

BEL ANIMAL WELFARE CHARTER

Preamble

The Bel Group is a global player in the healthy fruit and dairy single-serving portion snacking and collects nearly two billion liters of milk annually from 2,650 dairy farmers globally.

The Bel Group and the partner farmers work together to ensure animal welfare (e.g. the Vacas Felizes program in the Azores, the KoeKompass in the Netherlands or the Dairy Farmer Best Practices Charter in France).

Local and international regulations have been set for dairy farms. Bel Group is seeking to go further, encouraged by its consumers, who want proofs of farming practices even more respectful of dairy cows.

End of 2017, Bel took ambitious commitments towards all its dairy value chain through the Bel global sustainable upstream dairy Charter. As part of this Charter, the Group aims to have by 2025 100 % of dairy farmers who supply milk to Bel certified by a third party as compliant with the Bel Animal Welfare Charter.

As part of the development of this Charter, the Bel Group has drawn on the expertise of the international NGO CIWF1, a specialist in farm animal welfare.

The Bel Group has therefore defined best animal welfare dairy farming practices. These are based on the Five Freedoms2 that form the backbone of the principles of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and consider the animals' sentience3. Bel plans to deploy these best practices to all the farmers across its 10 dairy farming basins around the world, with the maturity of dairy farming practices in the countries where we work duly considered.

ABOUT CIWF

Compassion In World Farming (CIWF) is an international NGO founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer in reaction to the development of intensive factory farming. CIWF's mission is to encourage higher welfare practices and to offer viable and sustainable alternatives to intensive livestock farming. Its multidisciplinary approach highlights the close links between animal welfare, public health, food safety and environmental issues. CIWF supports actors of the food industry in their efforts to improve farm animal welfare by offering them technical expertise and promoting their concrete commitments through its Good Farm Animal Welfare Awards.

For more information:
www.compassioninfoodbusiness.com

¹ Compassion In World Farming - www.ciwf.fr

² Freedom from hunger, malnutrition and thirst; Freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; Freedom from pain, injury and disease; Freedom to express normal patterns of behavior; Freedom from fear and distress.

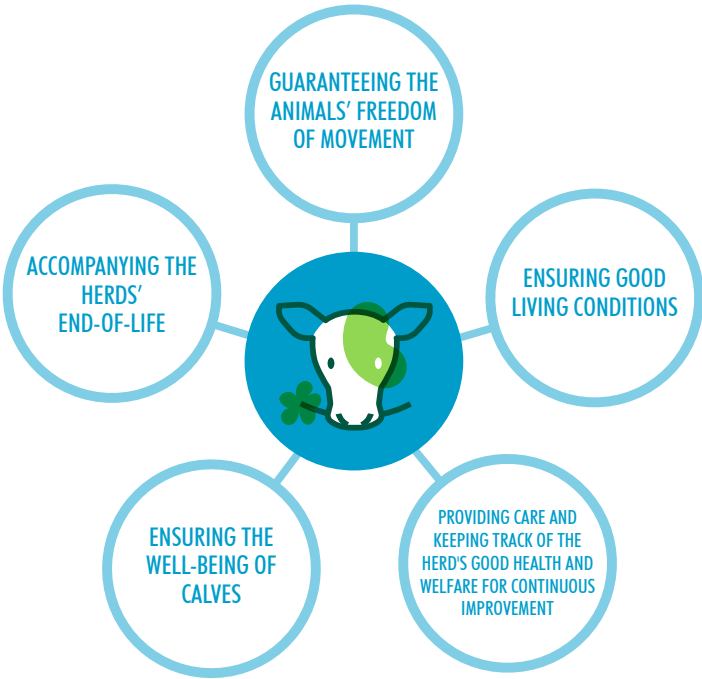
³ Ability to perceive or feel things.



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OUR 5 STRATEGIC PILLARS FOR animal welfare

Bel’s animal welfare Charter encompasses five themes:



Each theme is supported by a set of priority actions and targets to be achieved by 2025. The action plans will be adapted country-by-country, according to the level of maturity in dairy production, as well as the general context.

