SPCA Certified
Operations Manual

BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS
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1.0 BC SPCA MISSION AND CHARTER

1.1 Mission

The BC SPCA is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.

1.2 Charter

The BC SPCA Charter is the foundation that guides the work we do:

Whereas:
The world is inhabited by many species sharing a common ecosystem of air, earth, and water. We recognize and value our interconnectedness with all animals.

Therefore:
The BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for the animals of the world we share.

We pledge our energies to inspire and mobilize society to create a world in which all animals that depend on humans for their well-being, experience, as a minimum, five essential freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease
3. Freedom from distress
4. Freedom from discomfort
5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.
The SPCA Certified program (SPCA Certified) is an independent, third party animal welfare certification system. SPCA Certified brings stakeholders together to further common goals in farm animal welfare across Canada.

SPCA Certified has been operating since 2002. Since this time, millions of farm animals have been raised on SPCA Certified farms in B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan. SPCA Certified standards are cited by animal welfare researchers, and used as a guide and reference in the development of Canada’s national organic standards, national farm animal Codes of Practice, and national animal care assurance programs. With more than 100 years of experience in animal welfare issues and more than 1 million supporters across Canada, the SPCA brand enjoys high brand trust with the Canadian public and national brand name recognition.

Products come from farms which are annually assessed to SPCA Certified farm animal welfare standards and operation policies by trained, independent inspectors. Certification is determined by third party, independent review panellists.

Third-party certified farmers build their market share by branding their products for consumers with the red barn logo and communicating their innovative practices to the public.

Upon certification, Members are able to use all materials bearing the SPCA Certified Name and logo. All Members certified within the SPCA Certified program will maintain compliance with label requirements, and commitment towards traceability of all products produced under the SPCA Certified program.

2.1 Operations Manual

The Operations Manual describes the operating procedures and requirements for certification under the SPCA Certified program, owned and operated by the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA).

The SPCA Certified program is modeled after the successful RSPCA (United Kingdom) program Freedom Food. The BC SPCA gratefully acknowledges the RSPCA’s leadership and assistance in developing the SPCA Certified program (2001).

Development, operation and accreditation of the SPCA Certified program follow International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Guide 65 – General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems.

The Operations Manual is made available to all Members and Applicants. The SPCA Certified program reviews the Operations Manual to ensure its practicality and relevance to third party certification procedures. Please see section 5.3 for further details on the Operations Manual.
3.0 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

3.1 Objective

The SPCA Certified program provides voluntary, third-party certification services to interested participants (producer, hauler, abattoir or processor). Standards for which participants are certified to:

1. Egg-laying Chickens
2. Broiler (Meat) Chickens
3. Turkeys
4. Pigs
5. Sheep
6. Dairy Cattle
7. Beef Cattle

Participating Program Members are annually assessed to SPCA Certified farm animal welfare standards and operation policies by trained, independent inspectors. Ten per cent of the membership is annually randomly audited. Certification is determined by third party, independent review panellists.

3.2 Scope

The scope of SPCA Certified is to ensure certification is demonstrated through a validation process, and to communicate certification through a SPCA Certified program label verifying that product is produced by accredited Members operating under Standards and procedures defined by the Certification Body.
4.0 LIABILITY

The Certification Body will not be responsible for any expense, loss or damage arising out of any requirements made under the SPCA Certified program. This will not prevent an Applicant/Member from claiming damages for negligence on the part of the Certification Body.
5.0 FRAMEWORK OF THE SPCA CERTIFIED PROGRAM

5.1 General Criteria for Accredited Certification Programs

The SPCA Certified program is designed to cover all accredited farm animals and products. The product must be easily distinguishable from products of a similar type. This is achieved through species-specific standards (Standards) related to production, transportation, and slaughter. Animals are identified or product is labelled as such during the entire chain of movement. The Standards are reviewed and updated as per the Operations Manual, ensuring the SPCA Certified product retains its status and market recognition.

SPCA Certified (also known as the Certification Program or Certification Body) has, as necessary components:

a) Species-specific standards (Standards)
   - Lays out the requirements for the raising and handling of farm animals.

b) Operations Manual
   - Outlines the requirements defining operation, assessment and traceability procedures conducted by Program Members and the Certification Body.
   - Sets the requirements by which Members perform to their utmost ability in raising and handling farm animals in accordance with the relevant Standard.

c) Program support
   - Effective validation that is reviewed and verified by the Review Panel and Certification Body, ensuring compliance with Standard requirements.
   - Certification Body that meets independent third party monitoring requirements.
   - Accurate scientific and evidence-based advice related to farm animal welfare issues.
   - Experienced and knowledgeable Program administrative and managerial staff.

d) Program Validators
   - Competent, trained and knowledgeable to validation and auditing procedures.
   - Independent and free from commercial interest in the activities being assessed.
   - Impartial to the results of the Program validation and audit process.

e) Review Panellists
   - Knowledgeable of Certification Body procedures, agricultural industry and animal welfare.
   - Independent and free from commercial interest in the activities being assessed.
   - Impartial to the results of Program validation and audit process.

5.2 Administration

The Certification Body oversees Program administration. The Certification Body is comprised of the following: SPCA Certified Management Group and Program personnel, and is supported by the Program advisors, Species Advisory Committees, Review Panellists and Program Validators.

5.3 Operations Manual

All relevant portions of the manual, including Standards and procedures, must be fulfilled for the production of certified animals, their transport, slaughter and processing. The Operations Manual is made available to all Applicants, Members, Review Panellists and Validators to ensure compliance with the objectives and scope of the SPCA Certified program.
5.3.1 Review of Operations Manual

The Certification Body reviews the Operations Manual every 3-5 years to ensure its practicality and relevance to third party certification procedures.

Members are notified when revisions to the Operations Manual will commence, and are invited to submit any comments to the Certification Body regarding the Manual. Comments must be received within three weeks of receiving notification from the Certification Body. Members do not have to wait until the review period to submit comments, and are encouraged to submit proposed revisions at any time for consideration in the formal review process.

Members are encouraged to participate in the review process when proposed drafts of the Operations Manual are circulated so they may voice concerns and opinions on proposed revisions prior to finalization and approval of the Operations Manual by the Management Group.

Once complete, Members are sent the revised Operations Manual, and are given 30 days in which to respond and appeal amendments to the Certification Body. Unless an appeal is launched, the end of the 30 days marks the date the revised Operations Manual comes into effect. Amendments to the Operations Manual are accompanied by appropriate lead-in times for implementation of the changes.

The Administrator will supply all Members, Review Panellists and Validators with up-to-date copies of the Operations Manual and/or relevant updated pages to insert within the Manual.

5.4 Commitment to Animal Welfare

The BC SPCA’s work is founded in the guiding principles of its Mission and Charter. The BC SPCA strongly believes that those participating in the SPCA Certified program also act according to these guiding principles, whether in regard to farm, companion or wild animals.

See Section 1.0 of the Operations Manual for the BC SPCA Mission and Charter.

5.4.1 Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act

SPCA Certified staff and Validators are not authorized to investigate or conduct inspections into allegations of cruelty to animals.

In addition to its advocacy, education and program work, the BC SPCA is granted authority to investigate and take action in instances of animal cruelty through the provincial Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA Act). Under the PCA Act, the BC SPCA’s Animal Protection Officers are appointed as special provincial constables for the purpose of enforcing this legislation. The PCA Act allows the constable to intercede whenever any animal, with the exception of species at risk or wildlife that are not in captivity, is found to be in a state of distress. Further details regarding this area of the BC SPCA’s work can be found at: www.spca.bc.ca/cruelty.

The PCA Act can be accessed through the following website: www.bclaws.ca.

It is recommended that SPCA Certified Applicants/Members read the PCA Act, either through the above-mentioned website, or by requesting a copy from the Certification Body.
6.0 PERSONNEL AND RELATED ROLES

6.1 SPCA Certified Management Group

The SPCA Certified Management Group (Management Group) is an internal BC SPCA group that governs and guides the strategic direction of the SPCA Certified program. The group utilizes information and advice from the SPCA Certified program advisors, Review Panellists, Species Advisory Committees, Validators and personnel in order to determine the best direction for the Program.

The Management Group meets two to three times per year, and is supported by SPCA Certified personnel.

6.1.1 Management Group Members

SPCA Certified Management Group membership is comprised of:

a) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), BC SPCA
b) Chief Animal Health Officer, BC SPCA
c) General Manager, Humane Education, BC SPCA
d) One to two external representatives

6.1.2 Role of the Management Group

The role of the SPCA Certified Management Group is to:

a) Determine and approve the strategic direction of the SPCA Certified program.
b) Determine and recommend a budget for the SPCA Certified program to the BC SPCA Board of Directors.
c) Approve amendments to the SPCA Certified program Operations Manual and Standards.
d) Address appeals from membership due to changes in policies or procedures or due to disagreement with Review Panel decisions regarding farm certification or non-compliance issues.

6.2 Species Advisory Committees

Each of the individual farm animal Standards must have a Species Advisory Committee (SAC) which:

a) Is comprised of producers, veterinarians, and specialists in the fields of animal science, including scientists with expertise in nutrition, physiology, and ethology. The SAC members must be well respected and qualified to ensure credibility and trust in their recommendations.
b) Provides input and consultation on the development of individual farm animal welfare Standards.
c) Reviews and proposes amendments to the Standards.
d) Makes recommendations to the SPCA Certified Management Group as to the approval (or not) of new technologies/techniques that may have an effect on farm animal welfare.
e) Relays any new technologies/techniques in farm animal agriculture to the Certification Body.
f) Meets on an as needed basis, unless requested by the Certification Body or the committee itself.
g) Abides by SAC Terms of Reference (Appendix G).

Staff responsible for the compilation of the Standards must send invitations regarding SAC membership to relevant individuals/groups in the animal agriculture/animal welfare industries.
6.3 SPCA Certified Program Supervisor

The Program Supervisor:

a) Oversees the Administrator’s role.
b) Implements all policies relating to the SPCA Certified program.
c) Attends the SPCA Certified Management Group meetings.
d) Oversees development of the SPCA Certified program.
e) Develops and coordinates the SPCA Certified marketing and communication initiatives.
f) Maintains the budget and related financial records.

6.4 SPCA Certified Program Administrator

The Administrator:

a) Assists and supports the Program Supervisor in his/her duties, as required.
b) Directs the day-to-day activities of the SPCA Certified program, namely the inspection and certification activities.
c) Develops related materials for the SPCA Certified program certification and inspection processes.
d) Works with Certification Body members to develop changes to the Standards and operating procedures.
e) Hires SPCA Certified program Validators, once approved.
f) Hires new Review Panellists, once approved.
g) Supports Review Panel, and is responsible for administration paperwork that stems from the certification process.
h) Ensures Members’ compliance with SPCA Certified name and logo requirements.
i) Ensures Members’ compliance with the fee structure.
j) Attends the SPCA Certified Management Group meetings.
k) Liaises with university animal welfare research programs/centres to further research in farm animal welfare and to incorporate emerging knowledge into the SPCA Certified program.
l) Maintains financial records.

6.5 SPCA Certified Program Validator

A SPCA Certified program Validator (Validator) is hired by the Certification Body. S/he:

a) Is an independent third party person contracted by the BC SPCA to conduct on-site inspections.
b) Performs Certification Assessments, Annual Assessments, Repeat Assessments and Random Audits of SPCA Certified program Applicants and Members.
c) Identifies and reports points of compliance and non-compliance with SPCA Certified standards using the appropriate checklist(s).
d) Submits written reports and certification recommendations to the Certification Body.
e) Abides by policies as per the SPCA Certified Validator Manual and the Operations Manual.
f) Works directly with the SPCA Certified Administrator, who submits the reports to the Review Panel.
g) Participates in Validator teleconferences held 1-2 times per year.

See Section 7.0 – Validators for more information on Validator qualifications and responsibilities.

6.6 SPCA Certified Program Review Panel

The SPCA Certified program Review Panel (Review Panel) is an arm’s length certification committee that reviews inspection reports and decides on the certification status of Applicants and Members.
participating in the SPCA Certified program. The Review Panel is selected by representatives of the Certification Body based on the qualification criteria outlined below. Each panellist receives a stipend (honourarium) payment for his/her services. At all times, the affairs of the Review Panel are autonomous, will remain confidential, and are shared with as few people as necessary to carry out their duties.

