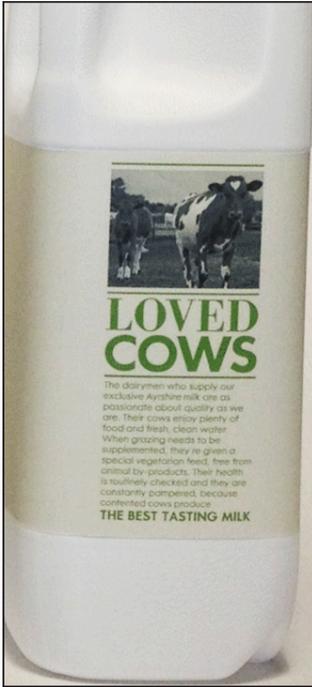


Woolworths Dairy Commitment List

Based on the assumptions we consumers believed to be true from Woolworths packaging and marketing of these two products - we ask that you urgently commit to addressing the following misleading discrepancies in their production :



Woolworths Ayrshire Dairy

PASTURE

COMMITMENT 1 :

Kindly ensure that all Woolworths Ayrshire dairy herds ***“spend their days in tranquil green pastures with access to plenty of good food and fresh, clean water”*** - as per the wording in your marketing of this product in Woolworths TASTE magazine. (Wording has been removed from the website since our complaint.)

ACTUAL SCENARIO : The Woolworths Dairy Team conceded that currently only about half of Woolworths Ayrshire cows live in pasture. The other half live in barns, and are fed a diet of feed, which includes GMO feed.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: Cows kept in barns are not able to do what cows do best, which is to convert fresh growing grass into wholesome milk. These cows are also not able to enjoy natural bovine behavior roaming, foraging, ruminating and lying down comfortably in pasture. Stocking density in barns often means cows can't lie down as much as in pasture, and standing for long periods of time increases their discomfort and incidence of lameness. Cows in barns spend more time standing & lying in faeces than cows in pasture, increasing the risk of hygiene problems, lameness, and mastitis, which can in turn affect the milk.

SHADE

COMMITMENT 2 :

Ensure that **ALL** Woolworths Ayrshire dairy cows are given plenty of shade in pastures, in the form of trees or shade-cloth – as per the Woolworths Ayrshire milk label which assures consumers of this product that the cows are ***“loved”, “pampered” and “contented”***.

ACTUAL SCENARIO: Existing shade for about half of Woolworths Ayrshire cows is in the form of the open barns and Woolworths stated that ***“when it is hot, cows generally prefer to stay underneath the open barns in the shade to be shielded against the sun.”*** This prevents their natural behaviour to move outdoors and graze.

EXERCISE

COMMITMENT 3 :

Kindly ensure that all Woolworths Ayrshire dairy cows are able to get adequate exercise by roaming freely in pasture - as per the Woolworths Ayrshire milk label assuring consumers that the cows are ***“loved”, “pampered” and “contented”***.

ACTUAL SCENARIO: Currently about half of Woolworths Ayrshire cows live in barns, and their main exercise is walking to and from the milking parlour each day.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: Lack of adequate exercise is detrimental to cows and can lead to weak bones and lameness. Animals in pasture naturally roam, slowly, all day, getting plenty of fresh air and exercise. Walking to and from the milking parlor is not the same as relaxed roaming, and if often done in large groups in single file along hard or concrete pathways which can damage hooves.

MUTILATION

COMMITMENT 4 :

Ensure that de-budding or dehorning of all Woolworths Ayrshire dairy calves or cows is rendered unnecessary by more careful management - as per the Woolworths Ayrshire milk label describing “*loved*”, “*pampered*” and “*contented*” cows.

In rare cases where it is deemed absolutely essential, ensure that the pain and distress of de-budding or dehorning is minimized, by being carried out by a qualified vet. Vets must administer a sedative to prevent the need for stressful physical restraint, a local anaesthetic for the operation, and post-operative pain relief. If debudding is unavoidable then it must be done before the calf is two months of age.

*(See reference (A) below - for study on calf welfare).

ACTUAL SCENARIO: In South Africa calves are routinely held down forcibly by unqualified farm workers, the horn buds cut or burnt out, and the wound cauterized with a hot iron. This is done without the presence of a qualified vet, sedative, anesthetic, or painkillers, and is extremely stressful and painful for the animal. This does not fit with the assurance which Woolworths gives on their Ayrshire milk label, that the cows are “*loved*”, “*pampered*” and “*contented*”.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: This lack of concern for the pain suffered by dairy calves and cows is very disturbing. In the UK the Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics) Act 1954 makes it an offence to disbud calves or dehorn any cattle without an anaesthetic (unless chemical cauterisation is used). Customers would like assurance that Woolworths is following best practice.

