

## Dairy Holdings Animal Welfare and Recording Protocols.

DHL takes animal welfare very seriously and expects full compliance with its good farm practice policies in this area. Failure to do so will be serious misconduct. This protocol sets out DHL's expectations in some key areas of animal welfare.

This protocol is closely aligned to all current official MPI Animal Welfare Codes referring to Dairy Cattle. Please use the following link to read the full most recent Animal Welfare Codes

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare>

Dairy Holdings strongly encourages all within the DHL team to report to senior management any incidences of improper animal care. This can be done to the Farmer, Supervisor, Farm Practice Advisor (021 225 5186) or CEO. Confidentiality will be protected if requested. Refer to the **DHL Commitment** document which must be displayed in a prominent place on every farm.

This formalised protocol in no way undermines the expectation that excellent stockmanship must be practiced by all contractors, managers and staff as part of their professional execution of their roles. Excellent stockmanship includes always handling stock in a quiet calm manner.

### The primary directives are;

- 1) Any sick animal or injured animal (that is not about to be euthanized) must be under-going treatment and if appropriate the manager shall seek vet advice in the first instance. These animals must be away from public sight, have easy access to adlib high quality feed, fresh water and where possible shelter.
- 2) Any animal that is to be euthanized will be done so as soon as possible once it has been determined that further treatment is not a sensible option. This is to be carried out by a suitably trained and authorised person – the nominated person for that farm.
- 3) For any animal welfare complaint, the farm manager, farm supervisor and CEO must immediately be notified. Such a complaint may be anyone including from a DHL staff, a member of the public or a warranted Animal Welfare inspector (eg MPI or SPCA).
- 4) A higher level of recording of animal health events must happen. This recording must be up to date and failure to do so will result in disciplinary actions. Most can be done as part of current recording systems – eg MINDA, the monthly Stock Reconciliation or the Best on Farm Practice Diary (BOFPD).

MINDA codes to be used

Code	Animal condition
Milk Fever	Any metabolics, nitrates, acidosis, grass staggers etc
Bloat	Bloat, caste, sudden death (heart failure)
Calving Trouble	Including toxæmia and metritis
Johne's	Animals euthanised due to rapid weight loss (needs a blood sample to be taken before being euthanised)
Lameness	Including any other leg injury
Mastitis	Including high SCC
Empty	

Do not use any of the other options in MINDA. Choose the closest of these.

A report will be printed for each farm each month.

A] Every case of a sick or injured animal – recorded in MINDA.

- The animal ID/ management number
- The date and nature of the illness or injury.
- The nature of treatment – updated as it occurs

B] Deaths – recorded on farm, in MINDA and in monthly Stock Reconciliation

- Remove tags and hold the tags until the end of the season.
- Management number
- The date of death.
- Suspected cause of natural death
- Reason for euthanasia
- Method of euthanasia and by whom
- Method of carcass disposal

C] For culled animals (in stock rec and MINDA where possible otherwise on an ASD form)

- Animal Id
- Date culled
- Reason for culling

D] For any animal welfare complaint – either from DHL staff, the public or as a result of a visit by MPI, SPCA etc. To be immediately sent to DHL office – attn. Farm Practice Advisor.

- Date
- Method of notification
- Nature of issue
- Response
- Resolution – including any official documentation.

### **Practices NOT accepted on DHL farms**

- 1) Any shortening animal tails (including the switch) unless by a vet.**
- 2) Using tails as a restraint in any way.**
- 3) Breaking or otherwise damaging tails**
- 4) Hitting stock with any object with the purpose of causing injury.**
- 5) Any removal of a teat by any means other than by a vet.**
- 6) Cows at locomotion score 2 or higher in the main milking herds**
- 7) Cows with BCS 2.5 or lower unless under active medical intervention**

### **Tails.**

The health and status of cattle tails has become a focus of animal welfare. Apart from the pain and discomfort experienced by cattle with a damaged tail the incidence of abnormal tails has become a very visual and permanent indicator of the quality of overall animal welfare practices.

