

# FOREIGN MATERIAL CONTAMINATION OF HIDES AND MEAT

## Key Recommendations for Beef Cattle Producers

When cattle rub against objects, including equipment and facilities, small fragments can break off and penetrate their hides. This poses food safety concerns, as foreign materials could end up in meat and lead to erosion of consumer trust in high-quality beef products. If fragments are detected during processing, this may lead to product recalls or the rejection of carcasses or carcass portions, which lowers carcass value. Preventing contamination of meat with foreign materials is the responsibility of all sectors of the beef industry. This starts at the farm level, with proper maintenance and monitoring of the animals' environment.

### Sources of Foreign Materials



**Metal or hard plastic scratchers**



**Sharp edges on equipment such as oilers**



**Scrap metal or old equipment**



**Buckshot or other types of shrapnel**



**Poorly maintained or collapsing buildings**



**Poorly maintained handling or housing equipment**

Poorly maintained scratchers are a potential source of foreign material.



Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

 **BCRC**  
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# Foreign Material Preventive Measures

Cattle are curious and like to explore their environment, so keeping areas free of potential foreign materials is the best prevention. Producers can reduce the risk of foreign materials penetrating cattle hides by:

- ✓ Removing scrap metal and outdated or unnecessary equipment from pastures and pens
- ✓ Performing regular maintenance on facilities and equipment to avoid breakage or loose fragments
- ✓ Limiting cattle access to neglected structures and areas used for hunting
- ✓ Routine inspections of both cattle and facilities to identify new risks early and monitor for any signs of foreign materials

Buckshot found in carcass during inspection



## Birdshot and Buckshot

Penetration of cattle hides from birdshot and buckshot can cause significant injury and distress to the animal.

**Buckshot is the most common foreign material found in carcasses.** Preventing such incidents is essential for animal health and welfare and public trust.



## NO HUNTING WITHOUT PERMISSION



This operation prioritizes On-Farm Food Safety measures. Use all firearms responsibly to mitigate the risk of foreign object penetration through hides of cattle.

**BE AWARE  
HUNT WITH CARE**



# Birdshot and Buckshot Preventive Measures

## Proper Fencing and Enclosures



- ✓ Ensure cattle are kept within well-maintained, secure fences that limit exposure to hunting areas or places where shooting may occur.
- ✓ Use sturdy, high fences whenever possible to deter unwanted access to cattle enclosures.

## Education and Communication

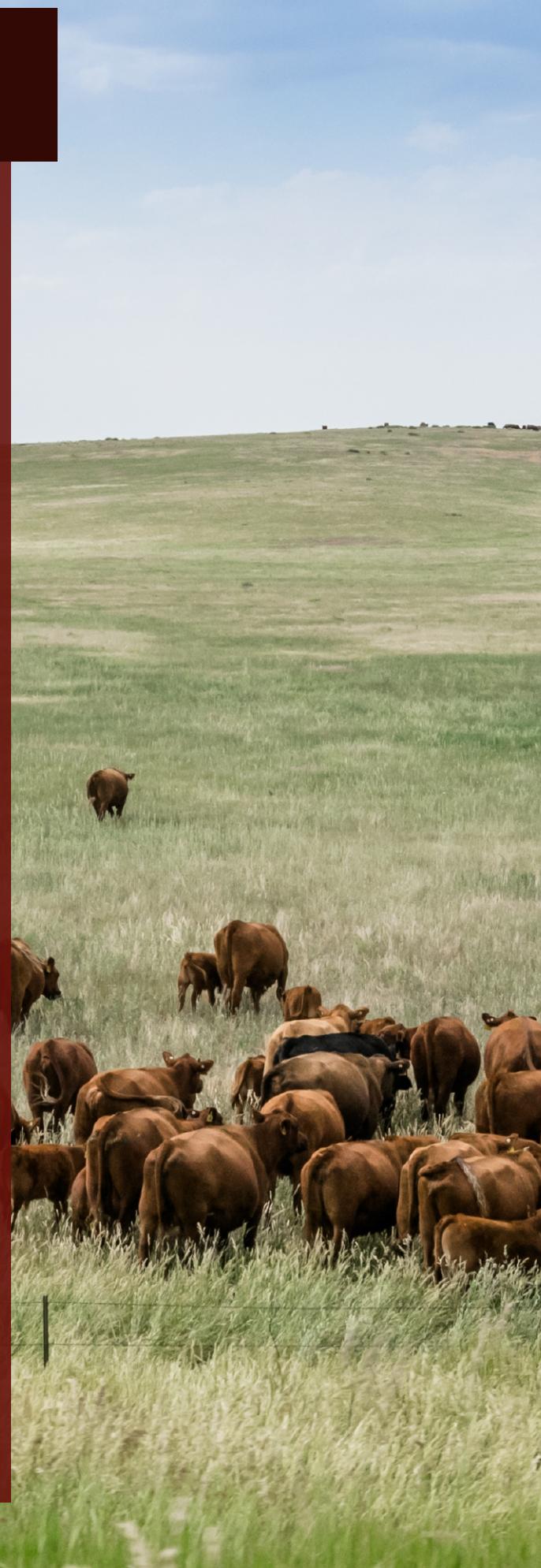


- ✓ Establish clear boundaries for hunting activities to deter access to areas occupied by cattle.
- ✓ Display clear signs on property lines warning hunters about the presence of cattle.
- ✓ Educate workers, neighbours and local hunters about risks of firearm use near cattle and foster communication to minimize risks and prevent accidents involving livestock.

## Regular Health Checks



- ✓ Routinely inspect cattle for any injuries from birdshot or buckshot.



# Safe On-Farm Use of Firearms

Firearms and air guns are sometimes used in cattle production for tasks such as humane euthanasia, pest control or predator management. However, they can pose significant safety risks to people, livestock and property if not handled, stored and used responsibly.

## Legal Compliance



- Ensure all firearms and ammunition are registered according to national and provincial regulations.
- Only licensed individuals should possess or use firearms.
- Understand and comply with restrictions on air guns (they may be regulated differently).

## Storage and Security



- Store all firearms and ammunition in a locked cabinet or gun safe and keep keys or access codes in the hands of authorized personnel only.
- Keep detailed records of firearms use, maintenance and any incidents involving firearms or air guns.
- Designate a firearm safety officer or responsible individual.
- Provide regular firearm safety training to all staff with access.

## Use Around Cattle



- Never discharge firearms near cattle unless necessary (e.g. emergency euthanasia).
- Use non-lead ammunition when possible.
- Avoid using firearms or air guns in areas where cattle are present – fragments or noise may cause stress, injury or contamination.
- Consider zone of fire when using firearms and treat every shot as having the potential to travel and spread.

