



**DAIRY  
HOLDINGS  
LIMITED**

**Dairy Holdings Ltd**

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Sharemilkers and Contract Milkers

**CC:** Farm Supervisors

**FROM:** Colin Glass, Chief Executive

**DATE:** 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017

**SUBJECT: BOBBY CALF COLLECTIONS – SILVER FERN FARMS**

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Please note the attached visit notification from Silver Fern Farms.

Last year MPI bought in two new 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.

**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 ready for pick up.

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.

A representative from Silver Fern farms will be visiting your farm in June to discuss these changes and make sure that your facilities are adequate and that you know what you are required to do. These visits will be coordinated by your farm supervisor

Yours sincerely  
**Dairy Holdings Ltd**



**Colin Glass**  
**Chief Executive**



Hello,

As you may know, there have been a number of changes introduced by MPI for the upcoming bobby calf season. By now, you should have received a brochure from us outlining our bobby calf service, bonus payment, and the introduction of the new regulations. These regulations include:

- Recording of last Feed on Farm. *Regulation in effect from 1 February 2017*
- Suitable Shelter for Young Calves. *Regulation to come into effect from 1 August 2017*
- Loading & Unloading Facilities. *Regulation to come in to effect from 1 August 2017.*

As part of our valued relationship with Dairy Holdings, I would like to visit your farm to discuss these changes and our service for the season ahead.

I will coordinate with your local supervisor to be in your area from the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017 onwards.

If you have any questions regarding the upcoming season, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A.A. Harvey".

**Alastair Harvey**  
**Silver Fern Farms Livestock Representative**

0274 339 315



# Calf holding and loading facilities

## Good practice guidelines

Whenever calves leave the farm on a truck, regardless of their destination or fate, working with your transporter to make their job as easy as possible will help to ensure that your calves are treated with care. Before you design and place your loading facility, arrange an on-farm visit with your transporter to ensure the facility is fit for purpose, accessible and safe for people and calves.

During the calving season truck drivers will frequently collect from more than 100 farms each day, often working with seasonal helpers.

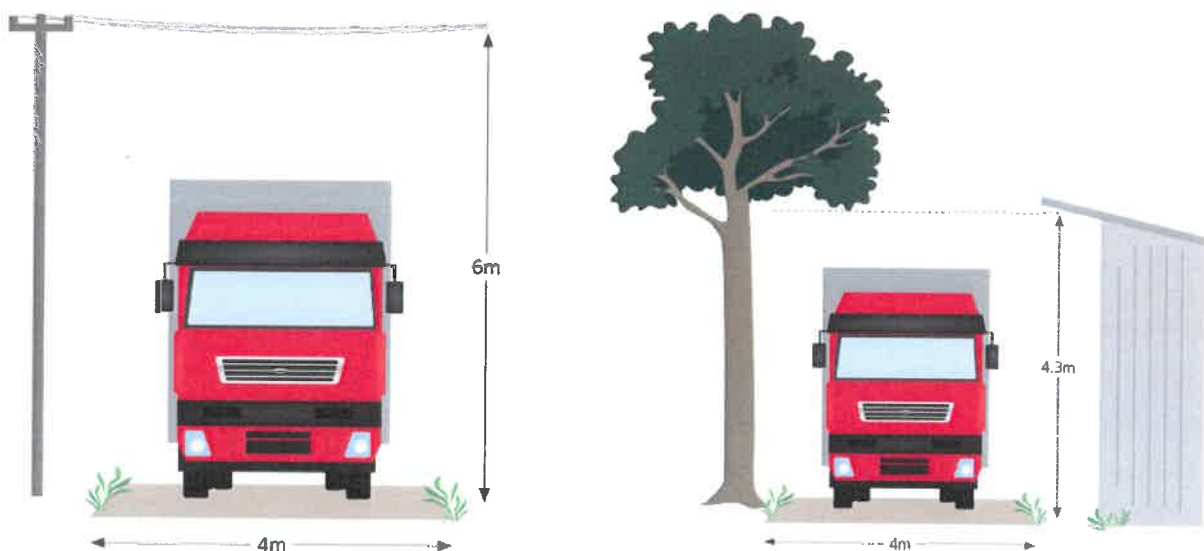
### Guidelines for calf holding and loading facilities

