



Dairy Welfare We Care

*The Australian Dairy Industry
– we care about animal welfare*

The National Dairy Industry Animal Welfare Strategy

For further information contact:
animalwelfare@dairyaustralia.com.au

The Australian dairy industry takes its responsibilities for animal welfare seriously and has a national dairy industry animal welfare strategy.

The Federal Government recently developed an Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) with the vision that the welfare of all animals in Australia is promoted and protected by the adoption of practical, effective and humane animal welfare standards. This is consistent with the dairy industry animal welfare strategy.

The dairy industry is one of Australia's major rural industries. It is a significant regional employer and a major export earner for the Australian economy – with more than half our production exported to over 140 different world markets.

The animal husbandry practices used by Australian dairy farmers are intrinsically linked with animal welfare. To deliver safe, quality dairy products, dairy farmers must practice sound animal husbandry and keep their animals in peak condition.

Australian dairy farmers participate in Quality Assurance (QA) programs – the food safety elements of these QA programs are audited to ensure compliance with food safety legislation. This underpins the whole QA program, ensuring credible and reliable delivery of outcomes.

The dairy industry

- is committed to, and serious about, delivering good animal welfare including continuous improvement where relevant;
- has a solid track record for animal welfare; and
- closely monitors animals every day as part of normal farming practice.

Sound husbandry practices are just part of daily business for dairy farmers.

This brochure focuses on the animal welfare outcomes already being delivered through normal dairy practices.

*“Sound dairy husbandry delivers
good animal welfare”*



Level 5, IBM Tower, 60 City Rd
Southbank Victoria 3006 Australia
T + 61 3 9694 3777
F + 61 3 9694 3733
E animalwelfare@dairyaustralia.com.au
www.dairyaustralia.com.au

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DAIRY AUSTRALIA
Delivering for the dairy industry

Nurturing

From the day they are born, dairy calves are nurtured with extra feed, shelter and health care.



Good nutrition and shelter ensure calves are fit and strong.

Calves that are healthy and grow to the optimum body weight produce more milk and meat. They are also likely to be more fertile and healthy during their productive years.

Routine calf rearing practices include:

- ensuring calves receive colostrum milk to provide early immunity;
- individual identification and recording of details;
- daily feeding and review of health;
- providing hygienic shelter and housing;
- regular inspection and treatment for illnesses if needed;
- vaccinations to prevent disease; and
- regular review of weight gain and body condition.

Valuing



Ear tag identification enables detailed records to be kept on individual cows.

Each animal in the dairy herd is an important asset to the business. They are cared for, protected and valued.

On a dairy farm, every cow is important and cared for as an individual. Each has its own identification tag so that detailed information can easily be recorded.

Individual animal information that is regularly recorded includes:

- breeding details such as parentage, mating dates, pregnancy test results, calving dates;
- milk production and composition;
- illnesses and treatments;
- body weight; and
- supplementary feed intake.

When making breeding decisions, farmers consider traits that affect welfare such as ease of calving, conformation and temperament.

Feeding



Our feeding system is pasture-based, supplemented by extra feed when needed.

Our grazing systems provide a highly nutritious diet that delivers good milk production and is also good for welfare.

Australian dairy cows spend most of their days grazing. Pasture is supplemented with hay, silage and grain when needed. A nutritious diet is essential to maintain good health, milk production, body weight and fertility.

Routine dairy husbandry practices associated with feeding include:

- providing fresh pasture each day;
- reviewing cows' body conditions and adjusting their diets accordingly;
- adjusting the diet during lactation to meet changes in nutritional needs;
- providing extra feed (hay, silage or grain) when pasture availability is low (eg winter) or quality is unable to meet nutritional needs; and
- providing access to suitable and sufficient drinking water.

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Preventing



Veterinary herd health treatment programs are an integral part of dairy farming practice.

Ensuring cows are healthy is an essential element of good welfare.

Dairy cattle receive regular health care checks and preventative treatments.

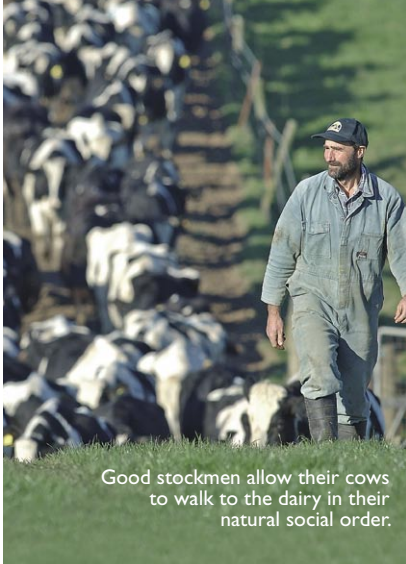
The cows are closely observed each day, prior to and during each milking. Any change in their health and wellbeing is noted and they are treated immediately.

Routine care of individual cows includes:

- post-calving inspections to check for complete recovery from giving birth;
- twice daily observations during milking;
- comprehensive disease prevention treatments;
- drenching to prevent worms;
- vaccinating against diseases; and
- participation in national disease control programs.