The Review Panel is comprised of at least four members. Each Review Panellist is asked to commit to a minimum one or two year term to allow for overlapping experience within the Panel. Each Review Panellist must sign a Confidentiality Agreement before commencing participation in the Program.

6.6.1 Review Panellist Qualifications

The Review Panel provides a balance of knowledge within animal welfare, farming and certification processes. Qualifications may include (but are not limited to):

a) Experience and knowledge of certification committee processes.
b) Knowledge of animal welfare research.
c) Veterinary qualifications, with farm animal experience preferred.
d) Knowledge of farming practices involving farm animals. This could include small and/or large farm experience.
e) Experience working in the transport, or the slaughter and processing industries.

6.6.2 Role of the Review Panel

The SPCA Certified program Review Panel:

a) Ensures consistency of the validation system.
b) Is responsible for the final decision regarding Applicant/Member certification status in the SPCA Certified program based on the information contained within the farm’s registration forms, health plans and biosecurity plan, the Validator’s assessment checklist(s) and the report submitted by the Validator.
c) Reviews all non-compliance and compliance reports regarding Applicants’ and Members’ certification.
d) Reviews files primarily by email or mail correspondence; occasional teleconferences to discuss the farm file are held for discussion of complex issues.
e) Participates in general teleconferences held two times per year.

6.7 SPCA Certified Appeal Panel

The Appeal Panel reviews all appellant submissions and decides, based on information submitted by the appellant and the Certification Body, the final outcome of the issue in question. The Appeal Panel is comprised of members of the SPCA Certified Management Group.

6.8 SPCA Certified Program Applicant

A SPCA Certified program Applicant (Applicant) is an individual, group of individuals or business (producer, hauler, abattoir or processor) that has applied for certification in the SPCA Certified program. The Applicant will be considered a Member once the following is completed:

a) An on-farm assessment by a Program Validator
b) Document review by the Review Panel
c) Noted non-compliance issues have been rectified, when appropriate
d) A Certification Agreement has been entered into and signed
6.9 SPCA Certified Program Member

A SPCA Certified program Member (Member) is an individual, group of individuals or business (producer, hauler, abattoir or processor) holding a Certificate of Registration with the SPCA Certified program. The Member:

a) Adheres to all requirements of the SPCA Certified program as set out in the Operations Manual, the Certification Agreement and the relevant Program Standard(s).

b) Ensures that all SPCA Certified program membership criteria is fulfilled and maintained for the duration of the Certification Agreement.

6.10 SPCA Certified Program Auditor

The SPCA Certified program Auditor (Auditor) is hired by BC SPCA and is an external, third party person that audits the Certification Body’s procedures and financial paperwork.

6.11 SPCA Certified Organizational Chart

The following flow chart illustrates the SPCA Certified organizational structure.
7.0 VALIDATORS

For a complete description of Validator qualifications and codes of conduct please refer to the SPCA Certified Validator Manual.

7.1 Validator Role and Responsibilities

The role of a SPCA Certified program Validator (Validator) is to verify that all requirements stated within the Operations Manual and relevant Standard are met by the Applicant/Member. This is accomplished through inspection of the Applicant/Member’s operation and animals, and reviewing all supporting production and audit trail documentation, and applicable laws.

Each Validator must sign a Service Agreement and a Confidentiality Agreement before commencing their contract with the Certification Body. A copy of each Validator’s resume is kept on file to document the level of knowledge and experience each Validator holds with respect to farm animals and inspection processes.

In conducting an Assessment or Random Audit, Validators complete all relevant forms and Assessment checklists provided by the SPCA Certified program. The following steps are used when conducting an Assessment/Random Audit:

a) Verify that information provided by the Applicant/Member is complete and accurate, and that all requirements as set out in the Operations Manual and relevant Standard have been followed.

b) Evaluate the operation and animals, record observations during the Assessment process and state the Applicant/Member’s overall compliance with the criteria as set out in the Operations Manual and relevant Standard.

c) Complete all relevant Assessment checklists and identify areas of compliance and non-compliance. Discuss Assessment checklist and areas of compliance and non-compliance with Applicant/Member. An exit interview form is signed by both the Validator and the Applicant/Member.

d) Submit all Assessment checklists, a written report, records, and any identified points of non-compliance to the Administrator.

7.2 Validator Qualifications

7.2.1 Experience

All Validators must have related professional, academic, or practical experience in the field of farm animal agriculture. This includes an understanding of specific production, handling, and processing methods for both non-conventional and conventional operations.

7.2.2 Regulations

All Validators must be familiar with the various Canadian Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals (www.nfacc.ca) and with the federal and provincial legislation relating to the agricultural industry.

7.2.3 Training

In order to qualify to do SPCA Certified inspections, Validators must have completed a formalized training program in farm and farm animal welfare assessment. Formal training provides a good foundation for how to conduct on-farm inspections, and also provides knowledge of farm animal agriculture and welfare.
The Certification Body requires that Validators be a member in good standing with a professional affiliation (e.g. Independent Organic Inspectors Association (www.ioia.net)).

 Validators are also required to have successfully conducted ten (10) on-farm animal inspections or related on-farm welfare assessments, and must have documented proof that this has occurred.

 The Certification Body will, in some circumstances, consider contracting Validators who do not meet these qualifications but who have other relevant knowledge and experience (e.g. on-farm animal-based assessments or other skills acquired through research in animal welfare and behaviour).

 Prior to commencing validation for the SPCA Certified program, new Validators receive a package outlining the SPCA Certified program and the BC SPCA. As part of their job training, Validators are required to accompany an experienced Validator to observe on-site Assessments and Audits.

 7.3 Review of Validator Performance

 Applicants/Members are given the opportunity to provide feedback to the Certification Body on Validator conduct and performance through the Validator Evaluation Form (Appendix F). Review Panellists also provide feedback to the Certification Body on the quality of Validator reports and completed checklists.

 At least once per year, the Certification Body provides feedback to the Validators during a meeting, which may take place as a teleconference. During that time, Validators have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have regarding the feedback, as well as any reports submitted by the Certification Body or Members, or any issues they have encountered during on-farm assessments.

 Minutes of these meetings are documented by the Certification Body and circulated to the Validators, allowing them a two-week opportunity following distribution of the Minutes to point out any errors or omissions. The Certification Body and the Validator sign off as having discussed the concerns and the resulting outcome by approval of the meeting Minutes within the two-week period. A lack of response from Validators is considered as approval of the Minutes. When necessary, individual Validators are contacted to discuss specific issues.

 7.4 Validator Biosecurity

 Validators must follow all biosecurity protocols imposed by the farm or facility they are visiting. It is up to the farmer to ensure all on-farm biosecurity protocols are adhered to.

 7.4.1 Biosecurity on Farm

 All clothing and footwear must be cleaned and disinfected and vehicle tires washed between all farm visits. Do not wear clothing/footwear worn at a processing plant to a production site unless they were laundered or disinfected between visits.

 It is essential that Validators carry the following:

 a) Sufficient clean and protective clothing and footwear.
 b) Industry and/or Applicant/Member approved disinfectant for footwear, or a supply of disposable shoe covers.
 c) Supplies of facemasks and gloves.
7.4.2 Biosecurity at Processing Facilities

At processing facilities, Validators must follow these protocols:

a) Do not wear clothing/footwear worn on a production site to a food processing plant unless they were laundered/disinfected between visits.

b) Adhere to all requests and requirements imposed by the plant with regard to personal health status, personal safety and biosecurity measures.

c) When in doubt of plant policies, ASK!

7.5 Validator Assignment

Validators are contracted and assigned to conduct specific Applicant/Member Assessments based on a variety of factors, including: experience, geographical location and availability.

Applicants are contacted by the chosen Validator once the completed application package is sent to and verified by the Administrator, and then sent to the Validator.

Members are contacted by a Validator once the re-certification paperwork is sent to and verified by the Administrator, and then sent to the Validator.

Should an Applicant/Member have concerns related to the assignment of a particular Validator (e.g. for personal reasons or perceived conflict of interest) they must communicate these concerns in writing to the Certification Body within three business days of being contacted by the Validator selected for their Assessment. Every attempt will be made to re-assign the Assessment to another Validator. If re-assignment incurs a large cost (e.g. due to travel or other such expenses) that would not otherwise occur, the Applicant/Member is responsible for paying these costs to the Certification Body.
8.0 SPCA CERTIFIED PROGRAM STANDARDS

All required welfare components for the production, transport, slaughter and processing of farm animals are contained within the SPCA Certified standards (the Standards). All Applicants, Members, Review Panellists and Validators must have up-to-date copies of the Standards.

8.1 Development of SPCA Certified Standards

The Certification Body initially compiles the Standards through consultation with the industry and the relevant Species Advisory Committee (SAC). The following process is followed for the development of a new Standard:

a) Selection of the commodity-specific Species Advisory Committee
b) Compilation of the first draft accounting for:
   - All federal, provincial and regional regulations regarding animal agriculture
   - Animal care and welfare programs and Codes of Practice
   - Evidence for the use of animal management and housing systems that are proven through research and experience to provide good animal welfare
   - Marketing regulations as per each commodity’s respective Marketing Board and/or Commission
c) Circulation of the first draft for comment to relevant Certification Body members, SAC and any/all of the following*:
   - Animal welfare scientists
   - Agriculture institutions
   - Other animal welfare organizations
   - Relevant producers and producer groups
   - Relevant marketing groups
   * Any individuals reviewing the Standard that are not official members of the SAC are made aware of, and follow, the SAC Terms of Reference (Appendix G).
d) Compilation of the second draft based on the feedback received from the first draft.
e) Circulation of the second draft to the SAC, Members, and any other designated reviewers.
f) Circulation of the final draft for approval to the SAC, Members, Validators and Review Panellists, and any other designated reviewers (minimum 30 day review period).
g) Upon final approval by the SAC, the finalized Standard is submitted to the SPCA Certified Management Group for approval.
h) Once the Standard is approved, Members are notified in writing and given thirty days in which to respond and appeal the Standard as approved by the Management Group. Unless an appeal is launched, the end of the thirty days marks when the Standard comes into effect.
k) Implementation of the Standard is accompanied by appropriate lead-in times.

8.2 Review of Program Standards

The Certification Body initiates review of the Standards at least once every five years, or as new scientific information and improved animal care practices are developed and proven to enhance animal welfare. The Certification Body conducts the review in partnership with Validators, Review Panellists, the SAC and Members. Standard amendments are put forth to the SPCA Certified Management Group for final approval.

Members are notified when revisions to the Standards will commence, and are invited to submit any comments to the Certification Body regarding the Standards. Comments must be received within three
weeks of receiving notification from the Certification Body. Members do not have to wait until the review period to submit comments and are encouraged to submit proposed revisions at any time for consideration in the formal review process.

Members are encouraged to participate in the review process when proposed drafts of the Standard are circulated so they may voice concerns and opinions on proposed revisions prior to finalization and approval of the Standard by the Management Group.

Once the Standards are reviewed, Members are notified in writing of any changes to the Standards, and are given 30 days in which to respond and appeal revisions approved by the SPCA Certified Management Group. Unless an appeal is launched, the end of the 30 days marks the date the revised Standard comes into effect. Amendments to the Standards are accompanied by appropriate lead-in times for the implementation of the changes approved by the Management Group.

The Administrator supplies all Members, Review Panellists and Validators with up-to-date copies of the Standards and/or relevant updated pages to insert within the Standards.

8.3 Exemption Policy

The Review Panel may consider an exemption to a requirement within any SPCA Certified standard, with the understanding that the exemption is allowed only until such time that the respective Standard is reviewed and revised by the Species Advisory Committee (SAC) and Certification Body. Upon review, the exemption could be revoked or built into the Standard, depending on the outcome of the review of the current animal welfare science and evidence-based knowledge.

