



Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary's Compassionate Euthanasia Policies

Introduction

1a) Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary's Statement On Euthanasia

Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary believes that a peaceful, pain and fear-free end-of-life is just as critical to a resident's care as their daily life in sanctuary, but sometimes this is not possible without compassionate human intervention. From this lens, Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary believes euthanasia is, by definition, an act of mercy that must be treated with significant respect and care at all stages. Euthanasia is never a simple decision- and, in addition to the impact it has on the entirety of the sanctuary's residents, the decision to euthanize is often difficult for members of the sanctuary's staff and community. For these reasons, Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary abides by the following standards and guidelines when considering, deciding upon, and carrying out euthanasia. By maintaining an accessible, written set of policies for euthanasia, it is the hope of Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary that the difficult conversations and decisions around euthanasia can be facilitated with the upmost care for both residents and the community.

1b) Misapplication Of The Term "Euthanasia"

While Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary believes that euthanasia is defined as above, we acknowledge that the term is often misapplied to other scenarios where an animal's life may be taken. For the purposes of this document, when used in a commonly misapplied context, euthanasia will be referenced with quotation marks [ie: "euthanasia"].

Considering Euthanasia

2a) Factors That May Lead To Considering Euthanasia For An Individual Resident

While Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary strives to provide exceptional resident care to the fullest extent of the sanctuary's capability, there are certain factors in a resident's health or overall quality of life that may lead the organization to consider exploring euthanasia as the most compassionate decision for an individual.

The presence of any one of the below factors alone **would not** automatically result in a euthanasia decision, but euthanasia will be considered if a resident is exhibiting or experiencing any of the below factors. Ultimately, all euthanasia decisions are dependent on an individual's quality of life and whether or not their quality of life is likely to improve on their own, or with additional assistance of veterinary and care staff support.

These factors may include:

- The inability to breathe comfortably unassisted.
- Persistent disinterest or inability to eat food or drink water.
- Unmanageable pain due to a chronic issue.
- Frequent seizures that do not respond to medical intervention.
- The inability to stand or severely reduced mobility due to a degenerative disease that causes emotional or unmanageable physical distress.
- Unmanageable neurological or other physical or mental health issues resulting in a perpetual state of distress or fear, or behaviors that are substantially dangerous to one's self or others, resulting in severely reduced quality of life.
- A confirmed diagnosis with a grave prognosis in a resident who has **also** been thoroughly evaluated and found to have a poor quality of life. In cases where a confirmed diagnosis is not possible, steps will be taken to rule out other possible conditions to further support the presumptive diagnosis.
- An emergency takes place that has caused catastrophic injury to a resident (see **2b Emergency Euthanasia** below).

2b) Emergency Euthanasia

In the event of a resident suffering from sudden extreme, unmanageable pain, injury, or distress, such as following a catastrophic accident or health emergency, staff will seek immediate veterinary care and non-attendant staff will be notified to ensure all necessary personnel are aware of the seriousness of the situation. Staff will be prepared to discuss the possibility of euthanasia following the veterinarian's evaluation of the individual. In the event that immediate veterinary care is not available, management will consult with an experienced veterinarian over the phone to identify ways in which to keep the individual comfortable and administer any urgent palliative care under their direction.

2c) Prohibited "Euthanasia" Motivators

At Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary, euthanasia is only considered in instances of the above factors. Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary does not, and will not consider "euthanizing" residents for the following reasons:

- On the basis of resident population size or in order to make space for other residents.
- On the basis of a lack of physical space at the sanctuary.
- Due to a lack of financial resources to provide daily care for residents.
- On the basis of a lack of experience with a resident and knowledge of how to appropriately care for them or any manageable medical conditions they may have.
- On the basis of a lack of food, water, or supplies of any kind at the sanctuary.
- On the basis of a resident's behavior or temperament.
 - There may be factors such as unmanageable physical, neurological, or mental conditions that may contribute to a resident's behavior, but behavior alone is **not** an acceptable reason for euthanasia.
- On the basis of a resident's age alone.
- On the basis of a resident's sex.

