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ISKCON

Cow protection

Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture

Minimum Cow Protection and Agriculture

ISKCON GBC Law 507





Minimum Cow Protection and Agriculture Standards Law 507

Endorsed by the Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture
Approved by ISKCON's Governing Body Commission, March 1999

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1. «Recommended» is the ideal.
2. «Permitted» is an exception to the ideal.
3. «Not Allowed» is self-explanatory.

The term «cows» is used herein to mean cows, calves, oxen, and bulls.

The following is a list of cow protection standards which is now ISKCON Law 507. Most of the standards have been discussed and formulated on the COM cow conference mostly by devotees who have had many years of experience caring for cows and/or the land.

USA: Balabhadra das (IMCPA) & Chaya devi, Madhava Gosh das, Ranaka das (New Vrindavana), Hare Krishna dasi (BTG & ISKCON Farm Research Committee), Rohita das, Dvibhuja das (New Talavan), Suresvara das (ACBSP, ISKCON Farm Research Committee), Anuttama das (ISKCON Communications).

England: Radha Krishna das, (ACBSP), Syamasundara das (Bhaktivedanta Manor).

France: Pitavas das & Aradhya dasi.

Bangladesh: Nistula das.

Serbia: Gopal, Inc.

India: Labangaltika dasi, Ekadasi das (Padayatra Secretary) and some of its other members.

New Zealand: Ananta Krsna dasi.

The purpose of these standards is to institute a world-wide cow protection minimum standard within ISKCON. The standards represent a cooperative spirit between the devotees involved, often of diverse views, to come to a general agreement in a joint effort to help prevent any mistreatment of ISKCON cows and help develop cow protection programs that exemplify Srila Prabhupada's vision of cow protection. ISKCON has made significant efforts to protect cows but still mistakes have been made on ISKCON farms in the past which have created present problems that will take time and effort to correct.

The Standards enacted below will assure that the current problems are rectified in the near future and similar difficulties will not arise again.

The «Recommended» is the ideal, the «Permitted» is an exception to the ideal, and «Not Allowed» is self-explanatory. These are internal requirements and they do not supersede whatever local government rules there are. We should follow the higher standard whether it be the Standards or the local government. In transportation, for instance, there are laws of inoculation that MUST be followed.

There are further issues that need to be standardized and such proposals will be presented at the GBC Mayapur meetings. Rewording, and additions to the standards will be presented at each Mayapur meeting if such changes are deemed necessary by the Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture after the standards have been in use and feedback has been ascertained.

The term «cows» is used herein to mean cows, calves, oxen, and bulls. Cows are domestic animals, not wild animals. They are dependent on the care of humans.

SECTION 1: COW CARE STANDARDS

I

PROTECTION

RECOMMENDED:

1. Lifetime Protection.

Maintaining a animal for its full lifetime including its training and engagement in productive service. Female cows are not required to be bred (see Section 2.9), and should not do heavy work (Section 1.5).

2. Daily Observation of Herd.

All cows should be given a daily headcount and health check.

3. Records.

Short concise records of conditions of the cows, land, and weather should be kept on a daily basis. These records are to be used as a tool for monitoring and improving herd conditions.

4. Fencing.

Stone walls, board fence, woven wire, living fences (except Multiflora rose) or high tensile are recommended to contain cows by creating an impenetrable border.

5. Safety and Security.

Adequate arrangements must be provided to ensure the safety and security of the cows from theft, abuse, and maltreatment. These may include locking gates, lighting, security surveillance, restricted access or other arrangements as per local circumstances.

6. Death.

a) A dying cow should be kept as comfortable as possible and given as much association and transcendental sound vibrations as possible. There should be access to water and food.

b) Calf mortality rate should be no greater than 5%, the achievable standard.

Permitted:

1. Daily Observation of Herd.

For larger herds with a shortage of cowherds it is acceptable for the health check to be done weekly. Daily counting is still required.

2. Records.

Keeping a general farm journal. Keeping breeding records of cows, parentage, offspring.

3. Fencing.

a) Electric fencing permitted for temporary and immediate fencing; it is especially useful for rotational grazing.

b) Barbed wire permitted in areas of low pressure and where other types of fencing would be impractical to use, but should not be used where animals are concentrated.

Not Allowed:

1. Transferring Ownership.

Transferring of ownership or the use of cows where all the minimum standards aren't observed.

2. Death due to the following conditions:

a) Failure to provide adequate feed, shelter, safety measures and health care.

b) Performing euthanasia.

c) Placing a sick cow in a situation where he/she will be trampled, eaten, frozen, etc. causing death.