Recent changes to the Animal Welfare act have banned the shortening of bovine tails other than for a partial reduction of the tail switch. DHL policy is that NO shortening of the tail will occur. On rare

occasion an animal's tail might need to be shortened and if required this must be done under vet supervision. Under no circumstance does any farm have a valid reason to purchase rubber rings.

Abnormal tails can have many causes, genetic, animal to animal interaction, accumulation of hardened faecal matter, damage from farm infrastructure and human actions.

### **Heifers**

Dairy Holdings have instigated an ongoing program of tail assessment of R2 heifers with assessment so far done at pregnancy scanning in 2016 and 2017. Heifers are acknowledged as being at the highest risk of tail damage when they first calve and are being trained to the routine of being milked.

To facilitate the training of heifers to the milking routine, where possible DHL farms will winter their R2yr incalf heifers on the dairy platform. This is with the express purpose of allowing plenty of time for these animals to be trained to entering and moving through milking shed and yards before they calve. All DHL R2yr heifers will also be mated about 7 days before the start of mating of the rest of the herd so that most calve before the main calving starts and the daily workload becomes high.

### **DHL Herds**

The mature cows in most DHL herds have had their tails assessed for abnormalities. Where abnormalities were found these were categorised and recorded against the animals ID. These animals were also tagged with a specific tag. (Appendix 1 – Assessment protocol.)

The heifer and herd data provides a clear historical starting point of accumulated abnormalities that have occurred in the past, from which future changes can be identified and the appropriate actions taken.

### **Ongoing tail assessment process.**

- At the time of assessment it is the manager's responsibility to ensure that **every animal** on the property is presented for assessment.
- Assessment and recording will be done to an agreed protocol by an appropriately qualified independent contractor who has undertaken a calibration exercise with our other assessors. The data supplied to DHL head office.
- Assessment will be done each year on all DHL R2yr heifers prior to them arriving back at the dairy farms. Typically this will occur at the time of their pregnancy scan.
- Assessment may be done on R1 calves arriving at the grazing blocks.
- Assessment will be done prior to, or at arrival of any stock purchased by DHL to add to existing herds or to build new herds.
- Assessment must be done prior to or at arrival of any cows owned by sharemilkers or contract milkers. If these are being provided to DHL for lease, the cost of the assessment will be covered by DHL including the special tags
- Should any new damage be observed to have occurred during the year, the farm manager must immediately inform their supervisor who will organise for the tail to be assessed, documented and the animal tagged. If required further investigation of the cause of the damage will be undertaken.
- Any mechanical or farm structural cause of damage must be either eliminated or modified to minimise the reoccurrence of any damage and documentation provided to the farm supervisor.
- Re-assessments will be done;
  - At the end of every contract and before a new manager takes over responsibility of that herd.
  - On any farm, at any time where there is either concern of possible new injuries, report of new injury, or evidence of a high level of past injury.

- All new injuries will be followed up by our DHL senior management and appropriate actions taken.
- Data on new injuries will be made available to our Vet partners who will be free to act as they see appropriate, including providing it to MPI where any resulting action will be at their sole discretion.

#### **Facilities assessment.**

DHL will with the support of the Farm manager and their teams, undertake a facilities assessment to identify any potential causes of mechanical damage to cow tails.

Where potential causes are identified the Farm Manager will execute and agreed plan to remove or modify the source to this potential damage.

### **Bobby Calves**

Last year MPI bought in two new welfare regulations involving bobby calves that applied on farm;

- Fit for transport – refer to the “Fit for Transport” poster available from DairyNZ.
- No use of blunt force to the head to kill calves.

By August this year three more new regulations will have come into effect;

- The maximum time between last feed and slaughter is 24 hrs
- Calves must be able to walk from their pen into the truck
- Calves penned for pick up must be sheltered from the weather.

These regulations must be met in full and there will be inspection of processes and facilities to verify that the correct facilities exist and the proper process is being done.

#### **Maximum time off feed before slaughter – 24 hours**

Please note the expected pickup time for your farm and organise your last calf feeding accordingly.

- Calves will only be picked up if the farmer has recorded the time of the last feed on the calf pickup docket that will be provided.
- If the truck is late and takes the calves it is the processors responsibility to make sure that the calf is slaughtered within the 24 hour period.
- Calves rejected for pickup or left on farm remain the farmer’s responsibility to ensure that they are properly fed and sheltered.