8.3.1 Application for an Exemption

a) In order for an exemption to be reviewed, the following information must be sent to the Certification Body in writing a minimum of 60 days prior to the proposed practice/procedure being implemented. The exemption must outline:
   ▪ Reason(s) for believing that the practice in question provides animal welfare that is equivalent to, or greater than, what the Standard currently requires. Anecdotal evidence as well as scientific background is recommended for inclusion.
   ▪ Contact information for, or letter of support from, an authority in the field (e.g. veterinarian, animal welfare scientist, fellow colleague/farmer) who would support the exemption.

b) If the exemption involves a procedure or management practice, the written proposal must include, but not be limited to, the following details:
   ▪ Where and when the procedure will be conducted
   ▪ Who will perform the procedure; level of expertise of the person must be included
   ▪ Detailed description of the procedure, including its length
   ▪ Number of animals that the procedure will be conducted on at one time
   ▪ Observations of the animals' behavioural reactions during previous use of the procedure

c) If the exemption is to involve changes to the animals' housing or environment, the written proposal must include:
   ▪ Detailed description of the proposed housing or environmental feature
   ▪ Number of animals that will be affected
   ▪ Length of time required to make the change
   ▪ Monetary cost associated with the exemption (i.e. is the exemption necessary to prevent huge capital modifications?)
Once the Applicant/Member submits the information described above, the Administrator will forward the materials to the Review Panel for review. If the requested exemption is substantial, the SPCA Certified Management Group is also sent the request for their review and decision.

Once the Review Panel and/or Management Group review the materials and come to a decision, the Administrator sends correspondence to the Applicant/Member outlining the Certification Body’s decision and appropriate next steps.

Should the Review Panel and/or Management Group choose to deny the exemption request, the Applicant/Member may submit a proposal for Standard revision to the Certification Body, which is reviewed by the Species Advisory Committee and Certification Body during the next revision of the Standard(s).

Decisions made by the Review Panel and/or Management Group regarding an exemption are final.

8.4 Certification Transition Periods

Program Members must be in compliance and utilizing SPCA Certified standards for a minimum period of time in order to apply the SPCA Certified Name and Logo to certified products, and in order for the animals to be included on the certificate of registration. The following timelines are required for each SPCA Certified standard:

a) Broiler chickens
   - Entire flock must be under the SPCA Certified standard for a full cycle, commencing at arrival to the broiler barn

b) Egg-laying chickens
   - Entire layer flock must be under the SPCA Certified standard for one month after arrival to layer barn

c) Turkeys
   - Entire flock must be under the SPCA Certified standard for a full cycle, commencing at arrival to the turkey barn

d) Dairy cattle
   - Entire dairy herd (including replacement breeding stock) must be under the SPCA Certified standard for one month
   - Pregnant cows and heifers must be under the SPCA Certified standard from the beginning of the cycle (from conception)
   - Heifer calves must be born to a SPCA Certified dairy cow and raised entirely under the SPCA standard
   - Bull calves raised for beef must be born to a SPCA Certified dairy cow and raised entirely under the SPCA Certified standards (dairy standard prior to weaning, beef standard after weaning)

e) Beef cattle
   - Entire beef herd (including new breeding stock) must be under the SPCA Certified standard for one month
   - Pregnant cows and heifers must be under the SPCA Certified standard from the beginning of the cycle (from conception)
   - Feeder cattle must be born to a SPCA Certified cow and raised entirely under the SPCA Certified standard

f) Sheep
   - Entire flock (including new breeding stock) must be under the SPCA Certified standard for one month
   - Pregnant ewes must be under the SPCA Certified standard from the beginning of the cycle (from conception)
- Feeder lambs must be born to a SPCA Certified ewe and raised entirely under the SPCA Certified standard.

g) Pigs
- Entire swine herd (including new breeding stock) must be under the SPCA Certified standard for one month.
- Pregnant sows and gilts must be under the SPCA Certified standard from the beginning of the cycle (from conception).
- Weaners, growers and finisher pigs must be born to a SPCA Certified sow and raised entirely under the SPCA Certified standard.

### 8.5 Raising of a Small Number of Animals

When an Applicant/Member raises a small number of additional animals for food, either for their own use or to sell at the farm gate or farmers’ market, the Applicant/Member will be exempt from certifying those animals to SPCA Certified standards unless they choose to do so.

Maximum number of animals allowed for exemption:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Group</th>
<th>Number of Animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy cattle</td>
<td>3 breeding cows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef cattle</td>
<td>10 breeding cows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>10 breeding ewes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>10 breeding sows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkeys</td>
<td>50 poults per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg-laying chickens</td>
<td>99 birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broiler chickens</td>
<td>200 birds per cycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regardless of the exemption, an Applicant/Member is required to submit a brief (approximately 1-2 pages) overview of the housing and management for each non-certified animal group, unless the Applicant/Member provides a certificate showing they are a member in good standing under their industry animal care assurance program* or a third-party certification program that validates animal welfare. The overview document is submitted with initial certification paperwork, and must be updated when management practices change. See Section 8.8 for further details regarding what type of information to include.

See Section 8.7 for details on how non-certified animals are assessed by the Validator.

An Applicant/Member may choose to certify small herds/flocks if s/he wishes. This section is null and void when an Applicant/Member labels any products derived from these animals as SPCA Certified.

* This requirement will be expected of Applicants/Members as industry animal care assurance programs are developed for each animal group (e.g. cattle, feather industries, sheep).

### 8.6 Parallel Production Policy

The Certification Body recognizes that changes to on-farm animal care and welfare may occur incrementally, and some Applicants raising multiple animal groups or species may not be able to fully comply with all Program Standards upon their initial application.
To maintain the integrity of the certification system with consumers and producers, and to maintain the philosophy of the Program, the Certification Body will not permit the indefinite practice of parallel production, or the parallel production of animal groups that are indistinguishable and/or untraceable.

It is the Certification Body’s goal for Applicants/Members to certify all non-certified animal groups for which SPCA Certified standards exist. Accordingly, the Certification Body will approach the Applicant/Member about bringing commercially raised, non-certified animals into the Program and will demonstrate to the Applicant/Member the benefits of certification. Interested Applicants/Members can contact the Certification Body for assistance with developing a transition plan.

See Section 8.7.1 for discussion on raising animals for commercial purposes when SPCA Certified standards do not exist.

### 8.6.1 Traceability Requirements and Parallel Production

Applicants and Members engaged in parallel production must have a plan for how products not produced under Program Standards are kept distinct from SPCA Certified products.

All animal products produced by Applicants/Members involved in parallel production must be distinguishable and fully traceable to the Validator (at the time of inspection) and distinguishable to the consumer (at the point of purchase). The Program label must be used to identify all products that are certified to the Program Standards and cannot, under any circumstance, be used on products derived from animals that were not raised under and certified to the Program Standards.

The Validator will conduct a traceability audit on the product stream, and include their findings in the Assessment report.

### 8.7 Assessment of Non-Certified Farm Animals

Upon initial and annual inspection, the Validator will view non-certified animals and include a general assessment of the animals and their housing conditions in the Validator’s report. If the Applicant/Member has multiple sites for which time and cost to view the non-certified animals is prohibitive, then the Applicant/Member will either:

a) Provide a certificate showing they are a member in good standing under their industry animal care assurance program* or a third-party certification program that validates animal welfare standards.

b) Submit a brief (approximately 1-2 pages) overview of the housing and management of the applicable animals. See Section 8.8 for further details regarding what type of information to include. This overview is submitted with initial certification paperwork, and must be updated when management practices change.

* This requirement will be expected of Applicants/Members as industry animal care assurance programs are developed for each animal group (e.g. cattle, feather industries, sheep).

### 8.7.1 When SPCA Certified Standards do not Exist

When SPCA Certified standards do not exist for one or more of the species raised on the farm, the Applicant/Member will follow reasonable and generally accepted industry practices of animal care and management. The Applicant/Member will either:
a) Provide a certificate showing they are a member in good standing under their industry animal care assurance program* or a third-party certification program that validates animal welfare standards.

b) Submit a brief (approximately 2 pages) overview of the housing and management of the applicable animals. See Section 8.8 for further details regarding what type of information to include. This overview is submitted with initial certification paperwork, and must be updated when management practices change.

* This requirement will be expected of Applicants/Members as industry animal care assurance programs are developed for each animal group (e.g. cattle, feather industries, sheep).

8.8 Standard Operating Procedures for Non-Certified Farm Animals

As per Section 8.5 and 8.7, when Applicants/Members submit a brief (1-2 pages) overview of the housing and management of each animal group that is not certified, topics that must be included are:

a) Source of animals
b) Quarantine practices used when introducing new animals onto the farm
c) Details of procedures practiced on-farm, or prior to the animals coming on-farm (e.g. age and methods used for: beak trimming, castration, dehorning, teeth trimming, etc.)
d) Health management (e.g. health monitoring, vaccinations, parasite control, lameness management)
e) Housing methods, including barn/pen dimensions and maximum stocking capacities
f) Methods of predator and nuisance animal control
g) Transportation of animals
h) Methods of on-farm euthanasia of sick and/or injured animals
i) Slaughter of animals

This document is submitted with the initial certification paperwork and must be updated when management practices change.
9.0 SPCA CERTIFIED PROGRAM PROCEDURES

9.1 Application

Membership in the SPCA Certified program is open to all agricultural groups – producers, haulers, abattoirs and processors – that are able to comply with the criteria set out in the SPCA Certified Standards for the Raising and Handling of Farm Animals and the Operations Manual.

Upon request, Applicants receive an application package containing registration forms, health plans, the biosecurity form, the Operations Manual outlining certification procedures, and the appropriate SPCA Certified standard(s). Each individual Applicant is required to complete registration forms, the biosecurity plan and the health plan(s). In the case of group certification, correspondence may be made through one group representative with the understanding that all individual members of the group are required to complete all appropriate paperwork.

Once the application package is received by the Certification Body, the Administrator reviews the contents of the forms to ensure completeness. The Administrator communicates with the Applicant any potential non-compliance(s) with the Standard(s). At this time, the Applicant can choose to proceed with the Certification Assessment, or address the non-compliances prior to Assessment. Should the Applicant choose the latter, non-compliances are to be corrected within 6 months of the discussion with the Administrator. Otherwise, the Applicant is required to re-submit the application package.

All required registration information is forwarded to a SPCA Certified program Validator once the Applicant is ready for a Certification Assessment.

See Appendix A – Fee Schedule
See Appendix B – Certification Protocol

9.1.1 Certification Assessment

Once the Validator receives an application package from the Administrator, s/he will contact the Applicant and arrange a date and time for the Certification Assessment. Should an Applicant need to postpone an Assessment, a cancellation notice must be submitted to the Validator within 14 business days in order to prevent forfeiture of the inspection fee. If the Validator must travel more than 500 km (or 5 hours) to do the Assessment, a cancellation notice of 21 business days is required.

During the Certification Assessment the Validator uses SPCA Certified Assessment checklists to verify compliance with the SPCA Certified standard(s) and policies applicable to the operation. The Validator and Applicant sign off on the Assessment checklists and Exit Interview Form (Form 1).

The Validator does not provide consultative advice regarding non-compliances and only assists the Applicant in understanding the aims and goals of the SPCA Certified standard(s) to which the Applicant is being assessed.

9.2 Certification Renewal

Once per calendar year a Validator visits a SPCA Certified Member’s farm to verify compliance with the policies and Standard(s) relevant to the operation. Members receive a notice of renewal by mail or email a minimum of two calendar months before their Annual Assessment is due.
Included with the notice of renewal are the previous year’s registration forms. The registration forms, health plans and biosecurity plans must be reviewed and updated (where necessary) within one month of receiving the notice of renewal and sent back to the Administrator. Once the paperwork is received, the Administrator verifies its completeness and forwards the information to the Validator. Only completed forms are forwarded to the Validator. The Administrator returns incomplete forms to the Member for revision.

At minimum, on-farm assessments are scheduled once per year. A Certificate of Registration is issued for the time period between assessments.

9.2.1 Certificate of Registration Extension

Should circumstances arise where the Certificate of Registration needs to be extended due to reasons not caused directly or indirectly by the Member, approval may be granted by the Review Panel to extend certification for up to six months.

It is up to the Member to notify the Certification Body, in writing, if and why an extension to the Certificate of Registration is necessary in order to avoid suspension of the Certificate of Registration or termination of the Certification Agreement.

9.2.2 Annual Assessment

Once the Validator receives the renewal package from the Administrator, s/he contacts the Member to arrange a date for the Annual Assessment. Should a Member need to postpone an Annual Assessment, a cancellation notice of 14 business days is required to prevent forfeiture of the Assessment fee. If the Validator must travel more than 500 km (or 5 hours) to do the Assessment, a cancellation notice of 21 business days is required.

During the Annual Assessment the Validator uses SPCA Certified Assessment checklists to verify compliance with the SPCA Certified standard(s) applicable to the operation. The Validator and Member sign off on the Assessment checklists and exit interview form (Form 1).