3. Neglecting the cow while she dies. Not providing feed and water.

4. Calf mortality rate higher than 10%.

If records are inadequate, mortality rate can be determined retroactively by seeing how many have been milking in the last 2-3 years and determining how many of their calves are still alive.

5. Failure to count cows daily. Daily counting reduces loss of cows to rustling and wandering off.

6. Fencing.

Failure to provide adequate fencing to control animals' movement. There should be no barbed wire in areas where animals are concentrated and in areas of high pressure, e.g., it shouldn't be used between a pasture and a meadow or crops field.

7. Safety and Security.

Failure to provide adequate arrangements to ensure the safety and security of the cows as stated in #5 of recommended.

8. Failure to maintain appropriate herd records.

II

ORGANIZATION OF COW CARE FACILITIES

Recommended:

1. Devotees owning their own land and cows.
2. Devotees owning some land and cows with access to communal rotational grazing and harvesting in order to fully provide for their cows.
3. A Cow/Land Trust established to secure cow care.
4. Breeding not to exceed carrying capacity of the land.

Permitted:

1. Centralized goshalla operated by a few devotees where there is an abundant congregation to support the goshalla and a Cow/Land Trust to secure the cow care and a training program for new cowherds.
2. Small privately owned family farms working with the Cow/Land Trust.
3. Both following breeding programs maintaining proper proportion of animals to land capacity.

Not Allowed:

1. Maintaining a centralized goshalla without appropriate manpower, training, congregational support, and Cow/Land Trust.
2. Breeding without consideration for land capacity.

III

SHELTER

Recommended:

1. Winter Shelter.

a) All cows should have access to shelter from the wind, rain, and snow. An open barn or shed facing away from the direction of the prevailing winds is much preferred to a closed building. Many diseases thrive in the warm, humid environment found in some closed buildings. Drafts should be prevented as much as possible in open buildings.

b) Adjoining outside exercise lot.

2. Clean water, feed, and vegetarian salt available at all times.

3. Summer Shelter.

a) All cows should have access to shade from the sun, either in tree shade or housing.

b) All feed must be fed so as to prevent mixture with manure.

4. All shelter should have access to sunlight and ventilation.

5. All shelters should have clean floors with dry bedding to prevent problems such as hoof rot.

a) Use of dry bedding of some type is important. Maintaining cows on dry surfaces helps prevent many foot problems such as hoof rot.

b) Pens should be cleaned daily or fresh bedding added.

c) Pens with hard floors are preferable to muddy lots and should have a sufficient layer of bedding.

6. Feed aisles or mangers should be constructed within the shelter so feed can not be pulled into the area where the cows walk. Thereby preventing wastage and feed mixing with manure.

Permitted:

1. Clean rest areas with rubber bedding.

Not Allowed:

1. Failure to provide shelter that protects against the wind, rain, and snow.

2. Failure to provide shade in the summer.

3. Failure to provide sunlight and ventilation.

4. Failure to provide clean feeding conditions.

5. Failure to provide water (also in freezing weather) and vegetarian salt.
6. Forcing cows to lie in sloppy, filthy pens.
7. Forcing calves to nurse on cows which have been lying in manure.
8. Overcrowding.

IV

FEEDING

Recommended:

1. All cows should have pasturing facilities. Herding and intensive rotational grazing are the recommended methods of pasturing.
2. Diet.
 - a) Milking cows, growing and working oxen, and breeding bulls should be fed grains or high quality supplemental feeds such as silage which should be secured to prevent overeating.
 - b) Change from one type of feed to another, especially from dry feeds to fresh feeds, should be done gradually so that bloating, which can lead to death, does not occur.
 - c) Clean water and vegetarian salt should always be available.
 - d) All feeding should be done under the supervision of the primary cowherd to ensure the health and safety of the cows.
 - e) There should be sufficient feeding space so that all animals can eat without undue stress from herd mates.
 - f) Hay or other feed should be available for all animals when natural browsing is insufficient to provide minimal nutritional requirements.

Permitted:

1. Pasturing with as much rotation of paddocks as possible.
2. Tethering when sufficient pasturing grounds are not available and under the following conditions:
 - a) All tethering should be supervised by primary cowherd.
 - b) There must be sufficient availability of green grass and provision for exercise.