IMPREGNATION/INSEMINATION

COMMITMENT 5 :

Ideally cattle would roam freely in a herd and fall pregnant naturally, however where this is not possible, it is understood that artificial insemination is used. When artificial insemination is used, ensure that Woolworths dairy cows are only served when they naturally come into heat, and that your farms do not set the time of oestrus manually through the use of hormones.

ACTUAL SCENARIO : Cows are currently routinely artificially inseminated. It's unclear whether Woolworths farms use hormones to bring cows into heat manually.

WEANING

COMMITMENT 6 :

Ensure that all Woolworths Ayrshire dairy calves remain with their mothers in the herd, suckling for a **minimum** of 3- 6 months, until they are gradually weaned, but not before they are taking in adequate solids. (At the very least, they may be weaned by a nurse mother until 4-6 months, but must not be removed from the mother until 3 weeks of age or until the rumen develops.)

Once they are weaned, ensure that calves spend their days grazing together in pasture when the weather is suitable, and are housed in group-housing barns at night or when the weather isn't suitable, with the care of foster cows to prevent the stress of separation from their mothers - as per the Woolworths Ayrshire milk label assuring consumers that the product they are purchasing is from “*loved*”, “*pampered*” and “*contented*” cows.

ACTUAL SCENARIO: Woolworths Ayrshire dairy cows are removed from their mothers after 3 days.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: In nature a cow would wean her calf around 1 year of age. Customers recognize the reason for forced removal and weaning in the dairy industry, to enable the producers to collect their quota of milk, but the harshness of this experience can be minimized.

The advantage of early weaning is solely to enable producers to collect more milk, and puts the young calf at increased risk due to stress. Studies have shown that leaving calves with their mothers longer avoids the

stress reactions observed in both mothers and calves, and provides the calves with health and performance advantages which help prevent disease and the need for antibiotics. * (see reference (B) and (C) below).

MALE CALVES

COMMITMENT 7 :

Woolworths to establish and make known to interested customers their protocols on the treatment of Woolworths Ayrshire male dairy calves. We would like to know that they remain with their mothers till humanely weaned at 3-6 months, and are then raised on the farm of birth, or sold only to reputable Woolworths approved farmers to be raised - as per the Woolworths Ayrshire milk label assuring customers that the cows are “*loved*”, “*pampered*” and “*contented*”. This process would need to be audited by third-party independent auditors and traceable by interested consumers.

ACTUAL SCENARIO : Woolworths Ayrshire male dairy calves are currently removed from their mothers after 3 days.

SLAUGHTER

COMMITMENT 8 :

The routine slaughter by Woolworths of dairy cows which are no longer productive should be done as humanely as possible. Humane transport and slaughter of these animals should take place in Woolworths approved abattoirs within close proximity to farm to avoid undue stress, and the process should be monitored by CCTV cameras, so that everything possible is done to ensure humane standards are observed - as per the assurance Woolworths gives customers on the Ayrshire milk label describing “*contented*”, “*pampered*” and “*loved*” cows.

ACTUAL SCENARIO : It's unclear what currently happens in terms of transport and slaughter of these animals, and at what age. A cow's natural lifespan is around 20 years, but intensively farmed dairy cows are routinely slaughtered at 5-7 years of age



Woolworths Organic Dairy

PASTURE

COMMITMENT 1 :

Ensure that all Woolworths Organic milk and dairy products are “*Produced from cows that roam freely and graze in organic pastures*” – as per :

(a) the label on Woolworths Organic fresh milk up until December 2012 (removed after we queried the accuracy of the wording vs Woolworths actual farming practice.)

(b) the Woolworths Holdings website, which states “*All Organic animals are free range...animals live natural lives, roaming on the land, interacting with one another and eating only plant-based foods.*” *(See reference (D) below)

(c) common consumer perception of organic products being ones that are farmed according to the principles of nature, where animals are allowed to express their natural behaviour.

Organic standards **do not permit zero-grazing systems.** Animals **must** be allowed access to pasture un-

less the following circumstances temporarily prevent this:

- a) the health or welfare of the animal
- b) the weather conditions and the state of the ground, or
- c) community or national requirements relating to specific animal health problems.

ACTUAL SCENARIO: Currently none of the cows which produce Woolworths Organic fresh milk spend their days roaming freely or grazing in organic pastures.