This Charter and its assessment criteria may be amended in keeping with advancements in scientific studies on animal welfare.

To begin with we want to highlight the importance of ensuring training for all animal handlers.

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OUR COMMITMENTS FOR EACH STRATEGIC PILLAR

ENSURE FREE MOVEMENT TO FARM ANIMALS

2025 TARGET: NO PERMANENT TETHERED ANIMALS

Bel wants to encourage natural expression of dairy cow behavior like free movements. It still happens that dairy cows may be tethered in some buildings. This type of buildings is already representing very rare cases, delivering very little volume of milk. In 2018 Bel estimates that more than 90% of its milk intake is from non-tethered cows.

For those less than 10% that could be from cows tethered during winter months, Bel plans to transform the practice thanks to different actions and support to farmers:

- **From 2019, only farmers using free-barns will be able to integrate the Bel milk supply-chain.** To that end, local specifications that must be met to join the pool of Bel dairy farmers will be drafted in compliance with this global Charter, and all new suppliers will have to comply with it.
- **From 2020, in cases where a farm delivering its milk to Bel is being transmitted or renovated, this will have to be done according to this Charter promoting animal welfare.** To this end, Bel will define a building design best practices guide that will be published and shared with all stakeholders.
- **Between now and 2025, an individual action plan will be discussed and co-build by Bel and the farmers still having tie-stalls barns, in order to transform this practice.** As Bel's pays a strong attention to its sustainable relationship with farmers, in the rare cases where transformation is not possible, and at very last resort Bel and its farmer will define a way to at least avoid permanent tethering during the winter months (daily outside exercise or else). This adaptation will permit the expression of the natural behavior of the cows during the tethering period and will allow the farmer to continue delivering milk to Bel.

If in rare geographies, some cows are tethered in pasture, then Bel has committed to encouraging changes to end this practice at farms by 2025.

Bel is strongly committed to **encourage pasture grazing** for raw milk production whenever feasible under local conditions, e.g. climate, grazeland availability and local cultural practices (cf. Global Sustainable Upstream Dairy Charter). Today roughly 2/3 of Bel's global milk intake for the 10 dairy basins comes from grazing cows. Wherever grazing is not possible, Bel has committed to encourage **access to an exercise area** where the cows can behave naturally. To that end, **from 2020**, the building design best practices guide will be published and shared with all stakeholders.

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ENSURING GOOD LIVING CONDITIONS

Ensure each dairy cow at farms that supply Bel benefits from either a comfortable and suitable lying down space or a stall (e.g in cubicle system, one cubicle per cow).

2025 TARGET: ENOUGH COMFORTABLE SPACE FOR ALL ANIMALS TO LIE DOWN AND REST SIMULTANEOUSLY

Dairy cow comfort is important for avoiding injuries, especially considering the cows' heavy weight and large size. Comfortable living conditions are necessary for dairy cow welfare, helping to reduce lameness and lesions, for example.

Comfort also means that the cows have enough lying down time, to rest and ruminate. Considering local specificities (such as breeds, size, etc.) as a basis, farms will have to offer all dairy cows a comfortable space for lying down.

PROVIDING CARE AND KEEPING TRACK OF THE HERD'S GOOD HEALTH AND WELFARE FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

2025 TARGET: 100% DAIRY FARMS USING ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

At Bel, we believe that well looked-after, healthy and professionally monitored dairy cows produce better quality milk. Dairy farmers care for every dairy cow, every day. And Bel takes commitments to ensure animal good health and its monitoring. Farmers care for their dairy herds, and Bel supports and encourages animal care best practices, including:

- **Veterinary visits** at least once per year;
- **A dairy herd health and welfare booklet to record treatments** (especially antibiotics);
- The use of **an animal welfare assessment tool at farm level** at least once a year.
 - In each dairy basin Bel will select or develop a locally recognized tool based on a scientifically validated animal welfare assessment referential
 - Assessment will be led either by a 1/3 party or by the farmer after dedicated training
 - This tool will support activity monitoring (corrective action plans and continuous improvement)

2020 TARGET: DEFINITELY STOP THE PRACTICE OF TAIL DOCKING⁴

At farms that deliver milk to Bel, the practice of tail docking has been diminishing for several years now. Bel continues to support initiatives seeking to completely eradicate this practice.