- c) The safety and comfort of the animal is the prime consideration. E.G., Care must be taken to guard against a cow being strangled on a rope especially in hilly areas.
 - d) Adequate water and vegetarian salt must be available if tethered for more than a couple of hours.
3. If cows are being fed bhogā and prasādam scraps (not from human plates) in addition to their other feed then such feeding must be carefully monitored by the primary cowherd due to the fact that cows can become unhealthily fat on scraps, sick, or in immediate danger due to carelessly adding indigestible items such as kitchen utensils.
 4. If grazing grounds are inadequate for the number of cows then there must be a plan to eventually provide grazing land or replenish existing land.

Not Allowed:

1. Tethering which fails to meet even the Permitted standards described above.
2. Total confinement.
3. Diet.
 - a) Feeding by-products of animal slaughter.
 - b) Feeding a diet consisting entirely of kitchen garbage and prasādam scraps.
 - c) Feeding prasādam scraps from human plates.
 - d) Feeding rotten prasādam and kitchen scraps.
 - e) Carelessly including in feed articles that are not digestible such as garlands, kitchen utensils, floor sweepings, or burnt food such as burnt chaunces, burnt custard.
 - f) Feeding moldy hay.
4. Throwing cow's hay and grains on the ground where they can walk on it and pass stool on it.(refer to 3b & 6 of Standard 3 Shelter).
5. Failure to follow 2a through 2f of recommended.

V

MILKING

Recommended:

1. Training Cows.

- a) Cows should be trained by voice commands for the purpose of safety during public events, every day health checks, etc.
- b) All cows should be given names.

2. Milking.

- a) Milking should be done by hand by trained experienced milkers who regularly milk the same cow(s).
- b) Cows should be brushed daily, and udder washed before milkings.

3. A Calf and Mother.

- a) A calf and its mother should have as much association as possible, especially in the calf's first week, to acquire the essential colostrum.
- b) There must be careful consideration to the eating habits of the calf so that overeating does not occur leading to scours (diarrhea) which can lead to death. Overeating can be prevented by limiting access to the udder of the mother.
- c) Weaning must be gradual, totally achieved no sooner than 3 months with the option of 6 months or longer.
- d) During the weaning process a sweetened grain with the proper balanced ration for a young calf, first cutting, non stemmy hay, and clean water should be available for access by calf.
- e) Caution should be taken against putting calves on pasture too early which can cause bloat (which can be fatal).
- f) The primary cowherd should be supervising and instructing the treatment of the calf and mother.

Permitted:

1. Training Cows.

Cows can be trained to lead by halter or gentle herding techniques. This is for safety and health checks, not working as oxen. However light work is allowed for non lactating cows and must be supervised by the primary cowherd.

2. Milking.

Milking should be done by hand.

3. A Calf and Mother.

- a) Calves may be bottle fed colostrum for the first few days and later on milk.
- b) A plan must be presented to correct bottle feeding allowing for new calves in the herd to be with their mothers.
- c) Gradual weaning can be prior to 6 months If the calf's coat changes color or it loses interest in milk (ruling out illness).

Not Allowed:

1. Ill Treatment.

Failure to develop a personal relationship with a cow leading to excessive use of whips, prods, beating, rough treatment, and violence to the animal.

2. Milking.

- a) Milking by hand in which the following occur: pinch, pull or any other action that may result in the animal becoming disturbed.
- b) Milking by machine. This is not acceptable and can only be done in a crisis situation, e.g., lack of sufficient cowherds. A plan to correct the crisis situation must be presented.
- c) Failure to provide all calves access to mother's milk either directly from the cow or by milk bottle.
- d) Feeding calves milk replacement or by the bucket method.

3. Working cows as oxen except in dire emergency.

VI

TRAINING OXEN

Recommended:

- 1. Training oxen should begin at 2-4 months to develop a relationship of love and trust. No work is done at this time due to softness of bones as well as other reasons.
- 2. Training should be by voice commands or Indian technique of pierced nose with rope halter.
- 3. All oxen should be given names.

Permitted:

1. Training at a later age but still developing a relationship of love and trust.

Not Allowed:

1. Using whips excessively, beating, rough treatment, and violence to the oxen.

VII**TRAVELING AND PREACHING PROGRAMS**

Such programs represent ISKCON to the public. If there is an unfortunate incident it is ISKCON that can be sued and attacked, not the individuals handling the animals.

