months of age is prohibited.