The Woolworths Dairy Team said this is due to the lack of available pasture in the hot, low-rainfall region of South Africa where Woolworths has chosen to farm their organic fresh milk. They stated that their organic cheese is however produced on pasture based farms in the Cape, which is cooler and has higher rainfall. When explaining the milk label, the Dairy Team said: ***“With regards to the packaging claim (on the milk bottles), this was made with reference to the farms in the Southern Cape (where Woolworths organic cheese is farmed) and not a combination of both farming conditions.”***

It is unclear why Woolworths milk labels would refer to farms where only cheese is produced. For reasons unknown too, since our complaint, this claim has been removed from both the milk and cheese labels.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: This is misleading and grossly unfair to customers who pay a premium for a product which we assume has been produced as the label, website and marketing indicate, plus as per organic standards as commonly understood by consumers.

Yet in spite of the milk label (***“Produced from cows that roam freely and graze in organic pastures”***) and the Woolworths Holdings website stating that ***“All Organic animals are free range...”*** none of the cows which produce Woolworths Organic fresh milk live in pasture.

ORGANIC STANDARDS

COMMITMENT 2 :

For the present and until relevant organic legislation is promulgated in South Africa, we ask that Woolworths adhere to organic standards which are recognized as best practice, and not those which are recognized to be deliberately watered down to match existing standards.

Organic best practice stipulates that organic food is produced using sound environmental and animal friendly farming methods, and that **animals are always truly free-range.** *(See Soil Association reference (E) below)

Adhere to Organic Food processing principles to minimise processing, consistent with the food in question and to maximise information for the consumer on **processing methods** and **ingredients** on labelling.

ACTUAL SCENARIO : The commonly understood standards of “organic” dairy which were stated on the Woolworths website, are not being followed by Woolworths in practice. *(See reference (D) below)

In discussions with the Dairy Team it seems that in practice the commonly understood definition of “access to pasture” has been clouded to include limited access to confined outside areas alongside the barn called “resting or holding areas” where cows can stand, sometimes on grass if available. Terms such as “free to roam” also confuse consumers into assuming that cows live in pasture, when instead it means they are free to roam from inside the barn, into the outside resting or holding areas. This blurring of terms is disingenuous and misleading to customers.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: This is misleading and grossly unfair to customers who pay a premium for a product which we assume has been produced according to commonly understood organic standards. With no government legislation of organic food in South Africa, consumers can be misled by retailers. It is essential that organic products are produced according to the principles of organic agriculture as they are commonly understood by the consumer, and as stated on the Woolworths Holdings website, and that the term is not manipulated by Woolworths and private certifying bodies to mean less than consumers expect them to mean.

SHADE

COMMITMENT 3 :

Ensure that Woolworths Organic dairy cows are given plenty of shade in these pastures, in the form of trees, as would occur in nature - allowing them to behave in a natural manner grazing, ruminating and sleeping, as per the standards of organic farming methods.

ACTUAL SCENARIO: Existing shade is in the form of the open barns and Woolworths stated that *“when it is hot, cows generally prefer to stay underneath the open barns in the shade to be shielded against the sun.”* This prevents their natural behaviour to move outdoors into pasture and graze.

EXERCISE

COMMITMENT 4 :

Ensure that Woolworths Organic dairy cows get adequate exercise roaming freely in pasture, as they would naturally do.

ACTUAL SCENARIO : Currently all Woolworths Organic fresh milk cows live in barns, and therefore are unable to express their natural behaviour of roaming, grazing and ruminating all day. Their main exercise is walking from the barn to the milking parlour, or into a “resting”, “loafing” or “holding” area next to the barn. Lack of adequate exercise is unnatural and detrimental to cows and can lead to lameness.

MUTILATION

COMMITMENT 5 :

Ensure that the unnatural mutilation and dehorning of Woolworths Organic dairy calves or cows is rendered unnecessary by more careful management. In the rare instance that it is deemed necessary, ensure that it is only performed by a qualified vet, with the use of a combination of sedative, local anesthetic and pain-killers. It must be done before the calf is two months of age.

**(see references (A) and (F) below, for studies on calf welfare.)*

ACTUAL SCENARIO : Dairy calves are routinely held down forcibly by farm workers, the horn buds cut out and the wound cauterized with a hot iron. This is done without the presence of a vet, sedative, anaesthetic, or painkillers, and is extremely stressful and painful for the animal. This goes against the principles of organic farming, and is neither natural nor demonstrates care for the animal welfare standards which organic farming demands.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: This is misleading and dishonourable to customers who pay a premium for an organic product which we assume has been produced to high animal welfare standards.