Recommended:

1. Before travelling, all oxen must be well trained with a proven working reliability by an experienced teamster.
2. All cows and calves involved must be trained to voice commands and/or halter broken.
3. All local laws of health, safety and insurance must be followed.
4. All animals in such programs must have had previous experience in the association of people so as to not be in a state of shock when taken to be viewed by a crowd.
5. The health, safety and general well-being of all animals and people in such programs and people observing such programs takes priority over achieving inappropriate daily distance or preaching goals.
6. There must be fair and considerate treatment of any uncooperative animal.
7. Oxen should be handled by experienced teamsters only.
8. Cows, calves should be handled by persons approved by the primary cowherd. They should have had some previous experience caring for the animal.
9. Daily health check of all animals. A sick animal is one which is: noticeably unwell, has temperature, not eating, or diseased. Appropriate remedial measures must be taken.
10. Transported Oxen must be well-provided at all times with the following:
 - a) Sufficient space to lie down and rest.
 - b) Sufficient ventilation, sunlight and protection from bad weather.

- c) Legally safe & secure transport facilities (doors closed while traveling, vehicles and/or trailers must be in well maintained condition).
- d) Sufficient food, water, and vegetarian salt.
- e) Sufficient exercise by being un-trailerred at night and when not traveling.
- g) Daily brushing.

11. Walking Oxen.

In addition to all the above:

- a) Appropriate and timely foot care (including shoeing, when needed).
 - b) Extra rest time and health care.
 - c) Their load must be appropriate to their strength power, health, and age, and approved by an experienced teamster.
 - f) Legs and feet of walking oxen should be given special attention during health check.
12. On a monthly basis, the oxen should have a complete health examination by a local government or approved veterinarian.
13. Concise records of health and temperament of the oxen, local land conditions, weather, distances traveled, and public interest shown to the oxen should be kept on a daily basis.

Permitted:

1. If the person handling the oxen is not an experienced teamster he must be in training and under the strict supervision of an experienced teamster.

Not Allowed:

1. Training programs consisting of only 1 to 7 days previous to beginning traveling.
2. Failure to provide sufficient supervision of public access to the cows, resulting in abuse to the cows.
3. Initiating a travelling preaching program with bullocks without sufficient provision for a suitable place for retirement and cowherd care.
4. Failure to provide animals the recommended and permitted.

Recommended:

1. Any property (land and cows) belonging to the Deity should be protected by environmentally sound conservation practices designed with the long term fertility and preservation of the soil in mind.
2. Construction of convenient watering places like ponds and tanks and easily accessible shade is appreciated by the cows.

Permitted:

1. Land may be burned only when dense growth needs to be removed to increase productivity.
2. Timber.
 - a) Conditions for timbering Individual select cuttings of trees may be done for the erection of homes, road right-of-ways, construction of fence lines, cropland, or pasture.
 - b) Use of timber cut trees so cut must be utilized for construction purposes or firewood.
 - c) Replacement when deemed necessary to forest health and supply, trees cut should be replaced by planting new ones in appropriate locations.

Not Allowed:

1. Grazing animals who are destined for slaughter on ISKCON/devotee property.
2. Removing sod or yearly burning of crop or grazing land.
3. Clear cutting of trees.
4. Cutting of trees on steep land or land which may be prone to erosion or any other activity that may lead to erosion.
5. Performing activity that may lead to contamination of any bodies of water.
6. Selling or exchanging land used by cows except where the cows will directly benefit or such sales will increase the assets of the cows.
7. Allowing unauthorized passage of people without permission from temple and knowledge of the primary cowherd.

SECTION 2: BREEDING STANDARDS

IX

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACQUIRING COWS

Recommended:

1. Animal Acquisition.

- a) A cow should not be acquired or bred for furnishing milk without well-defined plans to provide care and lifetime engagement for her resulting offspring.
- b) Cows should be acquired from the nearest ISKCON farm.

2. Sufficient Land.

Care includes having sufficient productive land to support the offspring. This land should be held in a Cow/Land Trust and maintained by self-reliant, low-impact methods.

3. Engagement of All Stock.

Lifetime engagement includes all male calves born be trained and worked and female calves be trained to voice commands or halter broken. Female cows are not required to be bred, especially if there are no plans to train any resultant bull calves.

Permitted:

1. Use of Non-devotee Land.

The acquiring of grazing rights, or leasing of land from non-devotees to provide sufficient land for the cows' support.

2. Trust funds and Lifetime Adoption.

The establishment of Trust Funds and Lifetime Adoption, in order to adequately provide for a calf throughout its entire life.

3. The Purchase of Feed.

Purchase of feed is permitted when existing lands fail to provide enough.