2d) Prohibition Of Mass “Euthanasia”

Mass (or multiple resident) “euthanasia”, such as to prevent disease spread, at Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary is strictly prohibited. In the event of a disease outbreak, each individual resident will be evaluated, treated, and their quality of life observed, rather than ever making the blanket decision to “euthanize” an entire flock or herd of animals on the basis of disease risk alone.

2e) Government-Mandated “Euthanasia”

In the event where a government entity mandates the “euthanasia” of one or more residents, Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary will make every attempt to negotiate an alternative solution that does not result in death, such as increased isolation, testing, and biosecurity protocols in the event of a contagious disease outbreak that has not yet affected members of the resident population.

Making A Euthanasia Decision at Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary

3a) How Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary Decides Upon Euthanasia As The Most Compassionate Outcome

If a resident is experiencing one or more factors listed in section **2a** and euthanasia has been put forward by one or more members of staff or a qualified veterinarian as potentially the most compassionate outcome for a resident, Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary will adhere to the following guidelines covered in subsections **3b** through **3d** in order to ensure that:

1. There is consensus between staff and the veterinarian(s) that euthanasia is indeed the best choice given all options,
2. A resident’s current overall quality of life has been assessed and found to warrant consideration of euthanasia at this time, and
3. No other options exist to improve the current or future quality of life for the resident.

3b) Staff Involved In Euthanasia Discussions

All members of Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary’s care staff who have daily care interactions with the resident in question will have the opportunity to be involved in any team discussion regarding euthanasia as a possibility for the resident. The experiences of staff members who have a clear sense of the resident’s current and prior quality of life will be given priority when any discussion of euthanasia as a possibility takes place. If there are any objections to euthanasia by one of the staff who cares for the resident, they will be given the space to explain why they are against it and what alternative they are proposing. Reasonable attempts will be made to contact staff who are not working if they have not had the chance to express their opinion and have consented to be contacted on their day off.

3c) Veterinary Assessments Regarding Euthanasia

Prior to any decision regarding euthanasia, at least one veterinarian with appropriate species experience for the resident in question (and ideally, who has previous experience evaluating or

providing care for the resident in question) will conduct a thorough mental and physical health assessment, ideally providing a written evaluation of the resident and their expert opinion regarding their quality of life and any expectations that their condition may improve, either on its own or with modifications to their care plan or other sanctuary interventions. If necessary, the written opinion of a second qualified veterinarian may be sought. Euthanasia will **not** be considered for any resident without veterinary assessment.

3d) Quality Of Life Assessment Of The Resident

Prior to any decision regarding euthanasia, staff will assess the quality of life of the resident in order to determine both the positive and negative aspects of their life to the best of the staff's ability. Staff who have worked extensively with the resident and have a strong understanding of them as an individual will be given extra consideration when discussing the resident's quality of life.

Methods Of Euthanasia at Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary

4a) Acceptable Methods Of Euthanasia

Species-specific euthanasia protocols written by a veterinarian with appropriate species experience and familiarity with the residents and Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary's philosophy of care will be kept on file as a permanent record by the attending veterinarian. Protocols will be documented in the Sanctuary Resident End-of-Life Record, and provided to future veterinary providers of euthanasia services. Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary only allows for euthanasia methods that are approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) or equivalent organizations. However, there are some euthanasia methods that are AVMA-approved that are additionally prohibited (see section **4c** below).

At Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary, residents are only euthanized using species appropriate, AVMA-approved, injectable euthanasia solution.

4b) Administration Of Pre-Euthanasia Sedation

In order to maximize resident comfort and dignity, pre-euthanasia sedation shall be administered to residents prior to euthanasia, utilizing intramuscular administration when appropriate.

