

PREPARATION OF DAIRY COWS FOR TRANSPORT

Preventing Down Cows

Follow these 3 steps **before** your cull cows get on the truck:

Step 1

Stand them off pasture (green feed) for 4-12 hours prior to transport.

Step 2

Provide roughage/dry feed and water while they're stood off.

Step 3

Supplement with *CALCIUM* (lime flour), as well as *Magnesium*. Add to roughage, dry feed or as an oral drench.



Why do I need to read this?

MPI records show approximately 1000 cull dairy cows go down during transport, or at the saleyard/slaughter plant each year, this is a significant animal welfare issue and it poses a risk to the reputation of the dairy industry. This metabolic crisis is principally due to low blood calcium i.e., hypocalcaemia (milk fever), brought on by the stress of feed withdrawal, transport and yarding.

Cows which go down on the truck are at risk of being trampled by their pen mates. They can suffer injuries such as broken bones, lacerations, bruising and even death. They can also bring down other cows in the pen. Some plants may treat 'down cows' with a metabolic solution. If they respond and gain their feet they can be processed, but only to restricted markets. If they do not respond (or are not treated) they will be euthanased with a total loss to the supplier.

**BOOST CALCIUM
BEFORE TRANSPORT**



What do I need to do?

It is vital that dairy cows are prepared adequately before transport to saleyard/slaughter. Even though the risks are greater for lactating cows, dry cows can also suffer from low levels of blood calcium. Therefore, **all cows** should be prepared properly regardless of lactation status, using the guidance on the back of the page:

Dairy cows should not be starved.

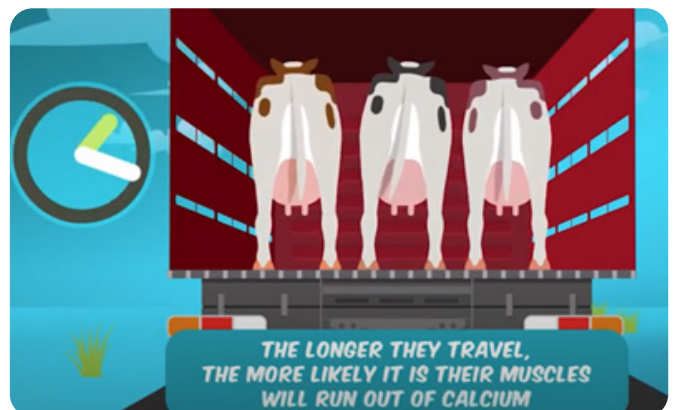
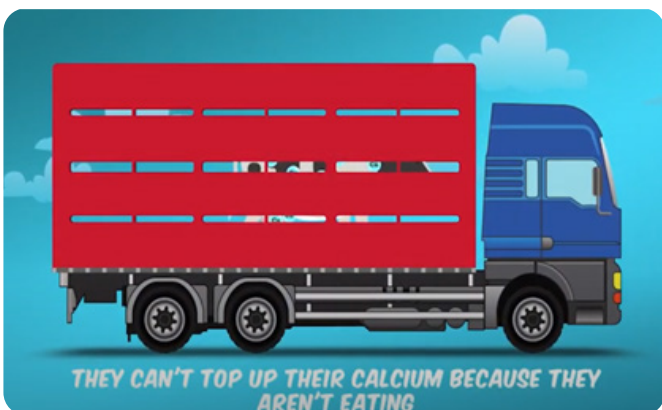
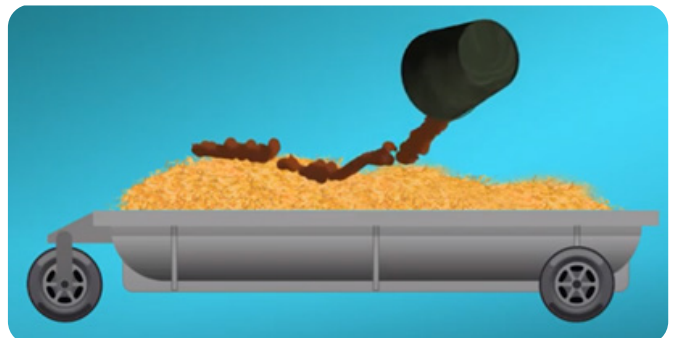
Stand off pasture for 4-12 hours before transport BUT provide roughage/dry feed and water until loading on the truck.

You can then add *CALCIUM* and magnesium to the hay/baleage/palm kernel.



1. Add 100 grams of lime flour per cow to feed during stand off (4-12 hrs before transport). This provides each cow with 35g of *CALCIUM*. An alternative supplement can be used but it **must** contain the equivalent amount of *CALCIUM*.
2. Also give 60 grams Causmag. Note that this contains Magnesium not *CALCIUM* so is not a substitute for Calcium supplementation.

The extra *CALCIUM* could be given as an oral drench, or a slurry poured over dry feed. If no roughage is on hand it is possible to mix with dry feed/meal in troughs in the yard/shed. Use the same rates as for colostrum cow supplementation.



In summary it is essential for the welfare of your cows that they are prepared for transport and receive *CALCIUM* as well as magnesium supplementation. Good preparation will also maximise your potential economic return.

More information can be found here: www.dairynz.co.nz/transport

Alternatively, seek advice from your vet.