



Cow Fact Sheet

We are committed to finding safe, loving homes for our rescued animals and want to make sure that you are making an informed decision when choosing to adopt. Please read this Fact Sheet carefully before filling out the application, as well as do your own research.

Characteristics:

- The average lifespan for cattle is 18-22 years. However, those who come from factory farms may have significantly shorter lives and more health problems.
- Cattle like to be petted and scratched and can be quite affectionate. They will lick you. Many love to be groomed. Even most shy ones, if you approach them with patience, will come to enjoy this bonding experience.
- Cattle are, in general, quite gentle. However, they can accidentally injure you due to their weight and size. Always be aware of their movements and give yourself enough room to get out of the way.
- Young cattle are playful and might forget that you aren't a cow, too. Watch out for horns and dominance behavior when they are finding their place in the herd.
- Before adopting a cow:
 - Check your local zoning regulations to make sure that you can have this species.
 - Make sure that you have the time to care for the animal and that you have responsible caretakers to cover for you in the event of illness or when on vacation.
 - Make sure that your vet cares for these species or find one who does prior to adoption.

Feeding:

- Clean, fresh water should be available at all times. Cattle drink 10-20 gallons per day; amounts increase in hot weather. Make sure that you have a container large enough to hold this amount of water. Expect to empty the trough and remove algae, dirt and scum at least twice a week in warm months.
- Salt blocks should always be available; mineral blocks may also be needed, depending on the region where you live.
- As ruminants, cattle rely mainly on hay or pasture for their diet. Source your hay supplier carefully, and inspect your hay delivery for dust, mold, and weeds. Hay should be soft and smell sweet, not musty. **Grain is not recommended for healthy cattle.**
- Make sure that the pasture is of good quality and that all poisonous plants are removed. Contact your County Agriculture Extension Agent for a list of poisonous plants in your area.
- Adult cattle need two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of body weight daily. Alfalfa hay is not recommended for healthy cattle.

Health Care:

- Cattle can be halter trained with little difficulty and it is best to get them used to handling. It is important to always be gentle with them, as they scare easily and will become harder and harder to handle.
- Each cow should have a “stem to stern” routine health check every 2-3 weeks. Clean your cow’s ears, check hooves, inspect her body for lumps/bumps and injuries, and check eyes for discharge or injury. The udders of females should be checked for swelling, hardness, and heat.
- Annual hoof trimming should be done by your veterinarian or professional hoof trimmer; maintenance trimming may need to be done in between.
- Cattle need to be vaccinated yearly for rabies and other contagious diseases. Consult your veterinarian.
- Call your veterinarian immediately if you notice the following:
 - Bloat: signs include labored breathing, kicking, grinding teeth, bellowing, groaning, bawling, and excess salivation. Bloat can be fatal. It is caused by overeating grain or lush pasture. When changing pastures, adjust cattle to the new area slowly.
 - Eye infection: check eyes daily; signs include discolored/cloudy eyes, discharge, and swelling.
 - Signs of a respiratory infection include: coughing, nasal discharge, watery eyes, sneezing, lethargy, and loss of appetite.
 - Weight loss and diarrhea could indicate Johne’s Disease, a chronic bacterial infection. There is no treatment and it is highly contagious, so animals with this disease must be isolated. Homeopathic remedies may prolong life.
 - Lameness and swelling, heat, and pain in the foot. This could be foot rot and needs to be treated early.
- Fecal tests should be done every three months to determine presence of internal parasites. Cattle should be treated every season to prevent heel flies.
- **De-horning is cruel, painful, and unnecessary. In those rare instances when it is medically necessary, CAS requires a letter from your veterinarian and our written approval prior to performing the procedure. De-horning without our permission is a breach of contract that may result in forfeiture of your animal.**
- In warm weather, flies can be a serious nuisance and health risk. There are a wide range of products available, ranging from fly predators to spray to rubs. Find what works best.

Shelter:

- Cattle need shelter that is waterproof and well-ventilated. It does not need to be totally enclosed. Allow for at least 80 square feet for each animal. Also provide plenty of clean, dry straw for bedding.
- Wet conditions (humidity, urine, manure, body moisture) can lead to pneumonia. Spreading lime on wet areas before placing clean straw will help to absorb moisture and prevent spread of bacteria.
- Provide extra bedding in winter.
- Sturdy fencing and secure gates are necessary. Electric and/or woven wire is most practical. Fencing should be strung taut, 8-10 feet between posts and about four feet high.
- Catskill Animal Sanctuary recommends a minimum of 1 acre of pasture per cow (2 acres is strongly preferred); if you have a number of cattle, you should have more than one pasture to rotate them

between. The larger the pasture, the more grass is available for your cow to eat and less hay is needed to supplement his/her diet.

- Make sure that the pasture and shelter are free of hazards, such as nails, loose wires, baling twine, and stray garbage. They could become injured by items lying on the ground or may ingest them, causing death.