#### 1. Off the roadside

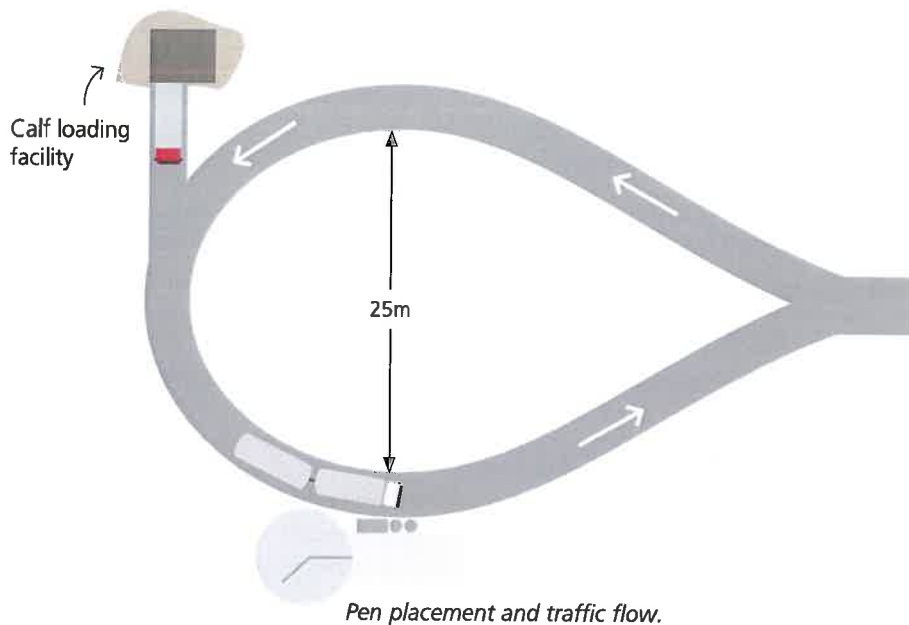
- Roadside collection is hazardous to truck drivers, staff and other road users.

#### 2. Accessible for the truck and trailer to reverse up to

- Access should be free draining and constructed with a level hard-standing surface.
- Track width should be no less than 4m wide.
- Height clearance of 4.3m for any overhead obstructions e.g. trees, water lines and electric fence wires; and 6m for powerlines. Loading calves directly under powerlines should be avoided.



Ensure the track is wide enough and clear of overhead obstructions.



- Locate the loading facility at or near the bobby calf rearing pen and allow sufficient turnaround for a truck and trailer unit (25m).
- Consider other traffic flow – if you are positioning or accessing the holding facility via the tanker track, design loading so that both trucks can pass or at least travel in the same direction.
- Maintain clear access, avoid holding stock in the access way or having gates across the roadway that require opening and shutting.
- Ensure that all bridges/culverts are safe, fit for purpose and that truck weight loadings are within the structure’s design loading specifications.
- Secure dogs and use a sign on the gateway to alert drivers if there is the possibility of children being in the area.

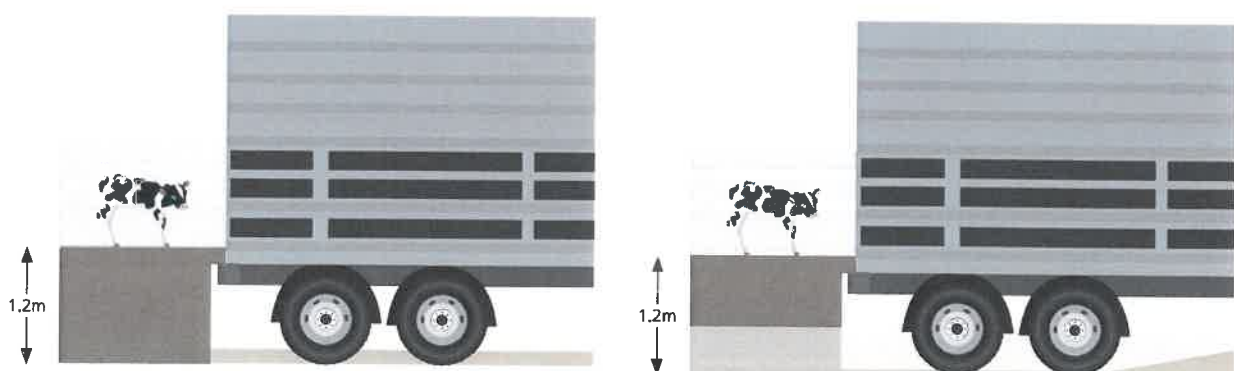
The Code of Practice for design and operation of farm dairies (NZCP1) has no stipulations about loading facilities and proximity of the farm dairy.