⁴ Cutting or removal of the tail

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2025 TARGET: ENSURE THAT IN 100% OF DISBUDDING OPERATIONS PROPER PAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ARE IMPLEMENTED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE PROCEDURE

As horns pose a danger to the animals and the farmer, the calves are **disbudded**⁵. To limit pain and stress, the disbudding is carried out on young calves at the latest before reaching **8 weeks of age**. The person performing the disbudding is **trained and aware**. Disbudding is clearly the preferred option. In the limited cases dehorning is necessary, then it's performed only under veterinary supervision. .

2025 TARGET:

- **ENSURE THAT 100% OF DAIRY FARMERS HAVE ACCESS TO TRAINING IN THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES**
- **MORE THAN 50% HAVE FOLLOWED THIS TRAINING**

Already, 100% of the milk collected by Bel is free of **growth hormones**⁶. To go even further, we want to encourage the **more and more responsible use of antibiotics**. In some dairy basins reduction use plans are already implemented. Bel's ambition is to expand globally those antibiotics stewardship programs on a longer term perspective.

ENSURING THE WELL-BEING OF CALVES

Bel is committed to the well-being of dairy cows throughout their lives, even before their first milking. To help male and female calves to get the best start in life, they are fed with **quality colostrum** in the first six hours after their birth to ensure a strong immune system.

2025 TARGET: 100% OF DAIRY BASINS HAVE MONITORED SCIENTIFIC DEBATES AND PROTOCOLS ADAPTED TO LOCAL CONDITIONS

Concerning **separation from the mother** scientific debates are not concluded and pilot studies continue in view of defining an optimal protocol to minimize separation stress. We are monitoring scientific advances to share with the partner farmers and among Bel's dairy basins.

As from now separation from the mother is handled with all the necessary care to minimize the stress of the mother and the calf and in compliance with locally defined protocols when existing.

2020 TARGET: PROMOTE CALVES GROUP HOUSING AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE AND ENSURE 100% OF CALVES ARE GROUPED BEFORE THE AGE OF 8 WEEKS

To ensure that the calves are able to express their normal behavior, they aren't left alone. They are in constant visual, audial and olfactory contact with fellow bovines and are comfortably positioned on dry and insulated substrata. Bel will promote group housing of the calves as soon as possible considering health risk (roughly 2 weeks of age). This recommendation will be part of the Building design guide. At 8 weeks of age, at the latest, they are grouped in a suitable external or indoor space.

⁵ Procedure aimed at preventing horn growth

⁶ EU regulation definition

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ACCOMPANYING THE HERDS' END-OF-LIFE

While the Bel Group is not a player in the meat industry, we are fully conscious of the need for coordinated actions between industries to ensure dairy farm animal welfare until their end of life.

2025 TARGET: PARTICIPATE IN WORK ON REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING ANIMAL WELFARE IN ALL DAIRY BASINS

Bel already participates in work to take animal welfare into greater account in local and European regulations. We are committed to develop our knowledge of downstream and to promote a better consideration of animal welfare imperatives in regulations governing animal transport and slaughtering conditions.

2020 TARGET: NO HIGHLY PREGNANT COWS ARE CULLED

In very specific cases, which are rarely the responsibility of the partner producers, a few rare pregnant cows can be culled. However, actions can now be taken in dairy farms to limit these cases. Bel is committed to ensuring that in farms delivering milk to Bel, no highly pregnant⁷ cows are sold to slaughterhouses.

⁷ 3rd trimester of pregnancy