The Validator does not provide consultative advice regarding non-compliances and only assists the Member in understanding the aims and goals of the SPCA Certified standard(s) and policies to which the Member is being assessed.

9.3 Random Audit

Each calendar year, the Certification Body randomly audits 10 per cent of the SPCA Certified Members. The objective of this audit is to ensure compliance with requirements specified in the Operations Manual and applicable Standard.

Random Audits are conducted in the same manner as an Annual Assessment. The findings are reported to the Review Panel, and if non-compliance issues arise during the Random Audit, such issues are treated in the same manner as non-compliance issues arising during an Annual Assessment.

The cost of the Random Audit is included in the Annual Assessment fees.

The Validator visits Members at different times of the year in order to verify compliance with the Certification Body’s requirements under different weather/seasonal conditions.
9.4 Traceability Requirements

During a Certification Assessment, Annual Assessment or Random Audit, the Validator conducts a traceability audit. Records kept on farm must allow the Validator to easily conduct a traceability audit, following the SPCA Certified product back from the processor to the farm of origin. The SPCA Certified product must retain its status at each stage of the process. When the SPCA Certified product is not shipped in sealed, tamper proof packaging, the traceability records kept by the Applicant/Member must include paperwork up to the retailer (including butchers).

The main goals of the traceability assessment are:

a) To ensure approved farm animal welfare practices occur from the birth until the death of each individual farm animal certified under the Program.

b) To ensure Members are labelling product correctly and are keeping records to prove that due diligence is maintained from the birth of the animal until the animal (and its products) is processed and reaches retail outlets.

The following requirements must be met throughout each stage of the process:

a) Members involved in the product supply chain are required to follow the Certification Body’s Operations Manual and Standards at all times, including meeting all traceability requirements relating to farm animal welfare and human health as required by law.

b) The audit trail begins with the farm and continues through to the processor. It is the responsibility of the individual Applicant/Member to ensure their suppliers and processors maintain compliance.

c) The Validator is shown management practices that allow for product traceability. These systems are designed in a manner that satisfies all traceability requirements under the Certification Body’s Operations Manual and Standards.

d) Members must undertake internal traceability audits throughout the calendar year, and all records outlining these audits must be made available during Assessments and Random Audits.

e) All paperwork, and other methods of traceability, must contain the Member’s name and/or SPCA Certified program registration number.

f) Records of farm gate or product sales need only include total volume by product and date of sale. These records do not need to report the dollar values of the sale.

g) Members must keep invoices for labels and packaging on hand for the Validator to evaluate during their traceability assessment.

h) Paperwork must be maintained and kept on hand, at a minimum, until the next Annual Assessment by a Validator.

9.5 Certification Report

Following a Certification Assessment, Annual Assessment or Random Audit, the Validator submits the Assessment checklists, Exit Interview form, Assessment Summary form and a Certification Report to the Administrator identifying areas of compliance and non-compliance with the Standards. This must be done within 14 days of conducting the Assessment.

Certification Reports are completed by the Validator for all Assessments. The Certification Report is based on the completed Assessment checklists as well as the information and observations recorded during the Assessment.

9.5.1 Certification Recommendations

The recommendations that the Review Panel considers are as follows:
a) **Unconditional Certification**: The Applicant/Member is in compliance with all Certification Program requirements as per the Operations Manual and relevant Standard(s).

b) **Conditional Certification**: A non-compliance issue (Level I or II) was identified during an Assessment. The Applicant/Member may enter into a Certification Agreement with the Certification Body with the understanding that all non-compliance issues (including timelines) are addressed as per the Review Panel’s discretion.

c) **Conditional Certification requiring Repeat Assessment**: A non-compliance issue (Level I or II) was identified during an Assessment. The Applicant/Member may enter into a Certification Agreement with the Certification Body with the understanding that all non-compliance issues (including timelines) are addressed and a Repeat Assessment is required to verify completion of the non-compliance issue(s). All issues (including timelines) are addressed at the discretion of the Review Panel. A fee is charged for the Repeat Assessment (Appendix A – Fee Schedule). An extension to the previous Certificate of Registration will be granted, or a short-term Certificate of Registration will be issued.

d) **Repeat Assessment**: A non-compliance issue (Level I or III) was identified during a Certification Assessment. The Applicant must address all non-compliance issues and a Repeat Certification Assessment must be completed before the Review Panel will consider certification. Appropriate timelines will apply and are at the discretion of the Review Panel. A fee will be charged for the Repeat Assessment (Appendix A – Fee Schedule). A Certificate of Registration is issued once a Repeat Assessment resulting in Conditional or Unconditional Certification has taken place.

e) **Suspension**: A non-compliance issue (Level II or III) was identified on a Member’s farm during an Annual Assessment or Random Audit. The Member has failed to comply with the requirements of the Certification Program, resulting in a breach of contract between the Member and Certification Body. Periods of suspension and restoration of Certification Program status are at the discretion of the Review Panel.

f) **Cancellation**: A non-compliance issue (Level II or III) was identified during an Annual Assessment or Random Audit, resulting in a serious breach of contract between the Member and Certification Body. Restoration of Certification Program status following a cancellation of a Certificate of Registration is at the discretion of the Review Panel.

See Section 10.0 – Non-Compliance Issues for definitions of Level I, II and III

See Appendix E – Index of Non-Compliance Issues

### 9.6 Assessment Review Process

Within 14 days of receiving the documents from the Administrator, the Review Panel decides the type of certification to grant the Applicant/Member (see Section 9.5.1 Certification Recommendations), or whether certification should be withheld, suspended or cancelled. A quorum of two Review Panel members signs off on each certification decision in order for the decision to be valid and binding.

#### 9.6.1 Assessment Outcome Package

Once the Review Panel reviews the Assessment documents and submits their reports to the Administrator, the Administrator compiles an Assessment Outcome Package. The Review Panel determines how the Administrator writes the certification letter to the Applicant/Member (for example, actions required by the Applicant/Member, related deadlines). The package is based on the report from the Review Panellists and is sent to the Applicant/Member within seven business days of receiving the Review Panellists’ report. The Assessment Outcome Package contains:

a) A certification letter from the Administrator outlining the Review Panel’s certification decision.
b) If non-compliance issues were identified during the Assessment, a Form 2 – Non-Compliance Receipt is issued with the reasons for the non-compliance and corresponding timelines/deadlines for resolution.

c) A copy of the Validator’s Assessment checklist(s)

d) Certificate of Registration (if applicable)
   - The Certificate of Registration is sent to Members and Applicants who submitted a signed Certification Agreement to the Certification Body, and who were granted Unconditional Certification or Conditional Certification

e) Certification Agreement (new Applicants only)
   - A Certification Agreement is sent to new Applicants for signature. Once returned, the Certification Body sends the new Member a signed copy of the Certification Agreement and the Certificate of Registration.
   - For Applicants requiring a Repeat Assessment, a Certification Agreement will not be sent until the Repeat Assessment is completed and the file re-reviewed by the Review Panel, resulting in certification.

f) A copy of the Assessment invoice

g) A Validator Evaluation Form

Once the Applicant/Member receives the Assessment Outcome Package from the Administrator, s/he has 10 business days to point out errors written within the Validator’s checklist(s), in the Form 2 – Non-Compliance Receipt, or in the invoice. Inaccuracies must be sent to the Administrator in writing.

If an Applicant/Member wishes to appeal the certification decision made by the Certification Body, the Applicant/Member would follow the guidelines as per the Appeal Process (Section 13.1).

9.7 Invoice Payment Process

The Assessment invoice must be paid within 60 calendar days of the invoice date unless an alternative payment arrangement is agreed upon (e.g. payments made in installments over the year). Payment is made to the BC SPCA Farm Animal Welfare Department by cheque, money order or credit card. Applicants and Members who pay their invoice within 15 days of the invoice date receive a prompt pay discount of 5 per cent (5%).

At 60 days past the invoice date, a second invoice marked “Past Due” is sent to the Applicant/Member with a late invoice payment fee of 10 per cent (10%) added to the original invoice.

At 90 days past the invoice date, a letter is sent to the Applicant/Member requesting immediate payment, with a reminder that failure to pay the invoice in full, including the late payment fee, will result in a suspension (Section 10.4) or cancellation (Section 10.5) of the Applicant’s/Member’s Certificate of Registration and Certification Agreement.

At the discretion of the Certification Body, late invoice payments may require that future Assessments be paid for by the Member in advance of the Assessment occurring.

See Appendix A – Fee Schedule
See Appendix B – Certification Protocol

9.8 Repeat Assessments

A Repeat Assessment occurs when the Review Panel decides a Validator must verify completion of all non-compliance issues identified in the original Assessment. A Repeat Assessment is not a full Assessment.
See Section 9.5.1 c) and d) for further descriptions of a Repeat Assessment for Applicants and Members.

The Applicant/Member is charged for the Repeat Assessment as outlined in Appendix A: Fee Schedule.

9.9 Assessment Policy for Members Holding Unconditional Certification

The Certification Body may allow Members who receive Unconditional Certification following two consecutive Annual Assessments or Random Audits to conduct a self-audit in place of their next Annual Assessment. This policy is intended to acknowledge members who demonstrate consistent compliance to the Program Standards and policies.

9.9.1 Qualifying for a Self-Audit

In order to qualify for a self-audit, Members who received Unconditional Certification must submit the following documents at least 60 days prior to the expiry of their certificate:

a) Fully completed registration forms for all species on the farm reflecting any changes to the management and housing of animals;

b) Program checklists that provide the Certification Body with the Member’s self-audit of their compliance to Program Standards and policies. These checklists require some analysis of record sheets, including indoor temperatures, air quality and mortality rates.

c) Copies of the record sheets, as specified in the checklist. The Certification Body may also randomly request further records to determine compliance to Program Standards and policies.

d) Documentation that provides the Certification Body with evidence that the traceability requirements of the Program are being met, particularly if the Member is involved in Parallel Production.

The Review Panel reviews the submitted documents to determine if the Annual Assessment can be waived. If it determines that the Annual Assessment can be waived, the Administrator issues a Certificate of Registration valid for one year following the expiry of the previous year’s Certificate of Registration.

Appendix A outlines the Administration Fee applied to farms holding Unconditional Certification.

A Member who continues to receive Unconditional Certification on future Annual Certification Assessments will qualify for a self-audit every second year.

Members who qualify for the self-audit are still subject to the Random Audit Process.

9.9.2 Self-Audit Disqualification

In some instances, a Member may be disqualified from being permitted to conduct a self-audit. The Certification Body may not waive the requirement for Annual Assessments if one or more of the following situations apply:

a) The farm has added a new species of farm animal not formerly assessed for certification.

b) The farm has undergone a substantial change to animal management or housing.

c) The Member has received a complaint relevant to farm animal welfare or health.

d) The Member wishes to submit an application for an exemption to a Standard.

e) The Member is engaged in Parallel Production involving the same commodity, which is not easily distinguishable.
f) The member is overdue on invoices from previous assessments or for goods and services supplied by the Certification Body.

9.10 Group Certification Protocol

The Program’s requirements for Producer Groups are based on the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Accreditation Criteria for Grower Groups (Section 8.3).

Producer groups are a group of farmers that use similar practices to produce their products, market their products in common, and may utilize central processing, manufacturing and/or marketing facilities. Examples of producer groups include: a community farming group, agricultural association or certification body, co-operative or individual farms affiliated with a processor.

While groups can be assessed for certification according to the protocols outlined in the Operations Manual, in some cases it may be more feasible for the group itself to manage their certification and inspection process with oversight by the Certification Body, and in keeping with the SPCA Certified program policies.

A producer group interested in becoming certified as a group and managing its certification process must establish an Internal Control System (ICS) – a system used by the group to provide supervision of the group’s activities and compliance with Program Standards and policies. At a minimum, the ICS has multiple functions including:

a) Annually inspecting production operations
b) Monitoring record keeping and non-compliances
c) Ensuring resolution of non-compliances by appropriate deadlines
d) Traceability of animals and products

9.10.1 Internal Control System (ICS) Organization

To be considered for group certification, the group submits a plan outlining how the ICS will be organized, including the names and qualifications of the internal inspectors and any administrators responsible for providing oversight of the group’s compliance.