IMPREGNATION/INSEMINATION

COMMITMENT 6 :

Ideally cattle would roam freely in a herd and fall pregnant naturally, however where this is not possible, it is understood that artificial insemination is used. When artificial insemination is used, ensure that Woolworths dairy cows are only served when they naturally come into heat, and that your farms do not set the time of oestrus manually through the use of hormones.

ACTUAL SCENARIO : Cows are currently routinely artificially inseminated. It's unclear whether Woolworths farms use hormones to bring cows into heat manually.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: Consumers who seek out and purchase organic milk, do so because they believe that the method of production is as natural as possible, that animal welfare is of the highest standard, and that no hormones or antibiotics have been used in the feed or production of the product. If hormones are

used to set the time of oestrus manually, then this is of grave concern.

WEANING

COMMITMENT 7 :

Ensure that all Woolworths Organic dairy calves remain with their mothers in the herd, suckling for a **minimum** of 3- 6 months, until they are gradually weaned, but not before they are taking in adequate solids. (At the very least, they may be weaned by a nurse mother until 4-6 months, but must not be removed from the mother until 3 weeks of age or until the rumen develops.)

Once they are weaned, it is essential that calves spend their days grazing together in pasture when the weather is suitable, and that they are housed in group-housing barns at night or when the weather isn't suitable, with the care of foster cows to prevent the stress of separation from their mothers - as per the animal welfare standards expected from organic products, and the principles of organic farming commonly understood by consumers, where animals are allowed to "*live natural lives*".

**(From the Woolworths Holdings website - see reference (D) below)*

ACTUAL SCENARIO : Currently Woolworths organic dairy calves are removed from their mothers after 24 hours after suckling colostrum, or after 3 days and then fed colostrum for 15 days.

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: This is misleading and grossly unfair to customers who pay a premium for an organic product which we assume has been produced according to commonly understood organic principles, and high animal welfare standards.

Early removal of calves causes distress to both the mother and calf, is not natural, and does not heed the commonly understood organic principles which consumers are paying for. In nature a cow would wean her calf around 1 year of age. While customers recognize the reason for forced removal and weaning in the dairy industry to enable the producers to collect their quota of milk, the harshness of this experience can be minimized.

The advantage of early weaning is solely to enable producers to collect more milk, and puts the young calf at increased risk due to stress. Studies have shown that leaving calves with their mothers longer avoids the stress reactions observed in both mothers and calves, and provides the calves with health and performance advantages which help prevent disease and the need for antibiotics. **(see reference (B) and (C) below).*

MALE CALVES

COMMITMENT 8 :

Ensure that all Woolworths Organic male calves remain with their mothers in the herd, suckling for a **minimum** of 3- 6 months, until they are gradually weaned, but not before they are taking in adequate solids. (At the very least, they may be weaned by a nurse mother until 3-6 months, but must not be removed from the mother until 3 weeks of age or until the rumen develops.) As per organic best practice, and the principles of organic farming commonly understood by consumers, where animals are allowed to "*live natural lives*".

**(From the Woolworths Holdings website - see reference (D) below)*

Ensure that once male calves are weaned, that they are then either raised organically on the farm, or sold to reputable Organic farmers to be raised. On these farms calves must spend their days grazing together in pasture when the weather is suitable, and be housed in group-housing barns at night or when the weather isn't suitable, with the care of foster cows to prevent the stress of separation from their mothers.

ACTUAL SCENARIO : Currently Woolworths organic bull calves are removed from their mothers after 24 hours after suckling colostrum, or after 3 days and then fed colostrum for 15 days. They are then either raised on the farm for organic meat or sold off the farm "*within the first two weeks of their lives for meat.*"

CUSTOMER CONCERNS: This is misleading and grossly unfair to customers who pay a premium for a product which we assume has been produced according to commonly understood organic principles as

specified on the Woolworths website, which include respect for natural behaviour and high animal welfare standards.

SLAUGHTER

COMMITMENT 9 :

Please ensure that when cows are no longer productive, that they are not slaughtered for meat, but are allowed to live out their natural lives on the farm.

If in the event slaughter of these animals is essential, please ensure humane transportation and slaughter in Woolworths approved abattoirs within close proximity to farm to avoid undue stress. Please ensure that the process is monitored by CCTV cameras, so that everything possible is done to ensure humane standards are observed.

ACTUAL SCENARIO : It's unclear what currently happens in terms of transport and slaughter of these animals, and at what age. A cow's natural lifespan is around 20 years, but intensively farmed dairy cows are routinely slaughtered at 5-7 years of age.