4. Leasing Cows.

Arrangements for leasing cows to others is permitted if it can contribute to the overall goal of cow protection, and if the lessee is legally bound to abide by all Cow Protection Standards, including, but not limited to, arrangements made for lifetime protection of both cow and calf.

5. Acquiring Cows From Non-devotees.

When the nearest ISKCON Farm is practically too far for safe transport, has no animals suitable for training, or has no need to give cows away, purchase from non-devotees is permitted.

Not Allowed:

1. Animal Acquisition.

Procuring or breeding of a cow for the purpose of supplying milk without any plan for the care, training and engagement of offspring.

2. Lack of land and funds for animal care. Failure to provide sufficient land, cowherds, and funds to support the cow and/or offspring.

3. The Purchase of Feed.

Purchasing feed without planning for future production by sustainable agricultural methods.

4. Leasing Cows.

Leasing cows without the legally binding and well monitored contracts as described in # 4 of permitted.

5. Acquiring Cows From Non-devotees. Buying cows from non-devotees instead of from local overcrowded ISKCON Farms when practical transportation of cows is possible and animals suitable for training are available.

X

SELECTION OF BREEDING STOCK

Recommended:

1. Choosing Breed.

a) Choice should be made on the basis of retaining traits desirable and appropriate for ISKCON devotees' particular needs.

b) Heritage breeds should be considered before more recent breeds.

2. Choosing Desirable Traits.

- a) Choice should be made taking into consideration docility, longevity, resilience, and the ability to thrive on low-quality feeds.
- b) Desirable milking cow traits include, in addition to longevity of milking, ability to produce milk on low-quality feeds, durability, ease of handling and leading, long teats.
- c) Desirable working oxen traits include, in addition, the ability to work well, durability, ease of training, and sturdy hoof history in lineage (black hoofs being generally stronger).

3. Geographical Considerations.

- a) Choice of breeding stock depends a great deal upon local conditions and availability.
- b) Breeds that are excellent choices for one area may not be good choices for other areas. For example, the 'Taurean' breeds are good for temperate climates while the 'Zebu' types are better for the tropics.

Permitted:

1. Crossbreeding.

To use existing stock with an appropriate cross breeding program, conducted by an experienced breeder, to breed in the desirable bloodlines and breed out the original bloodline.

Not Allowed:

- 1. Choosing exotic breeds that are unsuitable for location and purposes.
- 2. Breeding done without appropriate knowledge which can result in unusable animals. E.g., most Taurean crossed Zebu cows have proven too unruly to milk.

XI

CASTRATION

Recommended:

- 1. Bull calves of European Taurean breeds should be castrated at 6 months to a year. Indian Zebu breeds should be castrated at 1 year to 2 years.
- 2. The method of castration should be by emasculation, specifically using the tool bordezio (bloodless castration) performed by a veterinarian, or experienced professional.

Permitted:

1. Cutting by a veterinarian or experienced professional.
2. Use of bordizzo by experienced cowherd.

Not Allowed:

1. Banding (using rubber bands around the testicles until they drop off).
2. Performing acceptable methods of castration by inexperienced cowherd.

XII**INSEMINATION OF COWS****Recommended:**

1. Cows should be inseminated by a bull kept at the farm, rather than by artificial insemination, as requested by Çréla Prabhupāda. Such bulls must be properly enclosed for safety reasons, as well as to avoid unwanted inseminations.
2. Careful records of breeding must be kept in order to avoid unplanned inbreeding.
3. When a bull can not be kept safely and humanely, use of a community bull or neighbor's bulls is recommended.

Permitted:

1. Artificial Insemination may be used when in special circumstances bulls cannot be properly maintained.
2. Bulls from a neighbor (even though not farmed according to Vaiñēav principles) may also be used if they are suitable.
3. Inbreeding may be practiced only under strict conditions by an experienced breeder.

Not Allowed:

1. Not restricting a bull in a standard bull pen. Such lack of precaution will inevitably lead to unwanted inseminations. It can also be the cause of life-threatening accidents to cowherds or guests.
2. Keeping a bull without following the same standards given herein for the cows.

3. Keeping a bull without association. At least one ox should be kept with him, to prevent boredom.

4. Keeping the bull in adjacent pastures or stalls to cows he should not breed.

SECTION 3: MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

XIII

RESPONSIBILITY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY

Recommended

1) Housing and use of ISKCON land contracted to devotees who are seriously committed to protecting cows and working the land.

2) Land Base.