The ICS plan will outline how the group will:

a) Ensure all group members have read and understand the SPCA Certified Operations Manual as well as the applicable Program Standard(s).
b) Assess (inspect) all new members before including them in the producer group.
c) Perform Assessments in a manner that is rigorous enough for the Certification Body to use the resulting information to validate compliance. Assessments are conducted at least once annually.
d) Maintain records of on-farm Assessments as well as a log of any animal-welfare related complaints.
e) Appropriately address, and have mechanisms for resolving, non-compliance issues by set deadlines.
f) Have a mechanism for suspending or removing non-compliant group members.

The Certification Body will review the plan and work with the producer group to determine how their group certification will function, including the percentage of farms the Certification Body will randomly inspect in the first year, and all subsequent years, and the number of times in a year that the Certification Body will audit the group and their Internal Control System. At a minimum, the Certification Body conducts annual on-farm Assessments (i.e. inspections) on ten per cent (10%) of the group members.
This plan may be reviewed by the Certification Body from time to time, and depending on the success of the group’s ICS, revised in consultation with the group.

9.10.2 Record Keeping

For each member, the group’s administrator is responsible for maintaining the minimum following records for both internal use, as well as for review by the Certification Body:

a) Up-to-date production and management forms that include maps of the farm and animal housing.
b) Assessment checklists from all on-farm inspections. Checklists will include name of inspector and those from the farm present during the Assessment.
c) Non-compliance records with clear timelines for correction and paperwork documenting that full compliance was achieved within those timelines.
d) Evidence that group members were given applicable Program Standards and policies.
e) Signed Agreements between the group’s management body and members.
f) Paperwork that traces the animal from the farm through to the slaughter and processing facilities. Facility paperwork will allow verification of animal separation from lairage through to the final packaging of product.
g) A complete list of group members and corresponding dates upon which their Certificates of Registration expire. This list must be updated at least once annually, or within 30 calendar days of a member joining or exiting the group.

The producer group may use the forms created by the Certification Body (excluding the Certification Agreement and Certificate of Registration), or it may develop its own forms provided all internal documents outline the necessary information to validate compliance.

9.10.3 Certification Agreement

The group’s management and the Certification Body sign an agreement specifying the responsibilities of the group, its ICS and the Certification Body. Individual group members sign an agreement with the group’s management. The group is expected to develop their own agreement with individual members outlining the obligations of all group members to comply with the Standards and permit inspections.

The group receives a Certificate of Registration with an appended list of certified group members. When individual farms are certified under the group certification protocol, the individual farm may not market or offer for sale SPCA Certified products outside of the group’s certification unless they sign an individual Certification Agreement with the Certification Body and receive an individual Certificate of Registration from the Certification Body.

9.10.4 Audit and Review

It is the responsibility of the administrator to ensure that copies of all group members’ documents are available for the ICS audit. Failure to fulfill this requirement could jeopardize the certification of the entire producer group.

An independent Validator is chosen by the Certification Body to conduct the ICS audit. The Validator will determine whether:

a) All internal control documentation is in place
b) Internal Assessments of all group members are carried out annually, and to the same Standards applied to individual on-farm Assessments overseen by the Certification Body
c) New group members are only included after initial, internal inspection
d) The ICS has dealt with all non-compliance issues appropriately, and in a timely manner

9.10.5 Certification of Group Members

When a new group member becomes certified, when a group member withdraws from the Program, or in the instance that the group’s management suspends or cancels the certification of one of their member farms, the group membership list provided to the Certification Body must be updated and re-submitted. This must occur within 30 calendar days of any new Member’s certification, or any existing Member’s suspension, cancellation or withdrawal from the Program.

While the group’s management has the authority to suspend or cancel certification of individual group members within the group, the Certification Body can also suspend or cancel certification of individual group members or the entire group following an ICS audit or on-farm inspection done by the Certification Body. Should a group member or the group itself have their certification suspended or cancelled, the Certification Body’s policies relating to suspension (Section 10.4) or cancellation (Section 10.5) apply.

If an individual group member’s certification is suspended or cancelled by the Certification Body, it is up to the group to decide if the individual member should remain part of the group, or if their membership in the group should also be suspended or cancelled. A decision regarding the individual's membership in the group must be communicated to the Certification Body.

It is the responsibility of the group's management, when appropriate, to assist suspended and decertified members with coming back into compliance with SPCA Certified program standards. Should the group decide to allow the individual member to remain part of the group despite suspension or cancellation of their membership in the SPCA Certified program, it is the responsibility of the group’s management to ensure traceability of the individual member’s non-certified animals and products to maintain the group’s ICS system.

9.10.6 Group Members Raising Multiple Animal Groups

Producer group members who raise other farm animals not marketed by the group, but for which the Program has Standards, must comply with the policies outlined in this Manual.

See:

a) Section 8.5 – Raising of a Small Number of Animals
b) Section 8.6 – Traceability Requirements and Parallel Production Policy

The group may conduct Annual Assessments of other farm animals not marketed by the group if it has the capacity and expertise required to validate compliance with the Program Standards written for other species. If it does not, the Certification Body will assess these farm animals for compliance with the Program’s Standards and policies. Regular Program fees will apply and are charged to the group over and above the group certification fees.

9.11 Joint SPCA Certified/Organic Certification Body Assessments

The SPCA Certified program works with organic Certification Bodies to carry out a combined (joint) on-farm Assessment for the two certification programs: SPCA Certified and Canada Organic Regime. The SPCA Certified program has entered into memorandums of understanding (MOU) with several organic Certification Bodies across Canada, allowing for joint Assessments to take place at a reduced fee.
Interested parties are to contact the SPCA Certified program Administrator for details regarding the joint Assessment process and applicable fee schedule.

Applicants/Members who are certified with organic Certification Bodies for which a MOU has not yet been developed are encouraged to contact both the SPCA Certified program Administrator and the Administrator of their organic Certification Body to express interest in joint Assessments. The SPCA Certified program is willing to work with any organic Certification Body to develop a MOU and set up a joint Assessment process.

Joint SPCA Certified/organic Certification Body Assessments require co-ordination on the part of the organic Certification Body, SPCA Certified program and the Applicant/Member. It is not a guarantee that a joint Assessment can take place every year due to changes in farm operations, Validator availability and shared communication between all parties. Applicants/Members are encouraged to discuss their preference for a combined Assessment with their organic Certification Body to avoid unnecessary disappointment.
10.0 NON-COMPLIANCE ISSUES

10.1 Non-Compliance

Members are required to correct issues of non-compliance, and fill out and submit the Form 2 – Non-Compliance Receipt (Appendix D) along with other supporting documents (original receipts, copies of records) indicating that corrective action was taken.

Incidences of non-compliance are determined by the Review Panel, which has the authority to decide upon the following:

a) The time allotted for the Applicant/Member to comply with the requirements of the SPCA Certified program. The timeframe could be as short as 30 days to a maximum of one year, based upon the degree to which the non-compliance issue affects animal welfare and/or human health.

b) Whether the return of a completed Form 2 and the supporting documents satisfy the requirements.

c) Whether the Validator will return to the site and do a Repeat Assessment.

d) Whether the site warrants more frequent visits.

e) Whether non-compliance issues warrant suspension or cancellation of the Member’s Certificate of Registration and termination of the Certification Agreement.

10.2 Levels of Non-Compliance

a) Level I – Non-Compliance issue not previously identified by a Validator during a prior Certification Assessment, Annual Assessment or Random Audit, with the exception of non-compliance issues that fall under the definition of Level III Non-Compliance (see below).

b) Level II – Non-Compliance issue(s) as identified in a previous Assessment or Random Audit is found to still exist during a subsequent visit by a Validator.
   - If a Level II arises during an Assessment, the terms of contract relating to the use of the SPCA Certified Name and Logo are considered to have been broken. The Review Panel may consider suspending or cancelling the Member’s use of the SPCA Certified Name and Logo. Periods of suspension are at the discretion of the Review Panel.

c) Level III – Non-Compliance identified, resulting in the failure to satisfy SPCA Certified program requirements relating to farm animal welfare, human health or product status as set out by the Certification Body.
   - This is considered a serious breach of contract between the Certification Body and the Member as such non-compliance issues jeopardize the SPCA Certified program’s credibility. The Review Panel will suspend the Member’s Certificate of Registration and their use of the SPCA Certified Name and Logo, with the length of suspension at the discretion of the Review Panel.
   - Under such circumstances the Review Panel may also, at its discretion, cancel the Member’s Certificate of Registration, Certification Agreement and their use of the SPCA Certified Name and Logo.

See Appendix E – Index of Non-Compliance Issues

10.3 Timeframes for Levels of Non-Compliance

The timeframes for addressing issues of non-compliance could be as short as 30 days to a maximum of one year, based upon the degree to which the non-compliance issue affects animal welfare and/or human health. More specific guidelines are as follows:
a) **Certification Assessment** – At the discretion of the Review Panel, the Applicant has a minimum of 30 days to a maximum of 12 months (one year) to submit the completed non-compliance report with original receipts or they will be required to re-submit registration forms and the application fee.

b) **Annual Assessment** – At the discretion of the Review Panel, the Member is required to submit the completed non-compliance report with original receipts to the Certification Body within 30 days to a maximum of 12 months (one year) of the Assessment. The timeframe permitted is based upon the degree to which the non-compliance issue affects animal welfare and/or human health. Failure to report within the timeframe specified could result in suspension and/or cancellation, depending on the urgency for addressing the non-compliance issue(s).

### 10.4 Suspension of a Certificate of Registration

Any Member who fails to comply with the requirements of the SPCA Certified program standards or Operations Manual jeopardizes their certification status. At the Management Group or Review Panel’s discretion, a Member’s Certificate of Registration may be suspended. Members are informed of such decisions in writing. Upon suspension, all fees owing to the Certification Body are immediately due (cheques made payable to the BC SPCA Farm Animal Welfare Department).

Reasons for suspension of a Certificate of Registration may include:

a) The repeated non-completion of Form 2 requirements (Level II non-compliance) when they were previously listed as non-compliance issues during prior Assessments.

b) A Level III non-compliance issue arises during an Assessment.

c) Application of the SPCA Certified Name and logo to products that do not comply with the Operations Manual and relevant Standards.

d) Non-compliance with Operations Manual policies.

e) Unpaid Assessment invoice (whole or partial) owed to the Certification Body. See Section 9.7 for further details regarding the invoice payment process.

A suspension cannot be given if a Member chooses to withdraw their Certificate of Registration due to:

a) Review Panel requirements for resolving a new non-compliance issue that is a Level I and not related to animal welfare

b) Revisions to Program Standards or Operations Manual policies by which the Member does not agree.

In the event of the suspension of a Certificate of Registration:

a) All labels and signage depicting the SPCA Certified Name and logo must not be used or displayed for the duration of the suspension.

b) The Certification Body updates the SPCA Certified membership list indicating that the Member has been suspended.

c) The Certification Body informs the Member’s Marketing Board or Commission that the Member was suspended. If applicable, the Certification Body will notify the Member’s organic certification organization.

d) The Member communicates their discontinued certification in the Program to all relevant parties who do business with the Member based on SPCA Certified membership. The Certification Body will be copied on the communication document.

e) The suspended Member complies with meeting non-compliance issues relating to the welfare of the animals’ in the Member’s care. See below for further details. See Section 10.4.2 – Animal Welfare Concerns Relating to a Suspension for further details.
Non-compliance Issues

Restoration of Program status following a suspension of a Certificate of Registration is at the discretion of the Management Group or Review Panel, and will not be considered until all issues of non-compliance are resolved, and all criteria for the SPCA Certified program are met in full.

10.4.1 Addressing Suspension Requirements

Within the Assessment letter sent to the Member, the Review Panel outlines the timeframe for addressing non-compliance issues relating to the suspension. These non-compliance issues must be resolved within the timelines stipulated by the Review Panel.

The Member may be required to undergo a Repeat Assessment by a Validator, a visit by a veterinarian or a visit by another relevant agricultural expert in order for the Certification Body to assess the Member’s progress toward resolving the non-compliance issues.

The cost of further Assessments by a Validator, veterinary visits, and/or the support of agriculture experts to rectify the non-compliance issues are at the expense of the Member.

10.4.2 Animal Welfare Concerns Relating to a Suspension

A suspended Member may choose to withdraw their participation in the SPCA Certified program (see Section 10.6), but non-compliance issues relating to the welfare of the animals in the Member’s care must be resolved regardless of formal participation in the SPCA Certified program.