Calves must not be housed within 20m of the farm dairy, however you can temporarily hold calves within 20 m of the farm dairy before pick-up (e.g. on the same day while waiting for collection, with time of holding minimised)

All standards regarding surfaces and drainage apply, as do requirements for shelter. If taking this approach, the area where calves are held must be maintained in a suitably hygienic state and be cleaned immediately after the calves have been collected.

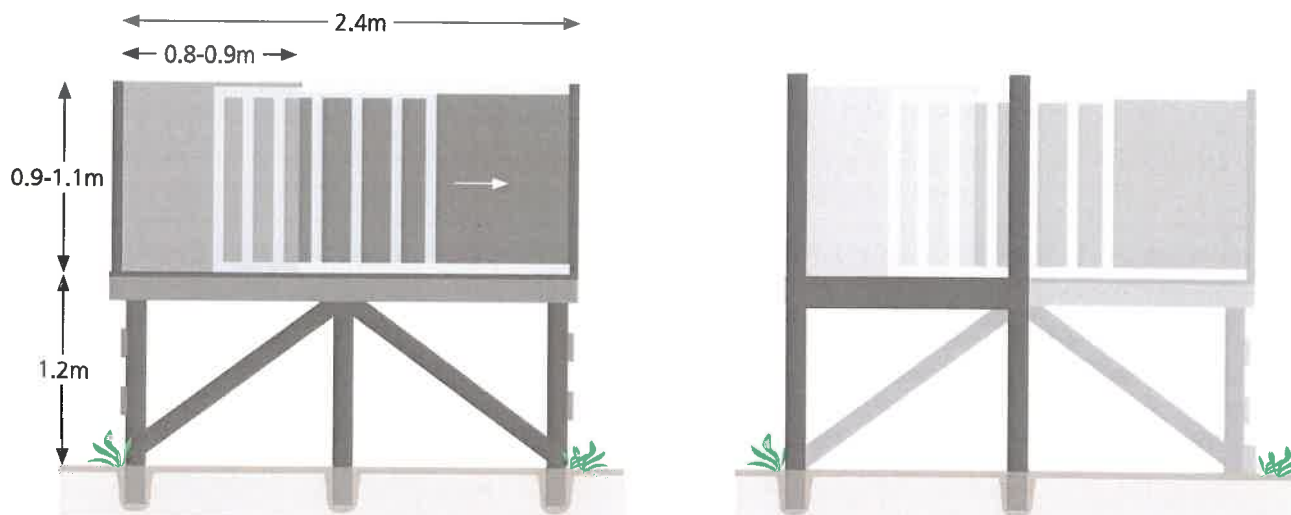
### 3. Calves should be able to walk on to the truck

Holding and loading facilities should be designed and constructed so that calves are able to walk directly from the loading facility onto the truck. Health and safety regulations mean that it is no longer acceptable for transporters to repeatedly lift calves from the ground to truck deck height. Raised loading facilities will also help to improve the wellbeing of calves being transported.

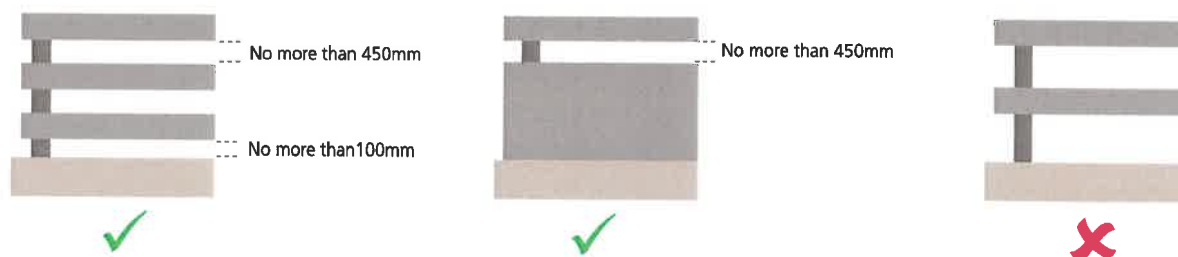


*Raise platform or lower truck height to achieve load height of 1.2m.*

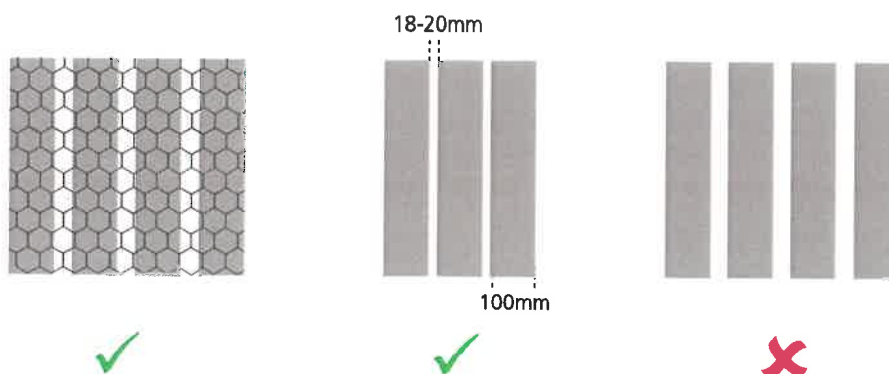
## Loading facility design specifications



1. Platform: level, with a load height of 1200mm.
2. Loading doorway: width of 800-900mm.
3. To protect a portable loading facility from damage by a truck backing up against it, construct a solid buffer using two straining posts and a horizontal board.
4. Pen side height:
  - a. 900mm-1100mm solid construction (ply or closely spaced rails to provide shelter. If rails are used spacing must not create a hazard for calf heads/legs).
  - b. If using rails, the gap between the bottom rail and the floor should be no more than 100mm.



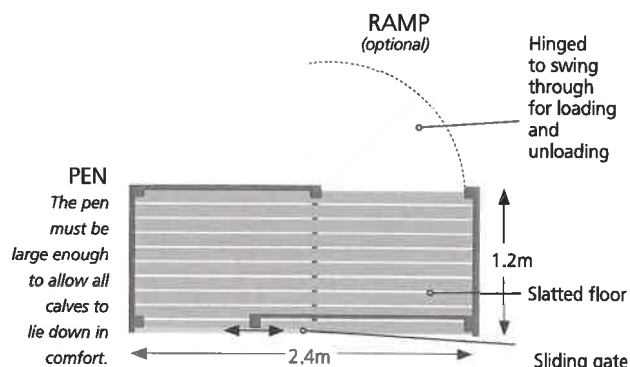
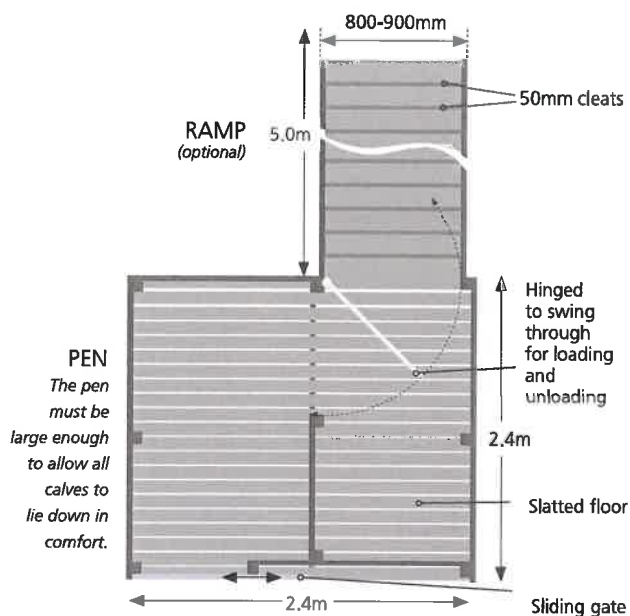
- c. If using a top rail, the gap between the top rail and the rail below or solid side must be no more than 450mm.



