



# NIMAN RANCH BEEF CATTLE PROTOCOLS

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Niman Ranch's mission is to produce the finest tasting meat in the world by adhering to a strict code of traditional husbandry principles. We have registered the following claims with the USDA:

- All Natural
- No Antibiotics Ever
- No Added Hormones Ever
- All Vegetarian Feeds
- Humanely Raised on Environmentally Sustainable Ranches

## I. SOURCE VERIFICATION

A representative of Niman Ranch will have a personal relationship with every supplier of cattle to the Niman Ranch beef program and our protocols must be followed from birth to plate.

All cattle must have full traceability back to the farm or ranch of birth. A Niman Ranch representative must pre-approve all cattle in the program and, if practical, visit the ranch or farm where the cattle were born.

All ranchers must sign producer affidavits confirming that their program meets all requirements of this protocol, and the Niman Ranch producer affidavit must be signed prior to or at the time the cattle are contracted for or purchased.

Any animal in a feedlot has to come from a ranch that is in compliance with body condition score and coat condition score. Body scoring will go into effect June 2011.

### **Breeding**

Niman Ranch will select cattle based on their ability to produce the finest-tasting beef possible. To be eligible for the program, cattle must be selected by Niman Ranch-approved personnel, and must be predominantly Angus-based British breeds.

All cattle, and the mothers of the cattle, must have been born, raised, and have spent their entire lives in the continental United States.

## II. HUSBANDRY

Our overriding objective is for cattle to be treated humanely, with dignity and respect. Whenever appropriate, they will be allowed to express their natural behavior.

### **Family Ownership**

Priority will be given to cattle that come from ranches and feedlots where the primary occupation of the owner(s) of the business is agriculture, and where the ranch is managed, leased or owned and operated by the family.

## **Pasture**

Cattle that have been raised on pasture fertilized with human sewage waste are not eligible for the program. Organic fertilizers spread on pastures and / or crop land is acceptable. Cattle on abused or over grazed pastures will not be allowed. Runoff will not be allowed to pollute any ponds or streams.

Neglected health problems will not be allowed in the cowherd. Cuts and necrotic prolapses are to be tended to immediately. They are not allowed to become necrotic. Bad eyes and lump jaws are to be removed immediately. There is a need to look for broken tails.

During castration, either by banding or by knife, the calves are to be watched for at least a 24 hour period.

At the home ranch, the cows will be given a body scoring.

Injured and non-ambulatory cattle requiring euthanasia will be euthanized quickly.

## **Feed & Supplements**

Cattle will be fed an all-natural, vegetarian diet of the highest quality feeds. Cattle will never receive feeds or supplements containing any fish, animal or meat by-products (including feather meal), fecal material, or garbage.

Only vitamins, minerals, and supplements listed on Schedule B may be fed to Niman Ranch cattle or cattle raised for the Niman Ranch program.

## **Antibiotics**

Cattle will never be given any added synthetic or natural form of growth hormones, steroids, or other artificial growth promotants.

Cattle will never be given any kind of antibiotics, including therapeutic and sub-therapeutic antibiotics or ionophores. When an animal is sick, it will be treated with the appropriate medications, including antibiotics if their use is necessary to return the animal to health. Mass treatment of cattle with antibiotics is not allowed. Under no circumstances are antibiotics to be used for any purpose other than treating an individual sick animal. Any animal that is treated with antibiotics of any kind is to be tagged and removed from the Niman Ranch program. Beta agonists are not allowed (zilmax, optiflex, etc.)

## **Vaccines**

Only vaccines listed on Schedule C may be used on cattle raised for the Niman Ranch program.

## **Body Scoring**

We will body score the cow herd when auditing a cow calf operation for Niman Ranch. The scoring system is based on a 1 through 9 scale, with a score of 1 or 2 being unacceptable.

**BCS 1 = Emaciated**

No palpable fat is detectable over the spinous processes, transverse processes, ribs, or hooks. The tailhead and ribs appear very prominent.

**BCS 2 = Poor**

Animal is still somewhat emaciated but the tailhead and ribs are less prominent. Individual spinous processes are still sharp to the touch. Some tissue cover is present over the ribs toward the top of the back.

**BCS 3 = Thin**

Individual ribs including foreribs are easily identified but are not quite as sharp to the touch. Some fat can be felt along the spine and over the tailhead. Some tissue cover is present over the ribs toward the top of the back.