Cow programs should be increasing the land base available to cow herding, not decreasing.

a) Lands may be sold or exchanged only if there is an offsetting advantage and an increase to the overall program.

b) New land acquired to be given, leased, sold at fair market value to those who seriously committed to protecting cows and working the land. Any income generated from such transferred land should be used to benefit the cow protection programs.

c) The determination of land sales in regard to what is best for the cows should be made by the cows' primary cowherd.

3. Ox-power Produce.

Ox-power produce should be purchased from the goshalla at above standard market price by temple and devotees. Milk from protected cows should be sold at a premium, with the amount above the standard market value used to make capital contributions to a Cow Protection Trust Fund.

4. Cow Remains.

a) Local government and customs must be respected.

b) When possible it is recommended to honor the dead body of the cow.

c) After all reasonable efforts have been taken to maintain the soul in the body of the cow, when the soul has left the body of the cow, there is no bar to someone recycling the body unless illegal in that country and after consulting with the primary cowherd. (Recycling the dead body of the cow is in accordance with Srila Prabhupada's instruction in the Teachings of Queen Kunti and other sources.)

5. Goshalla Reporting.

Managers of goshalla should be accountable for quarterly presenting facts and figures that show the value of the cows, their services provided (i.e. plowing, transport, labor, publicity), their produce and their by-products.

Permitted

1. Milk and Ox-power Produce.

- a) When cows and cowherds are sufficiently supported by temple, milk and produce can be given to the temple.
- b) Milk and ox-power produce bought at market value by temple and devotees.

2. Land Base.

Lands may be put into private hands if there is a means easily monitored and managed by which the land will continue to be used for cow protection, i.e. retention of grazing rights, leasing agreements, or the establishment of a fund dedicated to obtaining new land.

Not Allowed

1. Land Base.

- a) Selling lands for the sake of generating cash flow to deal with non-capital expenditures. This is strictly forbidden except in emergency situations and then only after approval by the Minister of Cow Protection and Agriculture and the approval of the GBC.
- b) Selling land currently used by cows that decreases the overall land base available to the cows.
- c) Using ISKCON's land to graze animals destined for slaughter. (See Standard VIII Use of Krishna's Property, Not Allowed #1).

2. Taxing of Goshalla.

3. Milk and Ox-power Produce.

Consuming milk and produce without compensation to the goshalla.

4. Cow Remains.

- a) Using the body of a dead cow by cow protectors for profit making activity to such a point that it encourages negligence that contributes to the cow's death.

b) Neglecting to follow the government's laws and local customs in regards to disposal of the dead cow's body.

5. Goshalla Reporting.

Failure to present facts and figures that show the value of the cows, their services provided (i.e. plowing, transport, labor, publicity), their products and their by-products.

XIV

LOCAL GBC RESPONSIBILITY

Recommended

1. The GBC Should Quarterly.

a) Meet with cowherds and ox teamsters. This meeting should be a minimum of 1 hour and private.

b) Visit every cow facility and traveling program and review records.(See Standard 1).

c) Present written reports to the Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture. (Report forms can be found on page 66 of this document).

2. Investigation of Abuses.

When a GBC receives reports of cow abuse in his/her locale, the complaint must be investigated by the GBC and if found true, the situation must be corrected by consultation with local Farm Council and the Ministry.

3. Follow-up by Consultation Team.

Where no action has been initiated after one week following investigation or if the Ministry deems the action insufficient, the Ministry will appoint a consultation team to create a report specifying actions needed to correct the situation.

4. ISKCON's Ministry of Justice Involvement If corrections are not initiated within one month following the initial abuse report, the problem will be referred to ISKCON's Ministry of Justice for further action to protect the cows.

Permitted

1. Temple Presidents are responsible to see that local Goshalla Managers send biannual reports to the Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture. The local GBC Deputy/Deputies shall validate these reports by either personally visiting or appointing an accountable and reliable representative to do so.

2. Response to Abuses.

Permitted standards are the same as recommended standards #2,3,4 above.

Not Allowed

Failure to meet even permitted standards.

XV

CONSULTATION TEAM (CT)

Recommended

1. Selection of CT.

The Ministry will collect a world-wide list of devotees to act as a resource pool. Such devotees will be knowledgeable of the standards and have agricultural experience. From this list the Ministry will select an appropriate CT.

2. Travel.

To defray travel expense, members of the list who live closest to the problem in question will be chosen first. Members are encouraged to provide travel expense. A fund can eventually be set up to help with travel expense.