#### **Calf loading facilities**

It is for the farmer to decide how the bobby calves are loaded safely into the collection pen.

- The loading facility could be a raised pen, a gentle loading ramp or an embankment.
- The calves must walk from their sheltered area onto the truck.
- No calf will be lifted and carried onto the truck.

#### **Calf shelter before transport.**

- Calves penned for transport must be sheltered from the weather (cold, heat, wind and rain).
- They must also have adequate space and flooring to be stand up and lie down in comfort.
- A ramp from this sheltered area to the truck does not need to be covered.

Please visit the DairyNZ website <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/calves/> for further information.

Also refer to;

**Bobby Calves – Fit for Transport Poster**

**Bobby Calf Regulations – Fed Farmers advisory**

**Bobby Calf Collection Protocols – Silver Fern Farms**

## Expectations regarding onset of treatment

### Lameness

Lameness is assessed on a 4 point scoring system.

- Lameness Score 0 - Walks evenly. No action required.
- Lameness Score 1 - Walks unevenly. Minor action required.
- Lameness Score 2 - Lameness. Immediate action required.
- Lameness Score 3 - Very lame. Urgent action required. She may require a vet.

View the excellent Locomotion score video on DairyNZ website and share this with your team.

<https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/cow-health/lameness/lameness-scoring/>

The expectation is that any animal (including bulls) with a Locomotion score of 2 or higher, must have the hoof lifted, checked and treated as required and not returned to the main milking herd until fully recovered.

These stock must be kept in an OAD mob near the shed with plenty of grass and water until they are fully recovered.

As a general observation lameness is addressed later than it should be and our objective is for treatment to occur when cows are either Locomotion Score 1 or 2.

The best results in reducing lameness are achieved when animals with a Locomotion Score of 1 are drafted out, checked, treated and rested.

Tackling the issue at this stage;

- Improves the recovery rate
- Reduces the cost of treatment
- Reduces the loss of milk production
- Reduces the loss of condition score.
- Reduces the amount of pain that the animal experiences.

### BCS

- No cows under CS 3.5 are to be in the main milking herd.
- If they are between CS 3.5 and 3.0 they must be put into a OAD milking herd and checked for illness.
- Any cows CS 3.0 or under are likely to be sick. These cows must be under treatment and preferentially cared for which most likely include being dried off.

Otherwise follow directions as per Mating Management Plan and the Autumn Management plan.

### Rapid weight loss.

Rapid weight loss and persistent scouring without other visible conditions can be caused by several possible factors including massive internal infections, very low mineral status, a severe worm or fluke burden or Johne's disease.

- These cows must be separated from other cows
- The first treatment option is a course of intermuscular antibiotics or a parasite drench.
- Cows that do not respond to this treatment within a few days should have a blood sample taken by a vet (and frozen for future testing)
- The animal must then be euthanized by the appropriately trained person on the farm.

### **Somatic Cell count**

Follow the recommendations in the SAM Plan

When the bulk somatic cell count exceeds 250,000

- Instigate a system to strip and visually check each quarter every week.

When the bulk somatic cell count exceeds 300,000

- Instigate a system to strip and visually check each quarter every two days.

When the bulk somatic count exceeds 400,000

- Strip each all quarters in every cow each day.
- Check the milk from each quarter with a paddle and RMT or some other accredited tool.
- Continue until SCC drops below 300,000

Each week DHL sends a copy of the weekly SCC data to Matthew Hart (Vetlife Dunsandel). If the cell count on a farm exceeds 300,000 and then does not quickly decline a vet will be organised to visit the farm and do an investigation and develop a plan to address the problem. Matthew is accredited by the National Mastitis Advisory Committee to carry out mastitis investigations for Fonterra.

### **Mastitis**

Cows with Black mastitis must be dried off and treated with antibiotic immediately.

Treatment must be recorded in MINDA and in the Best on Farm Practice Diary.

All cows being treated for mastitis must be separated into a RED mob and treatments recorded as well as the date the cows is returned to the herd.