**BCS 4 = Borderline**

Individual ribs may not be visually obvious. Individual spinous processes can be felt when palpated but feel rounded rather than sharp. Some fat cover is present over the ribs, transverse processes, and hooks.

**BCS 5 = Moderate**

Overall appearance is generally good. Fat cover over ribs feels spongy. Palpable fat cover is present on either side of the tailhead.

**BCS 6 = High moderate**

A high degree of palpable fat exists over the ribs and around the tailhead. Firm pressure is needed to feel the spinous processes.



### BCS 7 = Good

Considerable fat cover is present with a fleshy overall appearance. Fat cover over the ribs and around the tailhead is very spongy. Fat "pones" or "rounds" may be starting to form along the tailhead.



### BCS 8 = Fat

The animal is very fleshy and appears overconditioned. Palpation of the spinous processes is near impossible. Large fat deposits are present over the ribs and around the tailhead. Fat pones around the tailhead are obvious.



### BCS 9 = Extremely fat

The overall appearance is blocky with extremely wasty and patchy fat cover. The tailhead and hooks are buried in fatty tissue with fat pones protruding. Bone structure is no longer visible and barely palpable. Large fatty deposits may even impair animal mobility.



Figure 3. Body condition scores and descriptions for beef cattle.

## References

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By **Jane A. Parish**, Associate Extension/Research Professor, and **Justin D. Rhinehart**, Assistant Extension Professor, Animal and Dairy Sciences

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Publication 2508

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. MELISSA J. MIXON, Interim Director (POD-07-08)

### III. FINISHING LOT PROTOCOL

All cattle will be finished in a Niman Ranch partner's approved finishing lot.

#### **Feed & Supplements**

Cattle will be fed an all-natural, vegetarian diet of the highest quality feeds. They will never be fed animal or meat by-products including feather meal, poultry litter, or aquatic by-products. Only feed and feedstuffs listed on Schedule A and vitamins, minerals, and supplements listed on Schedule B may be fed to Niman Ranch cattle.

All rations and ration changes must be approved before use.

#### **Finishing Lot Husbandry**

Feeding facilities and pens will be maintained to ensure the health and safety of our cattle. Pens and shelters will be designed to take into account the natural behavior of the animals and so as not to bring on unnecessary stress or to risk injury or the health of the animals.

Whenever possible, cattle will be housed with their natural social group (animals that were born and raised together).

Any disrepair – broken chutes, gates, pens, exposed nails, etc. will be fixed immediately.

Cattle Handling & Loading facilities:

- Non slip flooring (can be dirt). Less than 2% falls under the NCBA guideline
- Prod score – not over 10%
- When cattle leave squeeze chute, should be walking or trotting (75%) (NCBA)

Cattle will be kept in pens with adequate room to behave naturally; i.e., move freely, exercise, and with sufficient space for each to lie down in a full lateral position simultaneously. At a minimum, there will be between 150 to 300 square feet per head depending on season and geographical location. There also must be at least 1 foot of bunk space per head provided regardless of the animal's age or degree of finish.

During wet months bedding will be provided when appropriate to keep cattle comfortable.

When needed, shade will be provided for the cattle, and sprinklers will be available as needed for cooling and minimizing dust. The use of sprinklers will depend on the dust situation and whether or not there is natural year-round moisture from rainfall.

Cattle that exhibit open-mouth panting must be provided heat relief. Head bobbing is a precursor to open mouth panting. It should be looked out for.

Water will be provided free choice with clean, fresh water constantly available. Troughs will be cleaned regularly. At the troughs, there will be slabs of concrete or packed earth for the cattle to stand on, and cattle will have sufficient room to drink so that they will not need to continually compete for space at the trough.

Persons moving animals must handle them in a way that avoids undue stress. All necessary steps must be taken to ensure that animals are not injured or caused to suffer during loading, unloading, processing, sorting, or transport.

Prods – Electric prods should not be carried around. They can, if necessary, be used for 3 things:

1. An animal won't go into the squeeze chute.
2. Animal is down in the squeeze chute.
3. Animal is down at a truck step.

Cattle will be monitored at least once daily to check for sickness, injury, or distress and to acclimatize them to being around people.