3. Membership of CT.

The CT should consist of 2 or more devotees not involved in the management of the program being investigated and a professional suited to the particular situation selected by the CT. The professional should not be currently employed by the farm under investigation.

4. Duties of CT.

The CT will arrange for group meetings and individual interviews with parties concerned and is responsible for the compilation of reports given to all GBC concerned (Local Commissioner, Global Secretary, Justice and Cow Protection Ministries).

Permitted

Same as recommended.

Not Allowed

Failure to follow the above standards in part or whole.

SECTION 4: CERTIFICATE OF READINESS (COR)

1) Requirements

A.1) In order to start a cow protection project that will be accredited within ISKCON and accepted as an ISKCON supported project, a “Cow protection Certificate of Readiness” needs to be obtained.

The following are the requirements for obtaining such a certificate, which will allow new cow protection projects to commence their operations:

1. The GBC Minimum Cow protection Standards ISKCON Law 507(1999) needs to be read and fully understood before applying for the certificate.
2. An exam must be taken and passed. The questions in the exam will be based on the content of Law 507.
3. A well-thought-out business plan with the signature of the GBC member must be presented to the Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture.
4. Details regarding the content that must be addressed in the business plan are provided below in order to assist in its preparation:

Centers may not make any commitments or agreements regarding procuring and/or acquiring cows until the “Cow Protection Certificate of Readiness” is granted. The “Certificate of Readiness” applies only to an ISKCON registered property to which it is granted and is not a generic permanent approval.

The Certificate of Readiness is valid for up to 180 days beyond the initial scheduled acquisition date. If the 180-day period has elapsed without the set up being completed, the center will be reassessed by the ISKCON Ministry for Cow protection and Agriculture for a new Certificate of Readiness to be issued.

The Cow protection Certificate of Readiness will be assessed by a local representative (from the temple concerned); the local GBC, regional leadership (which may include a representative from the National Council or RGB, etc.); and an ISKCON Cow protection and Agriculture (IMCPA) accredited representative. The GBC Executive Committee will be informed of the assessment outcome.

A.2) All ISKCON farms and goshalas must be registered in the IMCPA directory. Any project not registered in the directory by the 30th of March 2023, will have to submit a certificate of readiness to be registered in the directory.

Existing farms need to be registered with the IMCPA if they are managed by ISKCON even if they are in the name of a Trust or other entity. The Zonal Supervisors and Zonal Secretaries are responsible to see that all goshalas and farms are duly registered.

The initial contact

The centre wanting to commence a Cow protection Program makes an application via the IMCPA's website. After receiving this application which includes a business plan signed by the local GBC, IMCPA contacts local GBC and regional authorities to assess the viability of the application by their business plan and test. If process shows the centre has made a proper analysis of requirements for Cow protection which includes agriculture and is moving in the right direction regarding the proper allocation resources, etc. for cow protection, then the first stage approval is given. This then enables the temple to make arrangements to acquire cows and commence fund-raising, etc.

The second and final stage will be assessed based on the findings of a site visit by an IMCPA accredited representative, or comprehensive consultation with concerned devotees.

B) Necessary Content of the Business Plan

The business plan does not have to be based on self sufficiency (growing everything yourself) but should show sustainability (how it can work continuously taking into account environmental measures, your economic model and showing how you will have enough people to run it)

- 1. Please state the existing ISKCON center/project/ GBC member under which this goshala will be run, maintained and expanded.**
- 2. A financial plan for key years of operation (Years one, two, three, five, ten and fifteen).** As an aid in preparing this plan, we are providing applicants with a template. Please only use the provided template, any other document will not be accepted. Within the business plan there must be an emergency fund that would cover the essential running costs of the goshala for one year should there be any unforeseen crisis. The minimum fund should be not be less than \$18,000 and should cover a herd for up to 18 in number, (\$1000 per cow). Larger herds will need a larger proportional emergency fund.
- 3. Amount of land.** Please provide the details of how much land will be available for buildings, for grazing, and other uses - if any. What type of grade/quality is the land and how is the land used locally. Lower grade land use may require further analysis.
- 4. A detailed breeding plan.** Please prepare your breeding plan while taking into consideration an average lifespan of 16 years per herd member. The breeding plan has to be proportional to the amount of staff and land available. Use the template provided.
- 5. Staff and Volunteers.** Please state here the names, phone numbers, addresses and email addresses of all trustees and/or managers of the farm (such as the general farm manager, finance manager, goshala manager, ox department manager etc.) Use template provided in the budget analysis for filling in all staff and volunteer requirements.
- 6. Staff training.** Before acquiring any bovines, those who are in the key managerial

roles need to undergo training in an accredited ISKCON cow protection project. Training should include but is not limited to: usual leadership and management training, ox training, milking cows by hand, maintaining the barn and surrounding areas to ensure the herd's comfort- fencing, feeding, pasture management, caring for sick or dying cows, calving (when possible), caring for bulls (when possible), the mood and philosophy behind cow protection & farming, Srila Prabhupada's instructions on self-sufficiency, cow protection and agriculture.

