



FEEDLOT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

26. Office and amenities

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Introduction

A feedlot office is a dedicated structure used primarily for conducting management and administrative functions at the feedlot. It facilitates administration and clerical activities, visitor induction, meetings, employee offices and storage for company records (e.g. financial, animal performance and inventory).

At a large feedlot there may be a main office and additional offices at the feedmill and/or cattle handling facilities. All offices must meet minimum workplace health and safety standards.

Employee amenities, which may form part of the office facility, can include a dining area, drinking water, toilet/s, hand washing facilities, first aid station and/or car parking.

Design objectives

The design objectives for office and employee amenities are to provide

- Facilities for administrative and clerical activities.
- Meeting room for employees and visitors.
- Secure storage for keeping records.
- A safe workplace for feedlot employees.
- Appropriate amenities/facilities for employees.
- Suitable first aid facilities in the event of an accident.

Mandatory requirements

A person operating a feedlot has the primary duty under the Work Health and Safety Act (2011) (the WHS Act) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that workers and other persons are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the business.

The Work Health and Safety Regulations (2011) (the WHS Regulations) put more specific obligations on a person operating a feedlot in relation to the work environment.

The Code of Practice: Managing the Work Environment and Facilities (2011) is an approved code of practice under Section 274 of the WHS Act. It is a practical guide to achieving the standards of health, safety and welfare required under the WHS Act and the WHS Regulations.

Regulation 40 of the WHS Regulations (2011) states: A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that

- The layout of the workplace allows, and is maintained to allow, persons to enter and exit the workplace and move within it safely, both under normal working conditions and in an emergency.
- Work areas have space for work to be carried out safely.
- Floors and other surfaces are designed, installed and maintained to allow work to be carried out safely.
- Lighting enables each worker to carry out work safely, persons to move around safely and safe evacuation in an emergency.
- Ventilation enables workers to carry out their work without risk to their health and safety.

- Workers exposed to extremes of heat or cold are able to carry out work without risk to their health and safety.
- Work in relation to, or near, essential services (such as gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telecommunications) do not affect the health and safety of persons at the workplace.

The National Construction Code of Australia details the guidelines required for new buildings.

The Code of Practice: First Aid in the Workplace publication provides practical guidance about requirements for first aid facilities.

Design choices

Office

The feedlot office and car park should be located on the entrance road to the feedlot, before the feeding pens and other operating facilities (see *Section 2 – Feedlot site layout*). The entrance road should provide for all weather conditions and be designed for two way vehicle movements. Situating the car park before the office reduces traffic congestion and improves safety and biosecurity in the feedlot complex. Prominent signage should advise all visitors to park their cars and report to the office. The weighbridge for livestock and feed commodity deliveries is usually located adjacent to the main feedlot office.

The size and layout of the office, and the facilities needed, depends on the feedlot capacity. Larger feedlots generally have a designated feedlot office, typically with

- A reception area; a counter for visitors to complete a biosecurity check, safety induction and other forms; a waiting area with seating; and a private office for the manager and/or other senior employees.
- A meeting room.
- A glass window or door that provides employees with a clear view of vehicles entering the feedlot and trucks arriving on the weighbridge.
- Windows that provide a clear view of outside activities.
- Work stations for administration employees.
- Computers and associated infrastructure; feedlot management and business management software; high speed internet; a telephone system; ergonomic office furniture; and records storage.
- A separate meal room.
- Male and female toilets.
- Shower and/or a change room.
- Lockers (or similar) for storage of employee personal effects.
- A designated first aid treatment area or room.
- Air conditioning to provide a comfortable work environment and minimise dust accumulation.
- Parking for employees, visitors and trucks.
- Video or audio connection to security gates.
- A communication hub (e.g. UHF system for site) and connection to AWS and the feed management system.
- clearly displayed emergency contact numbers.



Relocatable pre-fabricated buildings provide a cost-effective solution for office and/or employee amenities.

A larger office may be needed if the feedlot size increases. The office should be situated in a location that allows for future expansion. The layout of the office, and the placement of furniture and fittings, should provide a functional, comfortable workspace.

At a small feedlot, a structure with a work station for the manager and/or administration employees, a dining area, toilet and first aid facilities may be adequate. This could be part of the feedlot manager's house, or another farm building - or it could be a small stand alone office. A second hand demountable building can provide a low cost, suitable space.