Cattle will have access to a high-quality, balanced ration delivered fresh twice daily at 10- to 14-hour intervals through a Total Mixed Ration (TMR) delivery system. Cattle that are fed through a self feeder will have the same quality feed available to them at all times. Distiller grains must not be above 40% of ration. Optimum ration is 12% to 20%.

All cattle will be processed in a timely manner (within 5 days) after their arrival at the finishing lot to avoid the spread of disease, boost the immune system, and ensure the overall health of the cattle. Vaccination boosters will be administered with every effort to avoid undue stress, and will be administered only in the area in front of the shoulder. At all times, humane handling will be practiced.

In the event an animal suffers accidental injury, it shall receive individual treatment designed to minimize pain and suffering. Injured animals will be housed and transported separately from uninjured cattle. If the injury is serious enough to require it, the animal will be euthanized on the ranch by a trained person.

Every necessary step will be taken to ensure that Niman Ranch approved finishing lots have no negative impact on the environment. Manure and runoff will be managed so there is zero discharge into surrounding waterways.

Manure will be managed as a beneficial resource and Niman Ranch finishing lots will work with local farmers to ensure the maximum beneficial use of manure for fertilizing nearby farms. Ranches and feedlots must adhere to local EPA and federal restrictions.

### **Cattle Mud Score**

A mud scoring system will be used for cattle in a feedlot situation. It will not be used during the dry months of the year – June through September.

Estimate a mud score for all the animals in each of 5 pens. The estimate is an average of the animals.

- 1= Clean animals with some mud on feet and ankles.
- 2= Mud on the legs above the knees. Sides and belly clean.
- 3= Belly of the animals has mud cakes on them. Sides are clean
- 4= Belly and sides of body have mud cakes on them.

The first 3 are acceptable, # 4 is not acceptable

### **Source Verification and Individual Animal Identification System**

All cattle entering a Niman Ranch approved feedlot will wear an individual tag that will stay with them until slaughter. These tags will enable the feed lot manager to identify each individual animal. At the time of tagging these animals, all related information must be documented, including color, sex, a code

tracking it back to its source ranch and genetics, information on any vaccinations, and all other individual information that came from the ranch when they arrived.

#### **IV. PROCESSING FACILITY**

Niman Ranch personnel may be present to assist in the handling and data collection of cattle at the processing facility and be a “familiar face” at that facility.

The slaughterhouse must be designed for low-stress movement of cattle and be approved by Niman Ranch for humane handling and processing of cattle.

Plant must adhere to AMI guidelines and include a 3rd party audit.

Cattle should not be able to see other cattle being dismembered.

Whenever appropriate because of travel times, cattle will be delivered to the slaughterhouse the evening before and be allowed to rest. Free choice water will be provided.

Niman Ranch cattle will be segregated at the facility.

The slaughter plant will be USDA inspected and meet all government regulation for the slaughter of cattle for human consumption. After slaughter, carcasses will be handled according to the facility’s USDA HAACP plan for Niman Ranch cattle.

No dragging down animals.

Handling of the cattle will be done with utmost care in loading and unloading, as well as moving the cattle.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

##### **Animal by-products**

Includes any mammalian, aquatic or avian tissue, fat, blood, brain, bone, spinal column, feathers, offal, hide, hooves, horns, tallow and/or any other part not listed that is derived from the body parts of another creature.

##### **Therapeutic antibiotics**

Antibiotics used to treat illnesses in animals.

##### **Sub-therapeutic antibiotics**

Antibiotics that are administered through supplements, feed or water used to increase health, rate of growth, feed efficiency and/or to offset poor husbandry.

##### **Ionophores**

Ionophores are listed as antibiotics with the FDA and we honor that listing. Therefore, ionophores would be considered a sub therapeutic antibiotic.

##### **Bad Eye**

Advance cancer has invaded tissue around eye

##### **Notice**

**Niman Ranch reserves the right to modify these protocols at any time to protect the quality of its beef and its cattle. Niman Ranch strongly recommends an aggressive health program that includes**

**vaccinating against clostridial and respiratory diseases, controlling internal and external parasites and a well balanced vitamin and mineral program that enhances the immune system.**