- 7. Barn layout.** Should include electricity and water layouts as well as manure and urine disposal facilities and milking stalls. (open barns with shelter from winds, rain and snow are recommended)
- 8. Barns provided.** Separate housing should be provided for cows, oxen, calves and bulls. Please describe your plans in this regard. For old or sick and dying cows special facilities need to be provided; please indicate if you will be offering such facilities on your farm or in a neighbouring devotee run farm.
- 9. Fencing layout.** Please describe the division of your land into grazing area, exercise area for the winter, area for bulls (if you plan on having them) etc. Describe the kind of fences you intend to set up. The financing template should include costs for building and maintaining these fences. If you have not purchased a farm yet, please give a general idea of what you expect or hope to have on your farm once it is purchased.
- 10. Feeding plan.** What kind of food will you be providing for your herd and which food will you be growing yourself? Include grazing, hay, grain, as well as plans for winter months. Please make sure to indicate the anticipated sources of these.
- 11. Milking plan.** Much of this information should be covered in your financial plan such as: number of personnel required for milking the cows (see law 507 for methods allowed), location of milking facilities etc. Please include here information about your plans for milk sales, You should indicate if the milk is for internal use, for usages on other projects (such as temples in your area) or for sale (indicate if it is for sale to devotees or non devotees)
- 12. Engaging the oxen.** Please present an initial plan for engaging the oxen. What types of work are they expected to carry out, how many working oxen would you like to have at any given time and the number of personnel that will be training them and working with them. If the initial plan is minimal, please present future plans for expansion.
- 13. Equipment list.** Please identify what equipment will be required for your operation and at what stage of the operation you will be acquiring it.
- 14. Cow breeds.** Please indicate which breed of cows you will be purchasing and why you are choosing that particular breed. Please note, you should choose a breed of cows that is compatible with the climate in your area. A breed whose cows are known to produce a high yield of milk and whose oxen are known to be good workers is preferable.
- 15. Bull.** Keeping a bull for the purpose of breeding is the recommended standard

for all cow protection projects in ISKCON. Are you planning to keep a bull? if so what facilities are you planning to have to keep him and others safe? Until a standard is established by the ministry of cow protection and agriculture in regards to keeping a bull, please take guidance from your national agricultural department.

16. Cow remains. What will you do with the remains of cows, bulls and bullocks who have passed away? Please note that your choice has to be accepted by your country's regulations in this regard, please indicate if it is or not.

SECTION 5: AGRICULTURAL STANDARDS

1) Principle & Application

The use of:

- a. Synthetic pesticides
- b. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)
- c. Synthetic fertilizers.

will not be allowed in ISKCON projects.

A project may continue to use synthetic fertilizers, at most until 2025, under the condition that they present a short-term transition plan towards regenerative agriculture.

Regenerative agriculture and agroecology practices are **recommended**. Organic Agriculture practices **are allowed**.

This law will be located in section number 5 of the existing '507' document and will be named 'Minimum Agriculture Standards'. Thus, the 507 law shall now be entitled " Minimal Cow Protection and Agriculture Standards ISKCON GBC Law 507".

Footnotes to resolution:

Glossary:

GMO: An organism produced through genetic modification.

Agricultural Biotechnology Glossary

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/biotechnology/biotechnology-glossary>

Regenerative Agriculture: A holistic, principles-based approach to farming. It seeks to strengthen soil fertility, community, and water-sources resilience.

Such systems include biodynamics, permaculture design, rotational grazing, biomimicry, agroforestry, syntropic farming, etc.

Adapted from (Newton et al., 2020)

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2020.577723>

Organic agriculture: Agriculture that focuses on production without the use of synthetic inputs and does not allow the use of transgenic organisms.

Agricultural Biotechnology Glossary

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/biotechnology/biotechnology-glossary>



Ministry of Cow Protection
and Agriculture

Minimum Cow Protection Standards
ISKCON GBC Law 507