

Name of Practice: DAIRY LOAFING LOT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM  
DCR Specifications for No. WP-4B

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's loafing lot management system best management practice, that are applicable to all contracts, entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Purpose and Description

To prevent those areas exposed to heavy livestock traffic from experiencing excessive manure and soil losses due to the destruction of ground cover. Unimproved loafing lots that are used for herd exercise and loafing are usually denuded of vegetation and harbor undesirable plants.

The intent of this practice is to prevent manure and sediment runoff from entering watercourses and sensitive karst areas and to capture a portion of the manure as a resource for other uses such as crop fertilizer. This is accomplished by dividing the area into lots. The cattle are rotated from lot to lot as is necessary to maintain a vegetative cover. One lot is designated as a sacrifice area for use in periods of wet weather.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. A management plan and practice design is to be developed with consultation from a qualified consultant, VCE, NRCS and/or SWCD.
2. A minimum of three grassed loafing paddocks are required. Each grassed loafing paddock will be sized based on soil type, topography and herd size not to exceed one acre per twenty to twenty-five (1,000 lb. EAU) cattle and be maintained in permanent forage.
3. All live streams must be fenced from livestock use in the loafing paddocks and sacrifice area. A minimum 35-ft. buffer must be maintained.
4. Concrete walkway(s) with curbing or other hardened walkway(s) (crusher run is not an acceptable surface material) may be installed to facilitate herd movement from the barn to the loafing lots. Slope is to be no greater than 8%. See VCE publication on installing dairy lanes.
5. A sacrifice area is required unless adequate housing facilities are available (e.g. free stall barns).
  - i. Sacrifice area (if needed) must be scraped periodically.
  - ii. The sacrifice area should not be sized to exceed 600 to 650 square feet per animal (1,000-lb. equivalent). It should be sloped between 1% minimum to 8% maximum.
  - iii. Divert surface water away from the sacrifice area.

- iv. Provide filter strip per NRCS standard 393 to filter runoff from the sacrifice area.
6. In order for the forage to take up nutrients such as nitrogen it must be managed for growth and harvested for hay when possible. Dry cows or other grazers can be used to remove forage growth.
7. Critical eroding and sensitive areas will be fenced out and permanent cover established.
8. If a sacrifice lot is impractical due soil and/or topographical conditions, a loose housing structure may be substituted for the sacrifice lot.
- i. All other potential more cost-effective approaches to reducing the water quality impact from the unimproved loafing lot must have been explored and rejected, due to economic inefficiency or lack of space for relocation, before cost-share or tax credit can be approved for constructing a loose housing structure.
  - ii. Cost share funding for a loose housing structure will only be authorized if a “Risk Assessment for Water Impairment from Concentrated/Feeding/Loafing\* Livestock Areas” has been completed and a score of 136 or greater has been obtained.
  - iii. General Design guidelines for Loose Housing Structures
    - a) Bedded pack space requirements:
      - 1) 60 sq. ft. per heifer minimum
      - 2) 100 sq. ft. per lactating cow minimum
      - 3) 120 sq. ft. per dry cow
    - b) If the loose housing structure is to have a roof, wind and snow loads shall be as specified in NRCS 367 Roofs and Covers or ASAE EP288.5 Agricultural Building Snow and Wind Loads. A PE shall certify roof designs. If the facility is to serve as part of a foundation or support for a building, the total load shall be considered in the structural design.
9. A nutrient management plan developed in accordance with requirements for nutrient management plan content and procedures as stipulated in the Virginia Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations for land application or a planned waste management system for any other uses of manure produced. The nutrient management plan should address all the acreage, which the participant farms where manure from the loafing lot system will be applied. The nutrient management plan should be implemented and maintained for the life of the practice. Design storage capacity of animal waste facilities should be coordinated with the nutrient management plan so that adequate storage capacity is installed for the specific cropping system.

10. Cost-Share is authorized for watering facilities in the loafing lots.
11. In order to be eligible for cost-share or tax credit, nutrient management plans must be prepared by a certified planner who holds a current Nutrient Management Planner Certificate issued by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Nutrient Management Plans must be written to comply with all requirements set forth in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations, (4 VAC 50-85-10 et seq.) and the criteria set forth in the Virginia Nutrient Management Standards and Criteria, revised July 2014.
12. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 313 Waste Storage Facility, 342 Critical Area Planting, 362 Diversion, 356 Dike, 367 Roofs and Covers, 382 Fencing, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 393 Filter Strip, 412 Grassed Waterway, 516 Livestock Pipeline, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection, 574 Spring Development, 575 Trails and Walkways, 580 Stream bank and Shoreline Protection, 614 Watering Facility, 632 Solid Liquid Separation Facility, 633 Waste Recycling and 634 Waste Transfer.
13. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 10 years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the SWCD throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

1. The state cost-share payment, alone or if combined with any other cost-share payment, will not exceed 75% of the total eligible cost. The maximum state cost share payment is \$70,000 per year for the construction of a system to manage concentrated livestock traffic.
2. As set forth by Virginia Code § 58.1-339.3 and §58.1-439.5, Virginia law currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain BMP practices. The current tax credit rate, which is subject to change in accordance with the Code of Virginia, is 25% of the total eligible cost not to exceed \$17,500.00.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and SWCD staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above, and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA), for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

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