Within the Assessment letter sent to the Member, the Review Panel outlines the timeframe for addressing any non-compliance issues relating to animal welfare. In the event the Member withdraws from the Program, the Certification Body may still ask the Member to agree to a Repeat Assessment by a Validator, a veterinarian and/or another agricultural expert in order to assess the Member’s resolution of non-compliances related to animal welfare issues. The Certification Body covers the cost of the first Repeat Assessment, and communicates the results to the Member in writing. The cost of further Assessments by a Validator, veterinarian, and/or visits or support from agriculture experts or any other professional to rectify the non-compliances is at the expense of the Member.

During the Repeat Assessment(s), the Validator and/or veterinarian and/or agricultural expert assesses whether the animal welfare issues were resolved. The Certification Body may request that the veterinarian or agriculture expert be an independent, third-party participant in the Assessment. This is to assure both the Member and the Certification Body that resolution of the non-compliance issues was assessed in an unbiased, transparent manner.

10.5 Cancellation of a Certificate of Registration

The Management Group or Review Panel may terminate a Member’s Certification Agreement, and cancel a Certificate of Registration, due to the following:

a) Unpaid Assessment invoice (whole or partial) owed to the Certification Body. See Section 9.7 for further details regarding the invoice payment process.

   ▪ Should the Member be facing financial difficulties, the Certification Body can, at its discretion, extend the deadline for receiving fees. This must be communicated immediately in order to avoid cancellation.

b) The Certification Body mailed a written notice requesting the SPCA Certified program Member to remedy all breaches of contract, but the Member failed to reply to or address the Certification Body’s written request within 10 business days of receiving the written notice.
c) The SPCA Certified program Member’s assets were appointed to a receiver, or were assigned to another party due to bankruptcy or insolvency.

d) The SPCA Certified program Member sells their farm, either intentionally or due to a forced sale (court ordered, foreclosure).

e) Application of the SPCA Certified Name and logo to products that do not comply with the Operations Manual and relevant Standards.

f) A breach of requirements outlined in the Operations Manual and/or relevant Standard.

g) The repeated non-completion of Form 2 requirements (Level II non-compliance) when they were previously listed as non-compliance issues during prior Assessments.

h) A Level III non-compliance issue arises during an Assessment.

Members are given cancellation notice in writing. In any of the above cases, all fees owing to the Certification Body as per the Operations Manual are immediately due (cheques made payable to the BC SPCA Farm Animal Welfare Department).

A cancellation cannot be given if a Member chooses to withdraw their Certificate of Registration due to:

a) Review Panel requirements for resolving a new Level I non-compliance issue that is not related to animal welfare.

b) Revisions to Program Standards or Operations Manual policies by which the Member does not agree.

In the event of the cancellation of a Certificate of Registration and termination of a Certification Agreement:

a) All labels and signage depicting the SPCA Certified Name and logo must be returned to the Certification Body unless it can be proven to the satisfaction of the Certification Body that all such materials were destroyed.

b) The Certification Body updates the SPCA Certified membership list indicating that the Member’s Certificate of Registration is cancelled and their Certification Agreement terminated.

c) The Certification Body informs the Member’s Marketing Board or Commission that the Member’s Certificate of Registration is cancelled. If applicable, the Certification Body notifies the Member’s organic certification organization.

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d) The Member communicates their discontinued certification in the Program to all relevant parties who do business with the Member based on SPCA Certified membership. The Certification Body is copied on the communication documents.

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e) The Member complies with meeting non-compliance issues relating to the welfare of the animals’ in the Member’s care. See Section 10.5.1 – Animal Welfare Concerns Relating to a Cancellation for further details.

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Restoration of SPCA Certified program status following the cancellation of a Certificate of Registration is at the discretion of the Management Group or Review Panel and will not be considered until all issues of non-compliance are resolved and all criteria for the SPCA Certified program are met in full.

The cost of further Assessments by a Validator, veterinary visits, and/or the support of agriculture experts to rectify the non-compliance issues are at the expense of the Member.

**10.5.1 Animal Welfare Concerns Relating to a Cancellation**

A Member may choose to withdraw their participation in the SPCA Certified program at any time (see Section 10.6), but non-compliance issues relating to the welfare of the animals in the Member’s care must be resolved regardless of formal participation in the SPCA Certified program.
Within the Assessment letter sent to the Member, the Review Panel outlines the timeframe for addressing non-compliance issues relating to animal welfare. Even though the Member no longer participates in the Program, the Certification Body may still ask the Member to agree to a Repeat Assessment by a Validator, a veterinarian and/or another agricultural expert in order to assess the Member’s resolution of non-compliances related to animal welfare issues. The Certification Body covers the cost of the first Repeat Assessment, and will communicate the results to the Member in writing. The cost of further Assessments by a Validator, veterinarian, and/or visits or support from agriculture experts or any other professional to rectify the non-compliances is at the expense of the Member.

During the Repeat Assessment(s), the Validator and/or veterinarian and/or agricultural expert assesses whether the animal welfare issues were resolved. The Certification Body may request that the veterinarian or agriculture expert be an independent, third-party participant in the Assessment. This is to assure both the Member and the Certification Body that resolution of the non-compliance issues are assessed in an unbiased, transparent manner.

10.6 Withdrawal of a Certificate of Registration

A SPCA certified program Member may at any time, and without cause, terminate their Certification Agreement with the Certification Body. The Member submits a Notice of Termination in writing, providing the Certification Body with 60 days termination notice. The Notice of Termination becomes effective upon the expiration of the 60 days. All fees owing to the Certification Body as per the Operations Manual must be paid in full. See Section 9.7 for further details regarding payment processes.

In the event a Member terminates their Certificate of Registration, the following will occur:

a) The Member stops using all labels and signage depicting the SPCA Certified Name and logo.
b) The Member returns their Certificate of Registration, if it has not expired.
c) The Certification Body updates the SPCA certified membership list to reflect that the Member’s Certificate of Registration has been withdrawn and the Certification Agreement terminated.
d) The Certification Body informs the Member’s Marketing Board or Commission that the Member is no longer in the SPCA certified program. If applicable, the Certification Body notifies the Member’s organic certification organization.
e) The Member communicates their discontinued certification in the Program to all relevant parties who do business with the Member based on SPCA certified membership. The Certification Body is copied on the communication documents.

10.7 Reapplication for a Certificate of Registration

Members who wish to re-enter the SPCA certified Program after withdrawal or cancellation of their Certificate of Registration are required to re-apply. To be eligible for Assessment, re-applicants must:

a) Update and resubmit all registration forms, including health plans and the biosecurity plan.
b) Submit the Assessment fee with their application.
c) Provide proof or confirmation that all issues of non-compliance were resolved to the satisfaction of the Management Group and/or the Review Panel (if applicable).
11.0 MAINTENANCE OF THE SPCA CERTIFIED MEMBER LIST

The Certification Body maintains an up-to-date list of all SPCA Certified Members granted certification and holding a valid Certificate of Registration.

Upon request, the SPCA Certified member list is sent via regular communication methods (e.g. mail, fax or email) to interested parties during regular business hours. Queries over the telephone regarding a SPCA Certified member are answered during regular business hours.
12.0 LICENSE TO USE THE SPCA CERTIFIED NAME AND LOGO

The Certification Program grants Members the right to use the SPCA Certified Name and logo in accordance with the Certification Agreement and Operations Manual. Members of the SPCA Certified program are required to follow all provincial and federal regulations as they relate to label requirements for food packages.

12.1 Supply of Materials

The Certification Body supplies all Members with up-to-date print and web ready artwork of the SPCA Certified Name and logo.

Prior to the final development and printing of packages and materials containing the SPCA Certified Name and logo, Members submit samples of the packages or materials for approval by the Certification Body.

12.2 Verification of Materials Used

Members must keep invoices for labels and packaging on hand for the Validator to evaluate during their traceability assessment.

12.3 Changes to the Requirement for Use of the SPCA Certified Name and Logo

All SPCA Certified Members are notified, in writing, of any changes to the SPCA Certified Name and logo, and are given 30 days in which to respond and appeal the changes. Changes to the SPCA Certified Name and logo are accompanied by reasonable phase-in times for the implementation of the changes.

Despite the aforementioned paragraph, in the event that the Certification Body is required by law to make changes or cease use of the SPCA Certified Name and logo, Members are required to immediately change or discontinue their use of the Name and logo as is outlined in the Certification Agreement. A copy of the legal order will be provided to Members.

12.4 Misuse of the SPCA Certified Name and Logo

Application of the SPCA Certified Name and logo to products that do not comply with the Operations Manual and relevant Standards, or to operations that have not entered into a Certification Agreement, nor have been issued a Certificate of Registration, will be subject to immediate action from the SPCA Certified program and possible legal action by the BC SPCA.

12.5 Specific Guidelines for Food Product Labelling

The Fair Labelling Practices Program of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) consented to the guidelines of this section for use of the SPCA Certified Name and logo on food products.

Members of the SPCA Certified program must use the statements below together with the SPCA Certified program logo on certified food products in order to comply with CFIA requirements for SPCA Certified product labelling. Members who alter or omit these statements or the logo do so at the risk that the CFIA will decline the product label or issue a product recall – the CFIA has the final approval on all product labels. The Certification Body is available for guidance and assistance in creating labelling for product packaging.
When sold in bulk or sold unpackaged (e.g. in butcher stores), all products must be accompanied with the logo, website URL, Main Claim and Explanatory Statement written in a manner visible to consumers, and which allows the SPCA Certified product to be easily distinguished from other products sold within the vicinity.

12.5.1 Logo

12.5.2 Main Claim

| Certified adherence to BC SPCA farm animal welfare standards |

The Main Claim would appear with the logo, but does not have to be located on the same area of the food package as the logo if it is linked to the logo with an asterisk and “See bottom” or “See Inside”.

12.5.3 Explanatory Statement

| Company X has paid for inspection by the BC SPCA and has been certified to meet their standards of farm animal welfare. The BC SPCA’s standards differ from the code published by the Canadian AGRI-Food Research Council’s codes in housing, space allotment, and transportation practices. More information available: www.spca.bc.ca/farm and 1-800-665-1868. |

The Explanatory Statement does not have to be located on the same area of the food package as the SPCA Certified logo if it is linked to the logo with an asterisk and “See bottom” or “See Inside”.

Thus, the Explanatory Statement can:

a) Appear with The Logo and Main Claim
b) Be linked to the Logo and Main Claim with an asterisk, and be located elsewhere on the food package
c) Be linked to the Logo with an asterisk, and be located with the Main Claim elsewhere on the food package

12.5.4 SPCA Certified Product Stickers

Program Members have the option of purchasing SPCA Certified product label stickers from the Certification Body for a nominal fee. Stickers include the logo and both statements and measure 5cm x 2.5cm (2 inches x 1 inch).
12.6 Farm Signs

Should a Member wish to display a SPCA Certified farm sign on site, whether at the farm gate; on barns; on company trucks; on banners at events like farmers' markets; etc., the sign must include the Program logo (Section 12.5.1). The following additional materials are recommended, but are not required:

- Website URL (www.spcacertified.ca)
- Main Claim (Section 12.5.2)
- Explanatory Statement (Section 12.5.3)

Farm-gate signs must state which animals or products are SPCA Certified to prevent consumer confusion on farms that practice parallel production and/or raise a small number of farm animals that are not SPCA Certified.

It is the Program Member’s responsibility to make sure that the logo and any accompanying statements or URL’s on the sign are correct prior to making the purchase. It is recommended that Members submit draft signage to the Certification Body for review prior to purchasing the sign.

The SPCA Certified logo is on file with various local sign manufacturing companies – please contact the Certification Body for details. Alternatively, a Member may do business with a sign manufacturing company of their choosing; however, the Certification Body must verify the layout of the sign and dimensions of the logo before it is made.

12.7 Promotional Materials

Members may purchase 9" x 4" promotional rack cards from the Certification Body for a nominal fee. Alternatively, should a Member wish to create promotional materials featuring the SPCA Certified program, such as brochures, table top signs (e.g. for display at farmers’ markets), informational rack cards, etc., the materials must include the following:

- Logo (Section 12.5.1)
- Website URL (www.spcacertified.ca)

The following additional items are recommended, but are not required:

- Main Claim (Section 12.5.2)
- Explanatory Statement (Section 12.5.3) – Members are encouraged to work this statement into the text of the promotional item

It is the Member’s responsibility to make sure that the logo and any accompanying statements or URL’s on promotional materials are correct. It is recommended that Members submit drafts to the Certification Body for review prior to purchasing/printing the materials.