Dust

Dust from roads and pens can be a major problem around office buildings. Inside the office, dust can damage electronic equipment and provide a disagreeable work environment.

Offices should be air-conditioned and well sealed to prevent dust entering. Dust generated near the office should be minimised with sealed roads and/or landscaped lawns.

Employee amenities

All workplaces must provide ready access to hygiene and welfare facilities, such as toilets, hand washing amenities, first aid facilities, drinking water, eating areas and shelter for all people. A large feedlot may need to provide some of these facilities at multiple locations.

Clean, hygienic toilets must be accessible by all people, including those with disabilities. The number of toilets required depends on the total number of employees and visitors that will use the facility and on the type of building. In most workplaces, there must be one closet pan toilet for every 20 males and one urinal for every 25 males. For females, there must be one closet pan toilet for every 15 people. The Building Code of Australia provides the standard guidelines for the number of toilets required.

Generally, separate male and female toilets are required - although a unisex toilet may suffice if there are less than ten employees in total and less than two people of any one gender. If showers or change rooms are needed, there should be at least one cubicle provided for every ten people. Privacy should be assured. Usually separate facilities are provided for male and female employees.

Readily accessible hand washing facilities with hot and cold water, hand cleanser or soap and hand-drying facilities (e.g. paper towels) must be provided in toilets. These may also be recommended for other areas, such as the workshop, chemical storage area, mill and livestock handling areas where people may be exposed to grease, chemicals, infectious substances or other contaminants. Similarly, an open shower facility may be provided outside a chemical store (see *Section 39 - Agricultural and veterinary chemical storage*).

As working in a feedlot poses some inherent safety risks, a well equipped first aid station is essential. A designated first aid room may be provided at a large feedlot, while a readily accessible, well stocked first aid kit may suffice at a smaller feedlot. First aid kits should also be located at convenient points around the feedlot complex for accessibility and in areas where there is a higher risk of injury or illness occurring (e.g. cattle induction area).



Modular relocatable building (a 'donga') used for a First Aid post.

If a designated first aid room is provided, it should

- Be available when workers are at work.
- Be clearly identified as the first aid room and used only for that purpose.
- Be close to vehicle access (a room in the main office is ideal).
- Have entrances and corridors wide enough to fit a stretcher.
- Be close to toilets and telephones.
- Offer a comfortable environment (ventilation, heating, cooling and lighting).
- Provide space for movement around furniture and equipment.
- Have an examination couch, or bed, with a waterproof surface and disposal sheets.
- Have an examination lamp with magnifier.
- Have clean bench tops/floors/surfaces.
- Have a hand basin, hot and cold running water, soap and paper towels or hand cleanser.
- Have a cupboard for storage.
- Provide a first aid kit appropriate for the workplace.
- Have designated waste containers for the safe disposal of materials contaminated by blood or body substances and sharp instruments and a bowl or bucket (minimum two litres capacity).
- Have electric power points.
- Have a sign on the door showing the name of the person in charge, the person on duty, the names and locations of the nearest first aid personnel and contact numbers in case of emergency and have a chair and a table/desk.
- Provide a telephone and/or emergency call system.
- Clearly identify the names and contact details of first aiders and emergency organisations.

The contents of a first aid kit should consider the risks posed by working at a feedlot. At a minimum, basic equipment should be sufficient for administering first aid for injuries such as

- Cuts, scratches, punctures, grazes and splinters
- Muscular sprains and strains
- Minor burns
- Bleeding wounds
- Broken bones
- Eye injuries
- Insect and snake bites
- Shock
- Heat stroke
- Concussion.

Employees must be able to readily access clean drinking water at all times. This should be separate from the toilets or washing facilities to minimise the risk of water contamination. As well as in the office, a drinking water supply should be provided in areas where hot or strenuous work is undertaken (e.g. cattle induction area and feedmill).



Permanent office and employee amenities building with adjacent weighbridge.

An eating area should be provided for all employees. Often there is a meal room set up in the office at large feedlots, although additional sheltered meal areas may also be provided. At a small feedlot, the eating area could just include facilities for making tea and coffee, storing food and washing. At all feedlots, the eating area should be supplied with

- Seating suitable for adults.
- A sink with hot and cold water, washing utensils and detergent.
- An appliance for boiling water.
- Clean storage, including a refrigerator for storing perishable food.
- A microwave oven for re-heating or cooking food.
- Vermin-proof rubbish bins, which should be emptied at least daily.