4c) Prohibited Methods Of "Euthanasia"

At Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary, the following methods of "euthanasia" are not considered acceptable for any resident and are **strictly prohibited**, despite some methods being AVMA-approved in certain cases:

- Captive bolt pistols or similar equipment
- Firearms
- Any substances not specifically formulated for euthanasia
- Any equipment that causes death via cutting or blunt trauma
- Cervical dislocation

- Suffocation or drowning
- Intracardiac injection in a conscious resident
- Electrocution
- Exsanguination

Policies During Euthanasia at Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary

5a) Human Presence During Euthanasia

The individual resident's psychological needs will be prioritized when determining the appropriateness of non-essential human presence before the individual is fully sedated. Staff and volunteers who have a close relationship with the individual will be given the opportunity to spend time with them once they are fully sedated, but will comply with veterinary instructions with regards to noise level, physical touching of the individual, etc, to prevent stimulation which could counteract sedation.

5b) Euthanasia And Other Residents

If possible and deemed safe, when sedatives are delivered, the individual will be in a familiar environment with close companions given the opportunity to be either present or leave the area.

5c) Euthanasia And The Public

Members of the public who are not a part of Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary's staff or volunteers who have a close relationship with the individual are not permitted to be present during euthanasia. This is to make the euthanasia as comfortable and stress-free as possible for the resident.

5d) Documenting Euthanasia Of A Resident

All instances of euthanasia are to be documented, keeping record of the name and species of the resident, a description of what factors led to the euthanasia decision, staff and veterinarians involved in the euthanasia decision, method of euthanasia, post-euthanasia events, and staff reflections on the life of the resident or the euthanasia process (if desired). This document will be kept for future reference. A suitable document for this purpose is appended at the end of this policy.

Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary's Post-Euthanasia Policies

6a) Notification Of Staff After Euthanasia

Whenever possible, staff are notified prior to euthanasia. When this is not possible, staff are notified in a timely manner to prevent any staff members from experiencing distress from learning of a resident's passing from outside sources, or having to learn about the event on their own. All staff are asked whether or not they would like to be notified about resident euthanasia that takes place during their scheduled time off. Those who would like notification are contacted in a timely manner, and are notified around the same time as those who are currently on-site. For those who prefer not to be contacted on their days off, a general message, which is

checked at the start of every shift, is left for all staff sharing the same information that was communicated to the rest of the staff.

6b) Notification Of Supporters And The Public After Euthanasia

After staff are notified of euthanasia, public supporters of the sanctuary are notified of the resident's passing using sensitive but honest messaging, with priority to communicate to those sponsoring the resident, if any, or those having an established relationship with the resident (such as a previous guardian or someone directly involved in their rescue).

Other Euthanasia Policies

7a) Publicity Of Euthanasia Policies

In the interest of transparency, and to help foster improved standards for the global animal sanctuary community, a copy of this policy is publicly available on Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary's website and upon request by any member of the public.

7b) Situations Not Covered In These Policies

If any situation arises regarding euthanasia considerations, decisions, methods, or post-euthanasia that is not covered in these policies, all efforts will be made for members of staff to work collaboratively in order to come to agreement on how to handle the situation. Upon resolution of the situation, staff will then decide whether to update Forget Me Not Farm Sanctuary's compassionate euthanasia policies to reflect the solution decided upon as the proper course for future situations.

SANCTUARY RESIDENT END OF LIFE RECORD

Resident: _____

Date And Time: _____

Location: _____

Staff Member Completing This Document: _____

Consulting Veterinarian (If applicable): _____

Secondary Opinion Veterinarian (If applicable): _____

Circumstances Leading To Death (If applicable): _____

Cause Of Death (Check one and describe):

Euthanasia (How was this decision reached? Who made the final determination?):

Method of Euthanasia (If applicable): _____

This Death Was Not A Result Of Euthanasia (Describe what happened):

Actions Taken After Death: _____

Remains Disposition Method And Description: _____

Documents appended to this End Of Care Record (Check All Included Below):

Veterinary Records (List): _____

Necropsy: _____

Other Document (*List*): _____

Other Document (*List*): _____

Other Document (*List*): _____

Other End Of Care Notes Or Reflections:

Signature Or Initials Of Individual Completing This Record:
