

Prevent downer cows during transport

Everyone across the supply chain – farmers, veterinarians, stock agents, transporters, saleyard operators and processors – **has a role to play in animal welfare.**

Transport is stressful for cows. Make sure you're doing your part to ensure cull cows have a comfortable, safe journey and arrive fit and healthy.

Good planning and communication are essential.



Cull cows must be well prepared for travel, whatever the journey length. Lactating cows are at increased risk of milk fever (low blood calcium) and going down during transport or at the processor. To prevent this:

- Only select animals that are fit for transport.
- Where possible, fully dry cows off before transporting to slaughter. Transporting in full milk is high risk. Milk any lactating cows as close to transport as possible.
- Cull cows should be transported for the shortest time possible and processed at the nearest facility. Discuss options with your stock agent. The risk of injury or going down increases with travel time and distance.
- Supplement with extra calcium and magnesium at the same rate you would give to colostrum cows to prevent milk fever. Seek advice from your vet on supplementation rates and administration options.
- Take cows off green feed (lush pasture) for 4-12 hours prior to pick-up time. Maximum 6 hours for lactating cows. Provide roughage and water until loading.
- A grazed-out paddock is recommended to give cows the opportunity to rest before the journey. Don't stand them on concrete.
- Cows may be held in yards overnight at the processing plant, so the total time off feed is longer than just the journey time.

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



For more information:

DairyNZ advice on preparing animals for transport:

www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/transporting-stock/

Check the codes of welfare and regulations:

www.mpi.govt.nz/welfarecodes
www.mpi.govt.nz/animalregs

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