12.8 Member Websites

Members are encouraged to place the SPCA Certified logo (Section 12.5.1) on their website. The logo can appear as an active link to www.spcacertified.ca, or can be accompanied by the web address immediately beneath the logo (or both).

Members are also encouraged to make use of the Main Claim (Section 12.5.2) and Explanatory Statement (Section 12.5.3) on their website, although use of these statements is not required.
13.0 APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

13.1 Appeals

13.1.1 Appeal Costs and Procedures

The Certification Body does not charge a fee to make an appeal. Expenses incurred to appeal a Certification Body decision are the responsibility of the Appellant.

For each of the below three appeal processes, the Administrator compiles an appeal package consisting of the Member’s written appeal and all documents relating to the appeal. The package is sent to the Appeal Panel members and the Appellant. The review period for the documents is 15 business days, commencing from the time the package is sent by the Administrator.

The Administrator schedules the meeting of the Appeal Panel. A quorum of three members from the Appeal Panel is necessary to conduct a meeting. After reviewing the appeal package, the Appeal Panel votes on the outcome of the appeal. A majority vote denotes the final decision of the panel’s members. The Appeal Panel’s decision is documented and sent in writing to the Appellant.

Decisions made by the Appeal Panel are final.

13.1.2 Appeals Related to the Certificate of Registration

In the event that the Certification Body does not grant, suspends or cancels a Certificate of Registration, the Applicant or Member in question has the right to appeal the judgment within 30 days of receiving the Certification Body’s decision in writing. All appeals must be made in writing, and submitted to the Administrator for consideration by the Appeal Panel.

13.1.3 Appeals Related to Operations Manual and Standard Amendments

Members are encouraged to participate in the review process when proposed drafts of the Operations Manual and/or Standards are circulated so they may voice concerns and opinions on proposed amendments prior to finalization and approval of the draft by the Management Group.

Appellants to proposed Operations Manual and Standard amendments can send written submissions to the Certification Body outlining their reasons for disagreeing with the amendments. Submissions must be sent to the Administrator within 30 days of receiving the notification of changes. Absence of response or failure to appeal within the 30 day timeframe is accepted by the Certification Body as Member agreement with, and approval of, the proposed changes.

13.1.4 Appeals Related to SPCA Certified Name and Logo Changes

Appellants to proposed SPCA Certified Name and logo changes can send written submissions to the Certification Body outlining their reasons for disagreeing with the amendments. Submissions must be sent to the Administrator within 30 days of receiving the notification of changes. Absence of response or failure to appeal within the 30 day timeframe is accepted by the Certification Body as Member agreement with, and approval of, the proposed changes.
13.2 Complaints

13.2.1 Complaints Related to the Certification Body

All complaints must be submitted to the Administrator in writing for the investigation processes listed in this section to occur. When a written complaint is received by the Administrator, the following occurs:

a) The Administrator responds to the complainant in writing within seven business days, stating that the complaint was received and the process of investigation has begun.
b) The Administrator gathers information on the complaint to determine the nature of the complaint.
c) The Administrator investigates the complaint.
d) The Administrator submits all information related to the complaint and the investigation findings to the SPCA Certified Management Group and/or Review Panel for review.
e) The SPCA Certified Management Group and/or Review Panel review all materials in relation to the complaint and decide on the appropriate action required of the Certification Body.
f) The Administrator sends a written response to all parties involved in the complaint within seven business days of receiving the decision from the SPCA Certified Management Group and/or Review Panel.

g) The SPCA Certified Management Group and/or Review Panel review all materials in relation to the complaint and decide on the appropriate action required of the Member.

13.2.2 Complaints Related to SPCA Certified Program Products

All Members of the SPCA Certified program are responsible for complying with the Operations Manual and relevant Standard(s), as well as regional by-laws, Federal or Provincial statutes and Federal Codes of Practice.

Members are responsible for addressing product complaints and any legal action arising from non-compliance with Federal and Provincial statutes. Complaints received by the Certification Body are forwarded to the Member for follow-up. All records of complaints and actions taken are kept for Validators to review during Assessments and Random Audits. Copies of such complaints and actions taken are forwarded for the Certification Body to keep on file.

13.2.3 Complaints Related to SPCA Certified Members

All complaints must be submitted to the Administrator in writing for the investigation processes listed in this section to occur. When a written complaint is received by the Administrator, the following will occur:

a) The Administrator responds to the complainant in writing within seven business days, stating that the complaint was received and the process of investigation has begun.
b) The Administrator gathers information on the complaint to determine the nature of the complaint.
c) The Administrator investigates the complaint.
d) The Administrator submits all information related to the complaint and the investigation findings to the SPCA Certified Management Group and/or Review Panel for review.
e) The SPCA Certified Management Group and/or Review Panel review all materials in relation to the complaint and decide on the appropriate action required of the Member.
f) The Administrator sends a written response to all parties involved in the complaint within seven business days of receiving the decision from the SPCA Certified Management Group and/or Review Panel.
g) The Administrator contacts the Member to discuss the complaint and next steps in investigating the complaint. Steps may include, but are not limited to:
   - Paperwork submission
   - On-site assessment by a Validator*
   - On-site assessment by an independent, third-party veterinarian or other agricultural expert*
- Investigation by a BC SPCA Cruelty Investigations Officer (under extreme conditions)**

* Fees associated with visits or consults from a Validator, veterinarian or other agricultural expert in order to resolve the issues surrounding the compliant are the responsibility of the Member, and are billed to the Member.

** Complaints received by the Certification Body that indicate a contravention of the Provincial Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act or the Federal Criminal Code must be forwarded to the BC SPCA Cruelty Investigations Department. The Certification Body has no authority in these investigations; as such Cruelty Investigation Department’s rules and procedures apply.
APPENDIX A: FEE SCHEDULE

The applicable sales tax (HST, PST or GST, depending on Province of residence) is added to all Assessment fees, including Repeat Assessments. These fees are subject to change with due notice from the Certification Body.

The Assessment invoice must be paid within 60 calendar days of the invoice date unless an alternative payment arrangement is agreed upon (e.g. payments made in installments over the year). Payment is made to the BC SPCA Farm Animal Welfare Department by cheque, money order or credit card.

See Section 9.7 Invoice Payment Process for further details, and discussion regarding prompt invoice payment and late invoice payments.

A.1 Certification and Annual Assessment Fees

Assessment fees are charged on an annual basis. Please contact the SPCA Certified program Administrator to discuss applicable Certification and Annual Assessment fees.

A.2 Repeat Assessment Fees

The SPCA Certified program Applicant/Member is required to pay for the cost to repeat the assessment process. The Certification or Annual Assessment fee applies.

A.3 Unconditional Certification Fees

Farms granted Unconditional Certification for two consecutive years are given permission to waive the Annual Assessment and related fee in the third year. Such farms pay only the Administration and File Review Fee.

A.4 Group Certification Fees

A group certification fee schedule is available to producer groups wishing to participate in the group certification protocol, as detailed in Section 9.10 of the Operations Manual. Interested parties are to contact the SPCA Certified program Administrator for details regarding the group certification process and the applicable fee schedule.

A.5 Joint SPCA Certified/Organic Certification Body Assessment Fees

A reduced fee schedule is available to Applicants/Members certified by an organic Certification Body that has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SPCA Certified program for joint (combined) Assessments. Interested parties are to contact the SPCA Certified program Administrator for the applicable fee schedule. See Section 9.11 for additional detail on joint Assessments.
**APPENDIX B: CERTIFICATION PROTOCOL**

**New Applicants**
- Initial enquiries by Applicant received by telephone, fax, email, or written letter.
- Administrator sends an application package containing all details of the Certification Program, including relevant Standards, the Operations Manual, and corresponding registration forms, biosecurity plan and health plans.
- Applicant submits completed forms.
- Administrator verifies completion of information and forwards package to Validator.

**Members**
- Members receive Notice of Certification Renewal.
- Member sends in re-application forms.
- Administrator verifies completion of information and forwards package to Validator.

**Certification and Annual Assessments**
- Validator contacts Applicant/Member and arranges date and time of Assessment Visit (see Section 9.0 – SPCA Certified Program Procedures for complete details).
- Validator conducts Assessment.
- Non-compliance issues are identified by the Validator for the Applicant/Member.
- Validator and Applicant/Member sign off on Farm Assessment Checklists and Exit Interview Form (Form 1)
- Certification report and checklists submitted to Review Panel.

**No Non-Compliance Issues Identified**
- Validator submits Assessment checklists, Assessment Summary sheet, Exit Interview (Form 1) and Certification Report to the Administrator. This information is sent to the Review Panel.
- Upon review of these documents, the Review Panel indicates how the Administrator should proceed with the certification letter to the Applicant/Member.

**Issues of Non-Compliance Identified**
- Validator discusses the Exit Interview (Form 1) with the Applicant/Member.
- Validator submits Assessment checklists, Assessment Summary sheet, Exit Interview Form and Certification Report to the Administrator. This information is sent to the Review Panel.
- Upon review of these documents, the Review Panel issues a Form 2 Non-Compliance Receipt and resulting requirements and timelines. Depending on the severity of the non-compliance issue(s), the Review Panel may require a Repeat Assessment (see Section 9.8 – Repeat Assessment and Section 10.0 – Non-Compliance Issues).
### Assessment Outcome Package

- Written confirmation of the Review Panel’s decision is issued to Applicant/Member within 7 business days of receiving the Review Panellists’ reports.
- The Administrator compiles the Assessment Outcome Package based on the Review Panel’s decisions and sends it to the Applicant/Member.
- **New Applicants:** The Assessment Outcome Package includes the Certification Agreement, copies of the Validator’s Assessment Checklist(s), a Validator Evaluation form and a copy of the Assessment invoice. The Certificate of Registration is to follow receipt of the signed Certification Agreement.
- **Members:** The Assessment Outcome Package includes the Certificate of Registration, the Validator’s Assessment Checklist(s), a Validator Evaluation form and a copy of the Assessment invoice.
- The Applicant/Member receives a copy of the Form 2 – Non-Compliance Receipt in the Assessment Outcome Package if non-compliance issues were identified during the Assessment.
- The Assessment Outcome Package will not include a Certification Agreement or Certificate of Registration if a Repeat Assessment is required.

### Total Compliance

- **Once per calendar year,** Validators visit Members to verify compliance with the Program criteria unless a farm holding Unconditional Certification is granted permission to conduct a Self-Audit in place of one Annual Assessment.

See Section 9.9 – Assessment Policy for Farms Holding Unconditional Certification

### Conditional Certification

- The Applicant/Member corrects issues of non-compliance, completes the Form 2, and submits the Form 2 with all relevant original receipts and records to verify action was taken.

**Once per calendar year,** Validators will visit Members to verify compliance with Program criteria.

### Repeat Assessment

- The Applicant/Member corrects issues of non-compliance, completes Form 2, and submits the Form 2 with all relevant original receipts and records to verify action was taken.
- The Administrator and Applicant/Member arrange for a Repeat Certification Assessment (Applicants) or Repeat Assessment (Members).

**Once per calendar year,** Validators visit Members to verify compliance with Program criteria.

See Section 10.0 – Non-Compliance Issues and Appendix E – Index of Non-Compliance Issues
APPENDIX C: FORM 1 EXIT INTERVIEW

Farm Name: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Farm representative present for interview: ____________________________ Validator Name: ____________________________

Summary of inspection findings, issues of concern, non-compliances and any additional information requested.

By signing below, I, the Member/Applicant, acknowledge that I have reviewed the above Exit Interview items presented to me by the Validator. I understand that these Exit Interview items will be presented to the Certification Body with the full Inspection Report.

Member/Applicant: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

By signing below, I, the Validator, attest that the above Exit Interview items are a result of my observations during on-site inspection and/or paperwork review of the above Inspected Operation.

Validator Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Form 2
Non-compliance receipt

The applicant/member, [ABC] Farm, has been assessed for compliance with the SPCA Certified program. The Review Panel has reviewed the registration documents and the assessment materials submitted by the Validator. Based on this information, the certification decision is as follows:

☐ Unconditional Certification
☐ Conditional Certification
☐ Conditional Certification and Repeat Assessment
☐ Requires a Repeat Certification Assessment
☐ Suspension
☐ Cancellation

The following receipt identifies issues of non-compliance noted by the Review Panel during review of the Assessment documents. Applicants/members are required to submit a signed and initialled (where indicated) copy of this form with all original, relevant records and receipts to verify completion of corrective action.