Access to shelter, that provides protection from the sun and inclement weather conditions, should be provided for all people.

Landscaping

A well maintained landscape area around the exterior of an office enhances the visual amenity and ambience, reduces dust and gives new visitors a good first impression of the operation. The landscaped area can also serve as a fire break and an emergency assembly point.

Lighting

The feedlot office should be equipped with adequate external and internal lighting to ensure general activities can be completed safely. Good lighting is also beneficial for security purposes.

Wherever possible, and provided safety is not compromised, all site lighting should be directed downward and incorporate glare shields. The location of external lighting and its potential light spill is an important ecological and social consideration in relation to safety, accessibility and aesthetics.

Suitable internal and external lighting may be installed according to relevant Australian Standards

- AS/NZS 1158.3.1:2005: Lighting for roads and public spaces - Pedestrian area (Category P) lighting - Performance and design requirements, Strathfield NSW and Standards New Zealand, Wellington.
- AS/NZS 3000:2007: Electrical Installations (known as the known as the Australian/New Zealand Wiring Rules).
- AS/NZS 1158.6:2010: Lighting for roads and public spaces - Part 6: Luminaries.

Essential safety measures

The Building Code of Australia outlines the essential safety measures that apply to the various classes of buildings defined by the Building Code of Australia (for details see: www.abcb.gov.au). Essential safety measures are the fire, safety and health items installed or constructed in a building to ensure adequate levels of fire safety over the life of the building.

A feedlot may have multiple classes of buildings at the site. For example, Class 1a (single dwelling detached house), Class 1b (guest house/accommodation), Class 5 (office building), Class 10a (a non-habitable building or shed) and Class 10b (structure) may all be present.

Essential fire safety measures for the suppression or fighting of fire include traditional building fire services and passive fire safety measures.

Traditional fire safety equipment includes

- Portable fire extinguishers
- Smoke alarms
- Fire hose reel system
- Fire hydrant system
- Automatic fire sprinkler system.

Passive fire safety measures for buildings include:

- Exit doors
- Fire doors
- Fire-rated structures
- Other building infrastructure such as paths of travel to exits.

Not all of these measures are required in all buildings. The requirements are stipulated in the Building Code of Australia, respective State Building Fire Safety Regulations and the relevant Australian Standards.

For example, the Building Code of Australia (E1.3) requires

- The installation of a fire hydrant system to serve a building having a total floor area greater than 500m².
- A fire hose reel system must be provided
 - (i) to serve the whole building where one or more internal fire hydrants are installed; or
 - (ii) where internal fire hydrants are not installed, to serve any fire compartment with a floor area greater than 500m².

For Class 1 buildings, the travel distance to an exit doorway must be not more than 6m.

Ensuring that a building has a floor area of less than 500m² negates the requirement for a fire hydrant and hose reel system. Nevertheless, portable fire extinguishers and smoke alarms are the minimum provision for any building.

Parking

Vehicle parking at the office should be divided into two areas. A signed carpark for visitors should be on the feedlot entry side, so that all visitors must proceed to the office before entering the feedlot complex. A carpark on the other side of the office is for vehicles moving around the feedlot complex.

These two carparks are often on either side of the weighbridge.

Quick tips

- Consider the location of the office during the overall concept layout stage of a new feedlot. An office at the entrance to a feedlot provides a control point for security and biosecurity purposes.
- The size, layout and construction of the office and employee amenities depends on the feedlot capacity.
- At a small feedlot, the office may be part of the manager's house or in a small demountable-type building.
- The size of the office may need to increase if the feedlot expands. The office should be situated at a location that allows for expansion as required.
- A larger feedlot will usually have a dedicated structure.
- Employee amenities need to be provided. Employees require access to toilets, hand washing amenities, first aid facilities, drinking water, eating areas and shelter. For practical reasons, it may be appropriate to provide some of these facilities at multiple locations.

Further reading

Local Authority Planning Scheme: for local requirements for building and staff provisions.

Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB), 2013, Volumes One and Two of the National Construction Code of Australia.

Safe Work Australia, 2011, Code of Practice: Managing the Work Environment and Facilities,

Safe Work Australia 2011, Code of Practice: First Aid in the Workplace, Safe Work Australia, Canberra.