* See additional references below :

(A)

From Calf Management: Improving Calf Welfare and Production

Daniel M. Weary, Animal Welfare Program, University of British Columbia

http://www.landfood.ubc.ca/animalwelfare/publications/pdfs/posters/calf_mgmt_weary.pdf

Dehorning of calves

“The use of a sedative (such as xylazine) can essentially eliminate calf response to the administration of the local anaesthetic and the need for physical restraint during the entire dehorning process (Grøndahl-Nielsen et al., 1999). A sedative makes it easier to accurately deliver the nerve block, and the lack of restraint makes dehorning much easier for a single worker.

The use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ketoprofen - similar to the ibuprofen you may take for a headache), in addition to a local anaesthetic, can keep stress hormones and behavioural responses close to baseline levels in the hours that follow dehorning (McMeekan et al., 1998b; 1999; Faulkner & Weary, 2000).”

“...dairy producers, in consultation with their veterinarians, consider a combination of treatments for calves being dehorned. The use of a sedative allows for careful administration of the local anaesthetic, with no response by the calf. The combination of sedative and local anaesthetic allows for dehorning with no immediate pain response. The combination of sedative, local anaesthetic and a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug reduces the response to the pain both during dehorning and in the hours that follow.

(B)

Cow Separation and Natural Weaning

<http://www.compassioninfoodbusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Info-6-Cow-Calf-Separation-and-Natural-Weaning.pdf>

The negative effects of separation occur at any stage, as the heart rate of cows increased after separation irrelevant to the calf's age or amount of time spent together (Flower and Weary 2003, Stehulouá et al. 2008). Good welfare is comprised of health and physical wellbeing, but also psychological wellbeing and the ability to express natural behaviour (OIE 2011). Rearing the calf until natural weaning simultaneously improves cow health, by reducing the disease risk post-calving; psychological wellbeing, by preventing distress of separation and allowing positive bonding with the calf and natural behaviour, by expressing maternal behaviour.

Cow-calf rearing until natural weaning provides welfare benefits of health, psychological wellbeing and natural behavioural expression for both the calf and dam. The investment in the future herd of improved calf health may also outweigh the reduction in commercial milk yield. Where not possible, benefits of late separation may outweigh the distress caused, which can be partly mitigated by group housing calves which provides social benefits, and preventing visual and vocal contact with the dam (Flower and Weary 2003).

(C)

From **Calf Management: Improving Calf Welfare and Production**

Separation of calves

“...keeping the calf together with the cow for longer periods illustrates how well calves can do and how much room we have for improving the ways we conventionally rear calves. When calves are given the chance to drink more milk, either from the cow or from an artificial teat, they show impressive weight gains that persist after weaning. Feeding calves by teat facilitates keeping calves in small groups, a practice that may have advantages for both the calf and the producer. When calves are weaned this can be done more gradually by watering down the milk.

(D)

From the Woolworths Holdings website - (bold & underline is our addition)

http://www.woolworthsholdings.co.za/media/news_display.asp?Id2=201

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

12.Can meat & dairy products be organic?

Yes. **Woolworths provides organic** meat and organic eggs, **milk, yoghurt and cheeses.** **Organic animal husbandry means that the animals eat organic plant food,** they are treated only with approved homeopathic remedies and they **are allowed to roam freely on the farms.**

13.What is the difference between organic & free range?

All organic animals are free range, however all free range animals are not necessarily organic. All free range animals live natural lives, roaming on the land, interacting with one another and eating only plant-based foods. However, animals classified as free range, not organic, may be treated by conventional veterinary methods when sick. In addition, while free range animals eat only plant-based foods, these are not necessarily organically produced, and may include approved artificial additives in specific quantities.

(E)

From the Soil Association:

<https://www.soilassociation.org/whatisorganic>

Organic standards insist that animals are given plenty of space and fresh air to thrive and grow - guaranteeing a truly free-range life.

Organic animals enjoy the very highest welfare standards – they are truly free range and have plenty of space and access to fields.

(F)

From the Soil Association

<http://www.soilassociation.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=9EbyfKAZp7g%3D&tabid=197>

The Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics) Act 1954 makes it an offence to disbud calves or dehorn any cattle without an anaesthetic (unless chemical cauterisation is used).

In addition **Organic regulations** in the UK says that “any suffering to the animals shall be reduced to a minimum by applying adequate anaesthesia and/or analgesia and by carrying out the operation only at the most appropriate age and by qualified personnel.

(G)

From the Soil Association

<http://www.soilassociation.org/frequentlyaskedquestions/yourquestion/articleid/2328/do-you-certify-abattoirs-and-meat-processing-plants>

Our organic standards require that animals are taken to an abattoir that holds an organic license. Slaughter systems must be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress. They must operate in a way that avoids contamination of organic and non organic meat.