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UPON COMPLETION OF THE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS:

I hereby acknowledge that the above action items have been resolved in full and that all attachments and information provided on this receipt is accurate.

Date: _______________________

Applicant/Member Signature: __________________________
**Office Use Only:**

Received by SPCA Certified program. The SPCA Certified Applicant/Member has satisfied the certification requirements as set out by the Review Panel:

Date: ________________________

Administrator Signature:
APPENDIX E: INDEX OF NON-COMPLIANCE ISSUES

The following lists of non-compliance issues are extensive, but are not complete. For a complete overview of non-compliance issues, refer to individual Program Standards.

E.1 General Issues of Non-Compliance

a) Poor feed or water quality
b) Inadequate feed amounts
c) Inappropriate feed ingredients
d) Use of pharmaceuticals for growth promotion or enhancement of production
e) Inadequate feeding or watering space
f) Inadequate floor space allowance
g) Inappropriate flooring
h) Absence of appropriate bedding/litter materials (specific to each Standard)
i) Barn or amenity designs that cause injury, distress, etc.
j) Poor air quality
k) Inappropriate barn lighting or lighting programs (specific to each Standard)
l) Poor sanitation
m) High levels of lameness, injuries, disease or mortality, including predation
n) Compromising the health and safety of animals or product through negligence or poor health plans
o) Inappropriate handling of animals by any staff member (e.g. throwing, kicking, improper catching or moving of animals, etc.) or inappropriate use of handling aids (e.g. misuse/overuse of electric prods, aids that cause injury, etc.)
p) Ineffective or inappropriate methods of euthanasia
q) Transportation of visibly sick or injured animals
r) Inappropriate transport conditions or stocking densities (specific to each Standard)
s) Inappropriate methods of controlling nuisance animals
t) Absence of, or inadequate, retention or maintenance of farm records

u) Absence of, or inadequate, emergency back-up system
v) Inadequate biosecurity plan
w) Inability to clearly demonstrate product traceability
x) Free range animals:
   ▪ Range designs that cause injury, distress, etc.
   ▪ Lack of range coverage (shade, shelter)
   ▪ Overstocking causing range depletion or negative affects to animal health
   ▪ Inadequate range use (i.e. time allowance on range)
   ▪ Inadequate range rotational practices
   ▪ Ineffective or inappropriate methods of predator control
   ▪ Use of electrified barbed wire fencing

Depending upon the degree to which an Applicant/Member is out of compliance with the Standard, all of the above may result in Conditional Certification and/or a Repeat Assessment. All conditions and the time allotted to comply with issues are at the discretion of the Review Panel and are communicated in writing and presented in a Form 2 – Non-Compliance Receipt.

E.2 Specific Issues of Non-Compliance

E.2.1 Egg-Laying Chicken Operations

a) Inadequate number of nest boxes
APPENDIX E: INDEX OF NON-COMPLIANCE ISSUES

SPCA Certified Operations Manual

b) Inadequate perch space
c) Use of caged housing
d) Unauthorized beak trimming or de-toeing
e) Forced moulting
f) Free range: Inadequate size or number of popholes

From: Standards for the Raising and Handling of Laying Hens (2009)

E.2.2 Broiler Chicken Operations

a) Unauthorized beak trimming or de-toeing
b) Caponization
c) Free range: Inadequate size or number of popholes

From: Standards for the Raising and Handling of Broiler Chickens (2009)

E.2.3 Turkey Operations

a) Unauthorized beak trimming or de-toeing
b) Desnooding
c) Dewinging
d) The use of spectacles or blinkers to control feather pecking
e) Free range: Inadequate size and number of popholes

From: Standards for the Raising and Handling of Turkeys (2009)

E.2.4 Dairy Cattle Operations

a) Tie stall housing or the use of tethered housing for calves
b) Inadequate number of stalls (in freestall housing)
c) Absence of grooming tools
d) Inappropriate weaning strategy or age
e) Inappropriate methods of disbudding, castration, teat removal or udder hair removal
f) Unauthorized dehorning or horn tipping
g) Tail-docking, spaying (females), ear notching, ear wattling or face branding
h) Unauthorized branding (freeze or hot iron)
i) No access to outdoors
j) Transport of animals under 7 days of age

From: Standards for the Raising and Handling of Dairy Cattle (2012)

E.2.5 Beef Cattle Operations

a) Use of tie stalls
b) Inappropriate weaning strategy or age
c) Inappropriate methods of castration or disbudding
d) Unauthorized dehorning or horn tipping
e) Tail docking, spaying (females), ear notching, wattling, or splitting, face branding or hot iron branding
f) Unauthorized freeze branding
g) No access to outdoors
h) Transport of animals under 7 days of age
From: *Standards for the Raising and Handling of Beef Cattle (2012)*

**E.2.6 Sheep Operations**

a) Use of snow as the sole water source  
b) Use of tie stalls for housing sheep  
c) Inappropriate weaning strategy or age  
d) Inappropriate methods of tail docking or castration  
e) Unauthorized dehorning  
f) Spaying (females), performing the mules operation, ear notching or ear punching  
g) Use of electric prods on sheep  
h) No access to outdoors  
i) Transport of animals under 15 days of age

From: *Standards for the Raising and Handling of Sheep (2012)*

**E.2.7 Pig Operations**

a) Absence of, or inadequate environmental enrichment  
b) Use of tethers  
c) Use of stall housing other than what is permitted in the Standard  
d) Inappropriate weaning strategy or age  
e) Unauthorized tail-docking  
f) Ear notching  
g) Inappropriate methods of castration or needle teeth trimming

From: *Standards for the Raising and Handling of Pigs (2002)*
Please complete this form after the Validator has inspected your operation and return it directly to the Certification Body by mail, fax or email. Thank you for taking the time to complete this form – we benefit from your helpful comments.

Producer & Farm Name: ________________________________

Date of Inspection: ________________ Name of Validator: ________________

Was this inspection:  □ Pre-Scheduled /  □ Random

Were you present for the inspection?:  □ Yes /  □ No

Was the inspection conducted in a satisfactory manner? Please explain:

The inspection would have been more productive if:

This inspection was not productive because:

Is there a need for an evaluation meeting between you and the Certification Body?

□ Yes  □ No

Producer Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:  SPCA Certified
1245 East 7th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5T 1R1

Or: farminfo@spca.bc.ca
The Species Advisory Committees (SAC) are selected to inform and assist the formulation and review of the SPCA Certified standards. An invitation to participate is sent by the Certification Body to potential SAC members and is based on appropriate industry experience, knowledge and understanding.

Each SAC consists of producers, veterinarians and specialists in the fields of animal science, including scientists with expertise in nutrition, physiology, and ethology. The SAC members must be well respected and qualified to ensure credibility and trust in their recommendations. No endorsement of the Standards by the members or their respective organizations is implied.

Each member will attend meetings of the SAC (in person or via teleconference) or provide insight by correspondence to establish recommendations as to the Standard’s content and proposed amendments. Specifically, the SAC must ensure that the Standards embrace the Five Freedoms as well as encompass practical initiatives, thereby ensuring the Standards remain credible, verifiable, and applicable.

The SAC meeting minutes and Standard recommendations are circulated to the SPCA Certified program Management Group for consideration. The SAC’s do not have the authority to make changes to the Standards; they can only make recommendations. The SPCA Certified Management Group must approve the modifications (by majority vote) before official changes are made and notifications issued.
APPENDIX H: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assessment Outcome Package

The package sent to an Applicant/Member upon completion of the certification review process by the Review Panel. The package includes:

a) A letter outlining the Review Panel’s decision and any requirements they may have for certification in the SPCA Certified program
b) Copy of the assessment checklist(s) used during the inspection
c) Certification Agreement for signature if the file belongs to a new Applicant
d) Certificate of Registration
e) A copy of the Assessment invoice

Breach of Contract

Activities by Program Members or the Certification Body that prevent complete fulfillment and adherence to all requirements of the SPCA Certified program, as stated in the Operations Manual, Standards and Certification Agreement.

Cancellation

A Breach of Contract between the Member and the Certification Body resulting in the Member’s Certificate of Registration being cancelled and the Certification Agreement being terminated. The requirements for reinstating the Certificate of Registration are at the discretion of the Certification Body.

Certificate of Registration

The Certificate issued by the BC SPCA enabling accredited Members to use the SPCA Certified name, logo and relevant materials. The Certificate provides recognition to Members and others involved in the SPCA Certified program that certified animals are raised and handled according to BC SPCA developed farm animal welfare standards, and that Member compliance was validated through Annual Assessments and Random Audits.

The Certificate of Registration states the following:

a) Legal name of the certified operation
b) The SPCA Certified program Registration Number (unique to each certified operation)
c) Products that are certified under the SPCA Certified program
d) Certificate effective period (timeframe to which the certificate applies)
e) Certificate date of issue
f) Initial date of farm certification

Certification Agreement

The contract between SPCA Certified program Members and the Certification Body outlining traceability and due diligence requirements as set out in the Operations Manual and relevant Standard.

Certification Body

Oversees SPCA Certified program administration and is made up of the following groups:
a) SPCA Certified Management Group  
b) SPCA Certified personnel

The Species Advisory Committees, SPCA Certified program advisors, Validators and Review Panellists support the Certification Body.

**Certification Program (the Program)**

The program used by the BC SPCA to validate all levels of the food industry through a third party certification system. Standards and operation policies are utilized to determine compliance, and satisfy the following Certification Program criteria:

a) Assessment: An annual inspection conducted by a Validator to verify Member compliance with SPCA Certified standards and Operations Manual requirements. An Assessment is also conducted upon Program registration to determine an Applicant’s compliance with the SPCA Certified program requirements.

b) Random Audit: An annual audit of 10 per cent of Program Members, conducted by a Validator. Ensures Member compliance with the SPCA Certified program requirements and Standards.

c) Traceability: The specific ability of SPCA Certified program Members and end users of certified animals and products to ensure at all times the origin and authenticity of a product from the farm of origin through to the processor.

**Non-compliance Issue**

Failure of an Applicant/Member to meet the requirements set out by the Certification Body’s Operations Manual and/or relevant SPCA Certified standard.

**Consumer**

The end user of certified animals or products produced through the SPCA Certified program.

**Negligence**

A breach in the contract made between the Program Applicant/Member and the Certification Body.

**Parallel Production**

The practice of certifying one or more animal groups to SPCA Certified standards while at the same time doing one of the following:

a) Raising other animal groups (of the same or a different species) that would be eligible for certification in the Program, but that are being raised in a manner that is not compliant with SPCA Certified standards.
   - E.g. - Raising some egg-laying chickens under SPCA Certified program standards while at the same time raising other egg-laying chickens under conventional standards that are not in compliance with SPCA Certified program standards.
   - E.g. - Raising SPCA Certified egg-laying chickens and raising pigs under conventional standards that are not in compliance with SPCA Certified program standards.

b) Raising other animal groups potentially compliant to SPCA Certified standards, but for which the Applicant/Member is not ready to register in the SPCA Certified program.
- E.g. - Raising SPCA Certified egg-laying chickens and pigs that are potentially compliant with SPCA Certified standards, but which are not yet SPCA Certified.

Applicants/Members cannot practice parallel production when the animals or their products are indistinguishable or untraceable.

Program Advisor

An expert in their field who provides advice to the Certification Body. Areas include but are not limited to: animal welfare, marketing, policy development, government regulations.

Producer Groups

Producer groups are defined as a group of farmers that use similar practices to produce their products; market their products in common; and may utilize central processing, manufacturing and/or marketing facilities. Examples of producer groups include: a community farming group, agricultural association or certification body, co-operative or individual farms affiliated with a processor.

SPCA Certified standards (Standards)

All required SPCA Certified program animal welfare components for the production, transport, slaughter and processing of farm animals as outlined within the SPCA Certified standards. The Standards are used to determine whether Applicants/Members meet SPCA Certified program criteria for animal care and welfare.

Suspension

A breach of contract between the Member and Certification Body that results in the Member’s Certificate of Registration being suspended. The Member is not permitted to use the SPCA Certified Name or logo until all issues of non-compliance are resolved and all criteria for the SPCA Certified program is met in full. The length of suspension is at the discretion of the Certification Body.

Validation System

The process used to assess and verify Applicant and Member compliance with SPCA Certified standards and operation policies.

Withdrawal

A SPCA Certified program Member does not renew his/her Certificate of Registration.