

# Distinguishing Between Confined Feeding Operations and Seasonal Feeding & Bedding Sites (for Cattle Operations)



## Fact Sheet

### Confined feeding operations and seasonal feeding and bedding sites

- The *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* (AOPA) requires any confined feeding operation (CFO) that contains animals above AOPA threshold numbers to have an AOPA permit. The act defines CFOs as “fenced or enclosed land or buildings where livestock are confined for the purpose of growing, sustaining, finishing or breeding by means other than grazing and any other building or structure directly related to that purpose.”
- AOPA exempts several types of facilities from the CFO definition, including a “seasonal feeding and bedding site” (SFBS). It defines an SFBS as an “over-wintering” site where livestock are “fed and sheltered.” An SFBS does not require an AOPA permit.
- AOPA does not define “over-wintering.” The NRCB interprets “over-wintering” to mean a limited time when livestock cannot subsist solely or even partially on grazing, because of either a lack of new grass or other climate-related reasons (for example, extremely low temperatures or deep snow).
- NRCB operational policy *Distinguishing Between Confined Feeding Operations and Seasonal Feeding and Bedding Sites (for Cattle Operations)* includes a decision tree, or guide, to help distinguish between a CFO facility and an SFBS. The policy and decision tree (see below) were updated in 2018.

### General principles of the NRCB policy

- Cattle operations may have a variety of facilities to confine cattle, including some SFBS and some CFO facilities. If the facility is used as a CFO for part of the year, it is considered a CFO.
- A CFO/SFBS determination is valid only for the management practice and other circumstances in place at that time. If the management practice or any of the relevant assumptions change, the operation will need to be re-evaluated.

### The decision tree (the guide)

- The decision tree is based on three criteria:
  1. A facility is automatically considered to be a CFO if it is used to confine and feed cattle between July 1 and September 15, no matter what type of cattle are being fed at that time or how the facility is used the rest of the year.
  2. A facility used for cow-calf purposes outside of the grazing period is automatically considered to be an SFBS. A cow-calf operation is presumed to have:
    - pregnant or lactating cows
    - replacement heifers (purchased or raised)
    - bulls used for in-herd breeding
    - cull cows
    - freshly weaned, homegrown calves produced from the operation’s own breeding herd, being held until grazing is available
  3. If the facility is adjacent to a CFO, it is considered an SFBS only if it has **all** of the characteristics listed in Table 1 (“Factors for assessing facilities adjacent to a CFO”). A facility is considered to be adjacent to a CFO if
    - it shares a boundary with a CFO—that is, when the two facilities have a common fence line or feed alley,
    - it is within or adjoins the same quarter section as some or all of the CFO facilities, or
    - it relies exclusively on power, water, labour, or other resources from a nearby CFO.
- If the three criteria above do not clearly indicate whether a facility should be classified as a CFO or an SFBS, refer to the factors listed in Table 2, below (“Factors for CFO – SFBS determinations”). The table provides the spectrum of SFBS and CFO characteristics. These are used to determine whether the facility is more characteristic of a CFO or an SFBS, based on the factors that are most relevant for the facility.

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## Further information

For more information, please contact an NRCB approval officer or inspector at the NRCB field office nearest you.

Dial 310-0000 to be connected toll free. Fact sheets and other NRCB publications are available at [www.nrcb.ca](http://www.nrcb.ca)

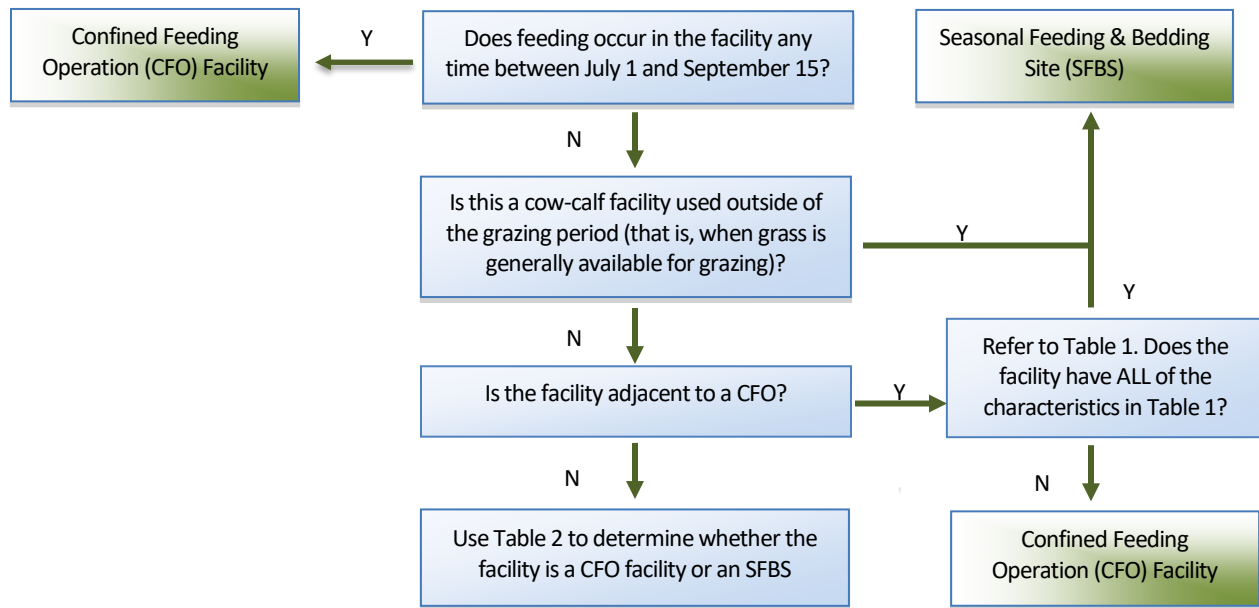
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## Guide for Distinguishing Between a Confined Feeding Operation Facility and a Seasonal Feeding and Bedding Site



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**Table 1. Factors for assessing facilities adjacent to a CFO**

Factors	Characteristics
Timing of feeding in the facility	Only when grazing is unavailable
Livestock type	Any livestock types other than finishers
Bedding site	Bedding sites are moved within or across years
Feeding area	Cattle have 360° access to the feeding area and the feeding area is moved within or across years
Manure management	Manure is spread over a large area requiring little or no management within the facility footprint.
Density of confinement	< 100 animals / acre
Infrastructure	Little or no permanent infrastructure
Vegetation	Pasture or annually cropped; the land has been and continues to be suitable for grazing, or the land has been and continues to be cropped

**Table 2. Factors for CFO – SFBS determinations**

Generic Factors	Typical Characteristics	
	CFO	SFBS
Timing of feeding in the facility	When grazing is available	When grazing is unavailable
Livestock type	Finishers or feeders (or mix of both), can also have backgrounders	Feeders or backgrounders (or mix of both)
Bedding site	Permanent	Moved within or across years
Feeding area	Fence line feeding using permanent bunks	Cattle have 360° access to the feeding area and the feeding area is moved within or across years
Manure management	Concentrated in the facility—must be removed and spread or stored	Manure is spread over a large area requiring little or no management within the facility footprint.
Density of confinement	≥ 170 animals / acre	< 100 animals / acre
Infrastructure	Significant permanent infrastructure	Little or no permanent infrastructure
Vegetation	No vegetation	Pasture or annually cropped; the land has been and continues to be suitable for grazing, or the land has been and continues to be cropped
Max # of animals being confined at any one time	> 1000 head	< 1000 head