



## **Harris Ranch's Commitment to Animal Welfare**

**2020**

Since our founding, Harris Ranch has proudly produced safe, high quality beef for our retail, foodservice and export customers all the while emphasizing sustainable production practices and an unwavering commitment to the humane treatment of our livestock. Harris Ranch considers animal welfare a critical part of producing great-tasting, premium quality beef. We ensure humane handling because Harris Ranch controls all aspects of production – from where and how our cattle are raised through feeding, processing and distribution. Few if any beef companies, other than Harris Ranch, can truly claim control of the entire process from start to finish.

Our beef cattle spend 70 to 80% of the time grazing on western ranches. We then feed them a grain-based diet for about 120 days at our well-maintained feeding operation to help add flavor, tenderness and juiciness to the beef. Grains, like corn, are fed to our cattle because they are nutritious, energy rich and can be stored for use in any season. Since grass doesn't grow in abundance throughout the year in most of the U.S., feeding grains helps us raise a consistent, year-round supply of superior quality beef.

Prior to arrival at Harris Feeding Company, we encourage all of our ranching partners to make every effort to prevent disease to minimize the need for antibiotic use. Vaccination protocols to prevent common bovine diseases, supplementation with minerals to support a strong immune system, and low-stress cattle handling can help accomplish this goal. When young children enter school, they receive vaccinations against human diseases to stem the spread of illness. Cattle face a similar challenge when they move from the ranch where they were raised to Harris Feeding Company.

Cattle arrive at Harris Feeding Company when they are between 16 to 24 months of age. Before any interaction with Harris Ranch staff, new arrivals are given 24 hours to become comfortable and gain familiarity with their surroundings. Although our mild, central California climate enables cattle to perform to their highest potential, our cowboys still ride through each of our pens daily – rain or shine – to monitor animal health and welfare.

Harris Ranch has taken numerous steps to ensure cattle comfort. Each pen features shade cloth for protection from the heat. Pens are also equipped with sprinklers to reduce dust and cool cattle in warm summer months. We also utilize parasitic wasps, which aid in non-pesticide, biological fly control. Additionally, we remove and compost waste as part of our dedication to maintaining all cattle pens. Livestock handling facilities have been designed with input from Dr. Temple Grandin, a world-renowned expert in animal welfare who has also assisted in training our staff on proper livestock handling techniques.

Harris Feeding Company covers over 800 acres which gives cattle plenty of space and easy access to clean water and feed. Cattle are fed a nutritionally balanced diet of corn and other feed grains, plus alfalfa hay, three times each day. We also add lactobacillus acidophilus – the good bacteria used to

make yogurt – to their diets. It’s a natural way to improve the overall digestive health of our cattle and bolster their immune systems.

Several years ago, Harris Ranch discontinued feeding Tylan – a product that belongs in the same class of antibiotics used in human medicine. Today, antibiotics are used in a therapeutic manner under veterinarian oversight to treat cattle that require medical attention. We believe it is inhumane not to treat an animal that becomes ill. Just like caregivers with children who become sick and need medicine, we administer antibiotics to sick cattle to help them achieve and maintain the highest levels of health. If antibiotics are administered, we strictly adhere to all withdrawal periods – or the time it takes for a drug to naturally be eliminated from the animal’s system -- in order to ensure no antibiotic residues are remaining in the animal’s system prior to harvest.

Once cattle reach optimum weight and quality, harvesting takes place at Harris Ranch Beef Company also located in Central California not far from our feeding operation. With Harris Feeding Company and Harris Ranch Beef Company in such close proximity, our cattle typically spend no more than one hour in transit. Other beef processing facilities may purchase cattle from distant feedlots that require several hours of transit. Our reduced travel time minimizes stress and discomfort, and offers one more way to ensure the wellbeing of our cattle. To further promote cattle health, as well as reduce cross contamination, we wash transit trailers between every load of cattle.

Harris Ranch Beef Company is the final stage in our integrated beef production system. Cattle entering our state-of-the-art receiving facilities, also designed with input from Dr. Temple Grandin, remain in holding pens for approximately two hours to relax and grow accustomed to their new environment. Pens are covered with shade cloth to minimize heat stress and tightly laced to prevent flapping that could startle the cattle. Designed to promote animal welfare and humane handling, our receiving facilities also feature non-slip flooring to ensure safe movement of cattle.

The design of our facilities allows cattle to maintain their natural tendency of movement, which is to go back from where they came. Allowing cattle to act naturally minimizes the stress of unnatural moving patterns. All cattle calmly pass through our tub area for thorough washing prior to entering the plant – another facet of our extensive biosecurity program. Harris Ranch follows all humane slaughter practices as outlined in the Federal Humane Slaughter Act. Cattle are completely rendered unconscious before processing takes place. As an added measure of safety, we take the extra step to test finished beef to make sure no antibiotic residues are present -- a process that actually exceeds USDA guidelines.

Harris Ranch uses an independent third party to verify our compliance with the Beef Quality Assurance Program and its animal care requirements. As Dr. Temple Grandin has often stated, “good facilities make good handling possible.” Her extensive input on the design of our facilities, combined with our stringent management and animal handling protocol, have shown this to be true.

At Harris Ranch, quality, consistency and unsurpassed levels of food safety make up the cornerstones of our operation.