The industry's national learning projects, Countdown Downunder and InCalf help farmers use responsible health care programs.

Handling



Good stockmen allow their cows to walk to the dairy in their natural social order.

Good stockmanship and welfare go hand in hand. Cow welfare and milk production benefit from handling practices that create a calm, low-stress environment.

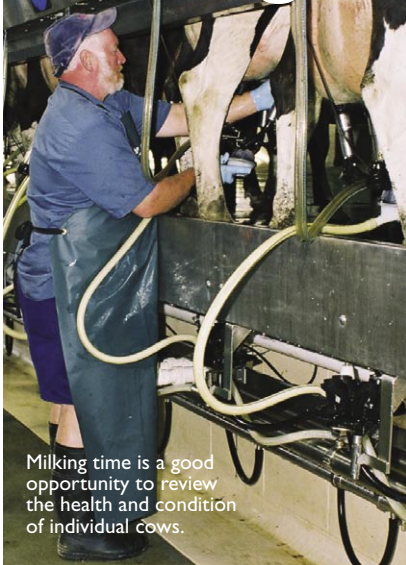
Milking and handling cows in a calm, stress-free environment is good for cows, people and milk production.

CowTime is the industry's national project to help make milking easier. It includes stockmanship practices that reduce stress and promote good welfare.

Routine husbandry practices that reduce stress include:

- allowing cows to remain in their natural social order when coming into the dairy;
- providing an environment that respects normal cow behaviour and their responses to light, noise and smells; and
- preventing injury to animals by maintaining farm facilities (such as laneways, fences, troughs and the milking shed) in safe working order.

Milking



Milking time is a good opportunity to review the health and condition of individual cows.

The milking routine enables cows to be inspected regularly, and if ill, treated early, long before welfare is compromised.

At milking each cow is closely monitored for:

- health, general condition and wellbeing; and
- recovery from any illness under treatment.

Routine dairy husbandry practices associated with milking include:

- inspecting the udder for signs of infection (mastitis) and treatment if needed;
- identifying cows with signs of lameness, inspecting the hoofs and treating if needed;
- teat treatments at the end of milking to prevent mastitis; and
- checking cows are recovering from calving and treating for infections if needed.

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Monitoring



A dairy milk sample is analysed for composition, food safety and signs of mastitis.

Daily monitoring of milk production provides almost instant feedback about cow health, nutrition and welfare.

The milk vat provides an opportunity for daily feedback on the herd's production which is an indicator of the health and welfare of cows.

Routine dairy practices associated with monitoring include:

- visual inspection of milk samples collected from each cow before milking for signs of mastitis;
- daily review of milk production as an indicator of the health and wellbeing of the cows;
- factory analysis of milk composition and quality; and
- factory testing of milk for bacteria.

Improving



Farmers at a CowTime Shed Shake-up discuss ways to make milking easier and less stressful for cows and people.

Australian dairy farmers are constantly adopting new and better ways of caring for their cattle.

Dairy farmers contribute a levy which helps fund research and development projects that identify and develop new practices and technologies.

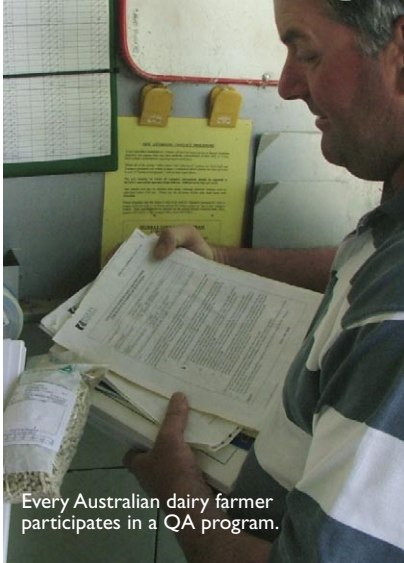
Dairy farmers attend courses, workshops and field days to keep in touch with the latest ideas and practices.

Projects which help dairy farmers continuously improve include:

- Countdown Downunder for improving mastitis control;
- InCalf for improving herd fertility;
- CowTime to make milking easier; and
- TopFodder to improve silage quality.

The dairy industry is committed to, and serious about, good animal welfare and continuous improvement. It has a solid track record for animal welfare.

Assuring



Every Australian dairy farmer participates in a QA program.

Sound dairy farming practices that deliver good animal welfare are integrated into everyday quality assurance systems.

Every Australian dairy farm participates in a Quality Assurance (QA) program through the manufacturing company they supply.

An Animal Welfare Reference Document for Dairy Production has been produced to support QA programs and staff training.

Routine practices associated with quality assurance include:

- adoption of disease control measures to ensure wholesome, safe milk;
- ensuring feedstuffs are suitable and safe, verified by vendor declarations;
- individual cow identification and recording for traceability;
- systems to ensure well being of animals and quality of milk; and
- ensuring bobby calves are fit and healthy for transport and market, verified by vendor declarations.

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