## **SCHEDULE A**

**Feeds and feedstuffs permitted in backgrounding and finishing beef for Niman Ranch**

**For any other feed or feedstuff, contact Niman Ranch personnel for approval.**

Alfalfa hay	Hominy feed	Rye grass pellets
Alfalfa meal	Kelp dried	Rye grass silage
Alfalfa silage	Kochia	Rye grain
Almond hulls	Lactose	Safflower meal
Almond hull meal	Legumes	Sorghum grain
Barley grain	Legume hays	Sorghum silage
Barley hay	Legume silage	Soybean hulls
Beet pulp	Linseed meal	Soybean meal
Brewers grains	Meadow hay	Soybeans
Canola meal	Milo grain	Sudan grass
Carrots	Molasses beet	Sudan grass hay
Citrus pulp	Molasses cane	Sudan grass silage
Corn distillers	Molasses/whey	Sunflower seed meal
Corn grain	Non-protein nitrogens	Teff hay
Corn gluten	naturally occurring from	Teff grain
Corn ground high moisture	grains	Triticale silage
Corn ground earlage	Oat hay	Vegetable by-products
Corn silage	Oat grain	Vegetable oil
Corn stalks	Oat silage	Vegetable proteins
Distillers grains	Orchard grass hay	Wheat hay
Enzymes	Pasture-native grass range	Wheat grain
Flax seed	Pasture-improved grass range	Wheat mill run
Flax seed meal	Pasture-irrigated permanent	Wheat middlings
Grain	Peas	Wheat Straw
Grain meals	Potatoes (whole only)	Wealage
Grain oils	Rice bran	
Grape pumice	Rice hulls	
Grass native/improved	Rice mill run	
Grass hays Grass silage	Rye grass hay	

## SCHEDULE B

### **Vitamins, minerals, essential elements, and supplements permitted in backgrounding and finishing beef for Niman Ranch**

**For any other vitamins, minerals or essential elements, contact Niman Ranch personnel for approval.**

Aspirin BHT Biotin Calcium carbonate Calcium chloride Calcium phosphate Calcium sulfate  
Chelated forms of: (Zinc) (Manganese) (Copper) (Selenium) (Cobalt) Chlorine Choline chloride  
Cobalt carbonate Cobalt sulfate Copper oxide Copper chloride Copper sulfate Dextrose Dolomitic  
limestone Enzymes Flavorings (Natural & Artificial) Florine Folic acid Iodine (EDDI) Iodine  
(potassium iodate) Iron carbonate Iron oxide Iron (ferrous sulfate) Lactobacillus Lactose Limestone  
l-Lysine Magnesium carbonate Magnesium sulfate Magnesium oxide Manganous oxide Manganese  
sulfate Mendadione Mineral oil Molybdenum Niacin Phosphorus (Mono-Dical) Phosphorus  
(Dicalcium) Potassium sulphate Selenium (Sodium Selenite) Sodium Chloride (Salt) Sulfur Thiamin  
Vitamins A, B, D3, and E Yeast (live active) Yeast culture Zinc sulphate Zinc oxide Zinc  
methionine (ZinPro) ZinPro 4-Plex

## SCHEDULE C

Niman Ranch recommends a vaccination and prevention program designed to work with your cattle and ranch management program. Please consult your veterinarian when selecting the vaccines that best fit your program and qualifies for ours.

Always read and follow vaccine label directions.

Always use proper injection techniques and administer all injections in front of the shoulder or neck area. Whenever possible, use sub Q labeled products.

Always provide adequate nutrition which includes a vitamin and mineral program that enhances the immune system. Animals should always have access to fresh water and quality forage.

Include vaccinations or management practices that are unique to your operation and/ or are of value to ours. A well planned preventive health program should work to eliminate animal stress. This can also be accomplished by handling livestock quietly and humanely.

Off label drug use must be done with vet approval.

Vaccines permitted for Niman Ranch beef

**Calf Hood Vaccinations:** Calves should be vaccinated on cows at two to four months of age. Clostridial 8-way IBR, PI3, BVD, BRSV viral vaccine IBR and PI3 should be chemically altered modified live or modified live with veterinarian's approval (Niman Ranch requests that a kill vaccine not be used). BVD and BRSV can be killed or MODIFIED LIVE.

**Weaning Vaccinations:** We recommend that calves be vaccinated two to four weeks prior to weaning and boosted at weaning. The other option would be to vaccinate at weaning and booster according to the vaccine label instructions.

Vaccinate with the above mentioned vaccines.

It is prohibited to wean calves the same day as they are shipped.

