

Young Calf Welfare

This paper sets out the policy authorised by Ministers not the final wording of the regulations, which will be subject to drafting by the Parliamentary Counsel Office.

These regulations will apply in respect of “young calves” which will be defined to cover bovine animals that are up to 14 days of age that have been separated permanently from their mothers.

It is intended that regulations 1-4 will come into force on 1st of August 2016. Regulations 5 - 7 will be subject to delayed commencement of 6-12 months.

I. Fitness for Transport - Age & Physical Characteristics

Proposed rule

A young calf must be at least four full days of age before it is transported for sale or slaughter.

When a young calf is presented for collection [likely by a farmer or farm employee] for transportation for the purpose of sale or slaughter, and when it is collected [likely by a transporter] it must:

- a. be free of disease, deformity, blindness or any disability;
- b. be alert and able to rise from a lying position and, once up, capable of moving freely, is not listless and is able to protect itself from trampling and being injured by other calves;
- c. have hooves that are firm and worn flat and not bulbous with soft unworn tissue; and
- d. have a navel cord which is wrinkled, withered and shrivelled and not pink or red coloured, raw or fleshy.

Owners or persons in charge of a young calf who present or accept that calf for transport will be required to have a system in place that, if followed, will ensure compliance with the age and physical characteristics requirements above.

Penalty - \$500 infringement offence.

Note that there will be three distinct offences here:

- Presenting for transport a calf that is less than four days from separation.
- Presenting for transport a calf that does not meet the physical requirements listed above.
- Accepting for transport a calf that does not meet the physical requirements listed above.

2. Twelve hour maximum duration of transport

Proposed rule

A young calf must not be transported on a vehicle for more than 12 hours from the point of loading to arrival at the final destination of the journey.

Any person that transports a young calf will be required to have a system in place that, if followed, will ensure that the journey does not exceed 12 hours.

Penalty - Prosecutable offence in regulation.

3. Prohibition of killing by blunt force trauma except in emergency circumstances

Proposed rule

A calf may not be killed by the use of blunt force trauma caused by a blow to the head except in circumstances where the calf is in severe pain or distress, requires emergency humane destruction as a result and where no reasonable alternative to the use of blunt force trauma is available.

Unlike the rest of these proposals, this regulation would apply to all calves (“bovines that are not yet weaned”) rather than only “young calves.” This would avoid downgrading the current prohibition in Minimum Standard 17 in the Dairy Cattle Code, which applies to “calves.”

Penalty - Prosecutable offence in regulation.

4. Prohibition of transport by sea across the Cook Strait

Proposed rule

Prohibition of the transportation of young calves by sea across the Cook Strait.

Penalty - Prosecutable offence in regulation.

5. Loading and Unloading Facilities

Proposed rule

In circumstances where a young calf is transported for the purpose of sale or slaughter, facilities must be provided and used to enable that calf to walk safely onto and off transportation by its own action.

Liability would fall on the owners and/ or persons in charge of the young calves at each location in which those animals are loaded or unloaded.

This regulation will be subject to a delayed commencement of 12 months. It will therefore come into effect on 1st of August 2017.

Penalty - \$500 infringement offence.

5. Shelter before and during transportation and at points of sale or slaughter

Proposed rule

In circumstances where a young calf is transported for the purpose of sale or slaughter, it must have access to shelter that is clean, dry, suitably ventilated and which provides protection from adverse weather, including extremes of heat and cold. The shelter should also enable the calves to stand in a natural posture, including the ability to lie down or stand up as they choose.

The description above draws from the current Dairy Cattle and Transport Within New Zealand Codes of Welfare. We intend that the final regulation should achieve these outcomes without being too prescriptive about how individual shelters must be constructed. This will allow flexibility for individuals to respond to their own particular circumstances, which is important given the diverse nature of New Zealand's geography, climate and seasonal conditions.

Liability would fall on the owners and/ or persons in charge of the young calves at each location or vehicle in which those animals are held before and during transportation and at points of sale or slaughter.

This regulation will be subject to a delayed commencement of 12 months. It will therefore come into effect on 1st of August 2017.

Penalty - Prosecutable offence in regulation.

7. Maximum time off feed

Proposed rule

Young calves must be fed at least once in the 24 hours prior to slaughter.

This rule is intended to apply to circumstances when a young calf has been or is being transported off farm for the purpose of slaughter. The intention is not to appear to suggest that calves need only be fed once every 24 hours in any other circumstance.

Persons in charge of a young calf at slaughter will be required to have a system in place with their suppliers that, if followed, will ensure that any such calf received into their care are fed at least maintenance rations within 24 hours of their last feed or fed again. An equivalent requirement will apply to transporters to have a contingency plan in place to enable the calf to be fed at least maintenance rations in the event of any delays to the journey which result in the calf not being off-loaded to slaughter premises before the 24 hour deadline.

This regulation will be subject to a delayed commencement of six months. It will therefore come into effect on 1st of February 2017.

Penalty - Prosecutable offence in regulation.