5. Flooring: solid construction, free-draining non-slip surface. Slatted flooring is ideal. The use of non-slip rubber matting or geogrid stretched and secured over a timber slatted floor can add grip and prevent hooves from being caught in floor slats. A gap of 15-20mm between slats is recommended.

## Large farms

## Smaller farms

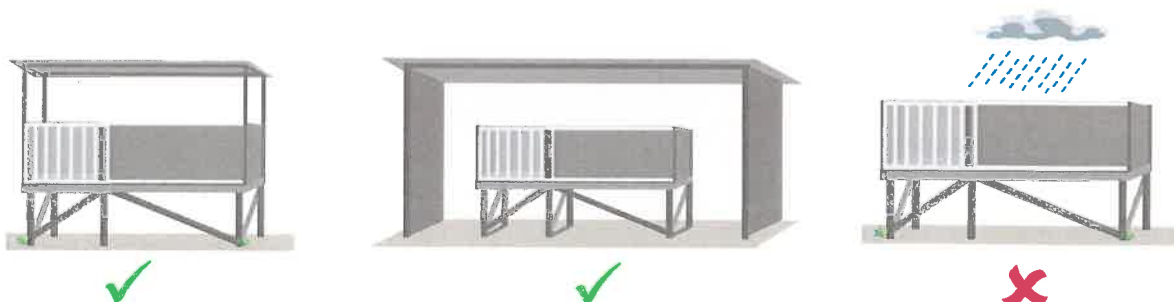


Total size: large enough to allow all calves to lie down in comfort. Pen size depends on farm size and calf numbers. 2.4m x 2.4m is considered suitable for most farms as this size pen will comfortably hold 15-20 calves depending on calf breed/size. Smaller farms could reduce the size to 2.4m x 1.2m. Larger farms may need multiple pens. For a large pen, use a divider/backing gate to manage larger numbers of calves and to help confine the calves during the loading process

### Area guide for calf breeds

Breed	Area/calf	Calves/m <sup>2</sup>	2.4m x 2.4m	2.4m x 1.2m
Jerseys/Cross breed	0.3 - 0.35	2.9 - 3.3	17 - 20 calves	up to 10calves
Holstein/Friesian	0.35 - 0.4	2.5 - 2.9	15 - 17 calves	up to 8 calves

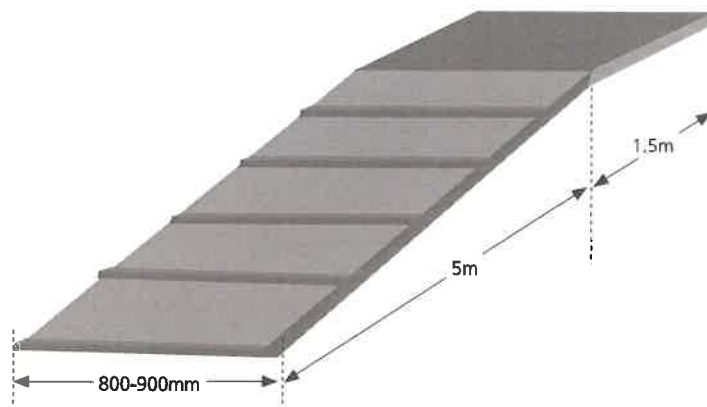
- Construction and hardware: safe environment for calves and people, including safe access for staff/loaders – avoid sharp edges, trip hazards, protrusions, etc.
- Water: calves must have fresh water available in the pen.
- Shelter: calves that have been removed from their mothers must be provided with shelter from weather likely to affect their welfare. The loading facility should either be:
  - within an existing building or in the shelter of one or
  - have a roof and solid pen walls or
  - a moveable pen on skids that can be stored within a building and moved into position immediately before the truck arrives.