### **Cows down or trapped in the milking parlour.**

- Immediately remove the cow from the situation, taking all reasonable actions to minimise any further pain or suffering to the animal.
- Treat any injuries and move the animal to a situation where it can safely recover.

### **Downer cows – (referenced from the animal welfare code)**

- Immediately treat with the appropriate metabolic solutions preferably in the vein if a suitably trained person. **Highest priority.**
- In the first instance put up some shelter from wind and public sight eg using a couple of large bales. When possible move to a sheltered warm area away from public view (see recommendation for how to move below).
- Cows that are unable to stand should be kept on soft ground and provided shelter, food and water.
- Cows need to be inspected frequently, kept in an upright position (i.e. lying on their sternum with legs tucked under the body), and shifted from side to side as often as possible.
- Any cow that is unable to remain sitting upright **unassisted** after 48 hrs should be euthanized.
- Any cows still down but able to sit upright after 48 hours of going down should be examined by a vet and a plan for its ongoing treatment developed.

### **Transporting Downer Cows**

**Hip clamps** must not be used to transport downer cows.

- Cows suspended in a **slings** must be able to breathe freely, not suffer unnecessary discomfort, and be lowered from the sling if they are unable to support their own weight after one hour.
- It is preferable that cows are moved by being rolled onto a **carry tray** and secured so that they cannot roll off until the carry tray is safely back onto the ground.

- If a carry tray is not available a very **large front end loader bucket** may be used and the cow secured so that they cannot roll out until the bucket is safely back on the ground. This method is hazardous if travelling over rough or undulating ground and should only be done by a skilled tractor driver.

#### **Recommended Best Practice for lifting cows.**

a) Where hip clamps are used, the following guidelines should be followed:

- prior to their application, a thorough examination should be made to rule out conditions that will not respond to being lifted and that will only increase pain and distress for the cow if lifted eg broken hip
- the hip clamps should be padded and applied firmly, to prevent slipping and bruising
- the rear of the animal should be lifted to a point where the feet are touching the ground, so that weight bearing can take place
- **if, after taking the weight of the animal on the hip clamps, the cow cannot be persuaded to take weight on the forelegs, the use of the clamps should be stopped**
- if an animal has failed to respond initially, she should be allowed to rest for a period before hip clamps are tried again.
- only two suspending sequences should be attempted in a day.

b) Where cow slings are used:

- suspended animals should be inspected frequently
- only two suspending sequences should be attempted in a day.

#### **Disbudding Replacement Calves**

All calves must have a local anaesthetic administered before they are disbudded.

This must occur before they are 3 months of age and be done by an approved operator.

#### **Infected calf ears.**

Treat with antibiotics and if required remove the ear tag and reinsert a replacement when the ear is back to normal.

#### **Restraint of stock** (stopping them kicking the cups of etc)

- Restraint must be applied in such a way to minimise stress and risk of injury to the animal
- Methods of restraint must allow for the animal to be easily released.

Being quiet and calm round stock is essential.

Giving stock time to get used to new situations like stock yards or milking sheds also reduces animal stress and bad behaviour.

If an animal continues to display behaviour dangerous to humans or such that it is not able to be milked safely it should be culled.

#### **Protocol for cows going to slaughter.**

Cows arriving at the freezing works with distended udders or dripping milk are not acceptable. This is in addition to MPI requirements for sound feet/legs and BCS.

Pre-Christmas and pre-pregnancy scans protocol;

All cull cows are to be dried off one month prior to transport to slaughter.

If there is a concern about possible mastitis insert one tube of Penclox lactating cow antibiotic in each quarter. The meat withholding period is 10 days so this is well within the period before slaughter. The cow must remain on farm until it is certain that no case of mastitis has developed and that the udder is dried off.

After pregnancy scans

All cull cows must be immediately drafted into a OAD herd and any with distended udders must be dried off the same as outlined above.

Let your supervisor know how many cows are to be culled so that they can be booked in.

The heaviest cows should be sent to slaughter first.

Cows are to be milked as close as practicable to the time of pick up.

If individual cows are still dripping when coming into milking they need to be dried off at least a week before transport to slaughter so that the udder is no longer engorged.

Updated on 14 May 2017