**Preconditioning:** Cattle need to be preconditioned. If cattle are preconditioned, they must have been weaned 30 to 45 days prior to shipping, have received all calf hood and weaning vaccines and have been administered a parasiticide for the control of internal and external parasites. They have been provided a nutritional base that meets the above criteria.

**Yearling Program:** Cattle should have received all of the calf hood and weaning vaccinations, parasite control and annual boosters of those vaccines.

**Other Approved Vaccinations:** Pasteurella Haemolytica and/or Multocida, Haemophilus Somnus, Interanasal Respiratory, Pinkeye, scour prevention and all reproductive vaccines Fusogard (Fusobacterium Necrophorum Bacterin) for the vaccination of healthy cattle six months of age or older as an aid in the reduction of clinical signs of footrot and the number and size of liver abscesses caused by Fusobacterium Necrophorum Tetnas.

If there are other health issues unique to your area, please let us know so we may discuss appropriate and permitted treatments.

Some coccidistats are approved for use – corrid and deccox.

## 18 “NOS OR NEVERS”

### OF NIMAN RANCH’S BACKGROUNDING & FINISHING PROGRAM

- 1 No implants or synthetic growth promotants  
No antibiotics of any kind including sub-therapeutic antibiotics. Sick animals are to be treated and removed from the program.
- 2 No ionophores
- 3 No untraceable cattle allowed into the program
- 4 No animal or meat by-products
- 5 No Vitamin D2
- 6 No animal tallow, fats, or blood or bone products
- 7 No put-together or more than one iron, one owner cattle unless approved by Niman Ranch personnel.
- 8 No cattle with eared or continental breeding
- 9 No cattle born or raised outside of the United States
- 10 No cattle will be purchased through an order buyer/ trader without a prior personal interview of the ranch on which the cattle have been raised, and all required Niman documents signed
- 11 No fed fecal material, garbage, processed food waste or pastures that have been grown with human sewage sludge
- 12 No Phosmet based pour on products. No Del-Phos Emulsified Liquid, GX-118, Imidian.
- 13 50 WP, Lintox HD, and Prolate are prohibited.
- 14 No beta agonists (zilmax, optiflex)
- 15 No weaning prior to 3 months, unless the health of the cow or calf is in jeopardy.
- 16 No wattling (brisket mutilation for identification)
- 17 No ear mutilation (removal of major portions of the ear for identification)
- 18 No weaning on the trucks of calves



Niman Ranch Beef Cattle Operations  
11990 Grant Street, Suite 500 - Northglenn, CO 80233  
Fax: (303) 252-9379 - Phone: 252-9313  
www.nimanranch.com

**CATTLE SUPPLIER AFFIDAVIT**

As a supplier of quality feeder cattle to the Niman Ranch beef program, I agree by signing this affidavit that the following management protocols outlined below have been adhered to:

- All animals have been treated humanely, with dignity and respect.
- All cattle and their mothers have been born and raised only in the continental United States
- Cattle are Angus or Angus cross breeds that exhibit at least 51% black hide, no neck humps that exceed 2 inches, and no dairy characteristics.
- Cattle have been managed using sustainable agriculture practices that improve environmental health and economic viability.
- Any cattle receiving treatment with therapeutic antibiotics have been removed from the Niman Ranch program.

Cattle supplied to Niman Ranch are PROHIBITED FROM EVER receiving the following:

- Antibiotics of any kind (all cattle given antibiotics must be tagged as having received them and will not be accepted into the Niman Ranch program)
- Ionophores (examples, but not limited to: Bovatec and Rumensin)
- Growth hormones, supplemental hormones and steroids.
- Feeds or supplements containing any fish, avian, animal or meat by-products such as fish meal, feather meal, and poultry litter. This includes all vitamins, minerals, proteins, and milk replacers.)
- Garbage, fecal material, processed food waste or raised on pastures that have been grown with human sewage waste.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Producer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ranch Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Producers Name Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
# of cows      Breed(s) of cattle

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type(s) of Marketing (check ones that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                      State              Zip

Calves sold off Cows       Calves Preconditioned

Yearlings                       Finish

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

Number of head covered by this affidavit: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address

Do you have the ability to give individual birth dates? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's Date

All cattle covered by this affidavit will be  30 Months of age or younger at the time of shipping to the feedlot. Please check the box and initial \_\_\_\_\_ for verification.