## Ramps

Ramps can be used to load calves either into a raised holding pen before pick-up (recommended) or to load out of a ground level pen onto the truck.

- Internal width: guideline 800-900mm.
- Slope: as a general rule, the shallower the slope the better. 5:1 (11 degrees) is optimal.
- Incorporate 50mm x 20mm cleats at 200mm centres into the walking surface to provide additional grip for calves and people, or build a stepped ramp with 50mm risers and 250mm treads.
- Geogrid mesh securely fastened to the slope is an effective way of adding grip.
- Adding solid sides to the ramp at a minimum height of 900mm to 1100mm is recommended.
- If using the ramp to load onto a truck, construct a level platform approximately 1.5m in length at the top of the ramp so stock load on to the truck from a flat even surface and not directly from a slope.



*A cleated ramp.*

## The holding pen

- It is the farmer's responsibility to select calves that are fit for transport. The holding pen should be a dedicated area where only calves that have been assessed and confirmed as being fit for transport are placed before collection.
- Calves to be transported should be tagged and clearly identified to avoid any animals being collected by mistake. The holding pen should provide a safe, sheltered, well drained and ventilated area for the calves. By raising the holding pen, calves may be loaded directly on to the truck; alternatively use a ramp to load from the holding pen.





## Building consent requirements and regulations

Check with your local council to see if your proposed facility needs building consent or whether it is exempt under Schedule 1 of the Building Act.

Building consent is not normally required if it is a temporary, moveable or detached structure or is a permanent structure that:

- has a floor level of up to 1m above the supporting ground and a height of up to 3.5m above the floor level
- does not exceed 10m<sup>2</sup> in floor area
- is further than its measured height from any existing dwelling or boundary, i.e. if the holding pen is 3m high it must not be built within 3m of any existing dwelling or property boundary.

For more information on building work that does not require a building consent, go to **building.govt.nz**.

If you want to construct a floor height higher than 1m to achieve the desired loading height of 1200mm, you may need to apply for a building exemption. Guidelines on the consent process can be found at **building.govt.nz**.

Regardless of whether consent is required or not, the structure must be safe and must comply with the building code.

## Health & safety

**Identified hazards should be addressed through good design rather than management controls.**

- If building a new facility, talk with your transport operator to help with the initial design and location.
- Use non-slip and non-bruising materials.
- Talk to a builder or engineer and build using materials and fasteners to create a structure that is fit for purpose and well within safe working load limits.
- To comply with health and safety requirements, the pen sides must be of 900mm to 1100mm high and be able to withstand a sideways force of 550N (56kg).
- Where possible, design holding facilities so you don't need to lift calves. Lifting of a limited number of calves onto a raised pen is permitted, provided safe lifting techniques are used. For information on safe cattle handling visit **saferfarms.org.nz/guides**.

### Maintain safety standards

- Talk with your transporter regularly to help identify any emerging safety risks promptly.
- Keep facilities clean and in a good state of repair.
- Make sure that anyone using the facility is appropriately trained and aware of any potential hazards.
- Report all faults or safety issues to management.
- The loading and other openings must be able to be closed off and secured to minimise the risk of anyone falling from the platform, including when the facility is not in use.

Potential hazard	Solution to hazard
Crush point between the facility and reversing truck.	Create a no-go zone between the truck and the ramp.
Portable ramps/holding pen moving backwards or becoming unstable when the truck reverses into it.	Create a no-go zone behind the ramp. Construct a solid buffer with two straining posts and a horizontal board.
Poor alignment between the facility creating a gap.	Use a solid hinged flap or extension to cover the gap between the loading facility and the truck. Fit a compressible buffer at the truck/facility interface.
Consider health and safety requirements when planning and reviewing access to the holding facility.	Stairs with handrails are much safer than fixed ladders. Portable ladders should be avoided.

## Loading design options

### Earth bank with wooden retaining wall

Use existing topography; dig into a bank or create an earth mound against a wooden retaining wall to provide face to load off. Depending on existing topography and available drainage, it may be possible to reduce the necessary loading height by digging down to lower the deck height of the truck so that the access point is lower.

