



## Animal Welfare Law in Colorado

Colorado law addresses livestock welfare in a way that protects animals from harm, neglect, and mistreatment. Current statutes pertain to confinement standards, humane slaughter methods, and cruelty to animals, amongst others - all of which prioritize animal welfare, quality of life, and health and safety.

### **Colorado's Animal Abuse Laws:**

Title 18 of the Colorado Revised Statutes protects livestock by criminalizing a person who knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence mistreats an animal as defined by C.R.S. 18-9-202. Examples of mistreatment include engaging in a sexual act; failure to provide proper food, drink, and protection; and housing an animal in a way that causes chronic or repeated harm. Article 42 (the Animal Protection Act) provides that no animal shall be confined without an adequate supply of food and water (C.R.S. 35-42-108), or shall be mistreated or neglected to such degree or abandoned in any circumstance so that the animal's life or health is endangered (C.R.S. 35-42-10). C.R.S. 18-9-207 includes but is not limited to the prohibition of the use or application of any drug or feed additive affecting the central nervous system of the animal and subjecting the animal to inhumane conditions or procedures for the purpose of concealing, enhancing, or transforming the true conformation, configuration, condition, or age of the animal or making the animal appear more sound than the animal would appear otherwise. Title 35 of the Colorado Revised Statutes dictates farm owners and operators must not confine an egg-laying hen in an enclosure with less than one square foot of usable floor space per egg-laying hen, effective January 1, 2025 (C.R.S 35-21-201). Additionally, processors are not permitted to slaughter animals in a way deemed inhumane as defined by C.R.S 35-33-203. Lastly, Colorado law requires that calves raised for veal and gestating sows shall be kept in a manner that allows the animal to stand up, lie down, and turn around without touching the sides of its enclosure (C.R.S. 35-50.5-102).

### **Animal Husbandry Practices:**

The Animal Protection Act, defines "Accepted animal husbandry" as practices generally recognized as appropriate in the care of animals consistent with the species, breed, and type of animal, and notes that nothing in the act shall affect accepted animal husbandry practices utilized by any person in the care of companion or livestock animals. Similarly, as defined by C.R.S. 18-9-201, no aspect of the "Sexual act with an animal" definition shall be construed to prohibit accepted animal husbandry practices, and nothing in Part 2 of Title 18 shall affect accepted animal husbandry practices.

### **Adequacy of Existing Colorado Law:**

Colorado law protects livestock from sexual abuse, physical abuse, and unnecessary death. The Animal Protection and Cruelty to Animals acts criminalize harmful activities, prioritize animal welfare, and establish humane practices that protect both livestock and domestic animals. Existing laws ensure that all animals are treated with dignity, and are granted an acceptable quality of life.

### **Standard Industry Practices:**

Colorado's livestock industry routinely engages in accepted animal husbandry practices and agricultural methods that work to sustain the quality of both their stock and their product. These practices include spaying and neutering, birthing assistance, and established reproductive practices (e.g. artificial insemination, pregnancy diagnosis, fertility testing).