### Packed earth ramps

Form sides and loading face using treated posts and timber rails, then create the ramp by filling between the timber sides using packed earth.



### Using an existing raised structure

Adapting an existing woolshed or utilising a disused tanker stand may provide a low-cost option to achieve correct loading height.

### Modified existing loading ramp

Typically loading ramps for cows are not suitable for calves as they are usually too steep and often have wide gaps in the sides that become trap hazards for calves. Attaching plywood with cable ties to create a solid-sided ramp may be an affordable option. You might have to create a sheltered holding area as well.

### Raised platform

You can get a commercial holding platform from a timber merchant or a farm supply store. They offer a variety of kit-sets, typically moveable, made of timber on skids. Not all kitset platforms are supplied with a roof, so you may need to place them within an existing structure to provide sufficient shelter from extreme weather conditions. Alternatively, build your own using the specifications outlined above.

If you are purchasing a commercially produced holding pen, check to ensure that it has been designed to meet the New Zealand Building Code requirements and that Producer Statements are available.

### Raised platform with loading ramp

Another option for raised platforms is a ramp that can be incorporated into the design so you will not have to lift calves into the holding area.

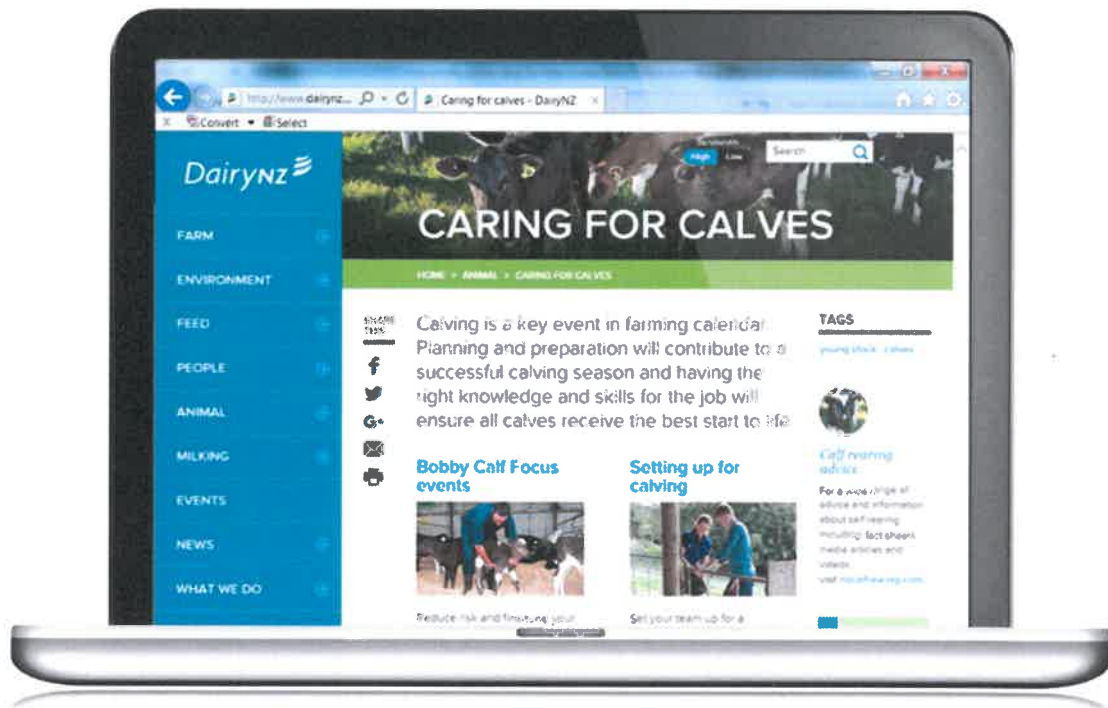


### Hydraulic platform

Using a tractor-mounted carry tray may be an option on some farms.

## Caring for calves resources

DairyNZ is offering a range of resources and events to help improve your calving season.



*For tips, resources and practical advice visit [dairynz.co.nz/calves](http://dairynz.co.nz/calves)*