

1: Animal Welfare – Levels 3 & 4

Responsibilities and reputation

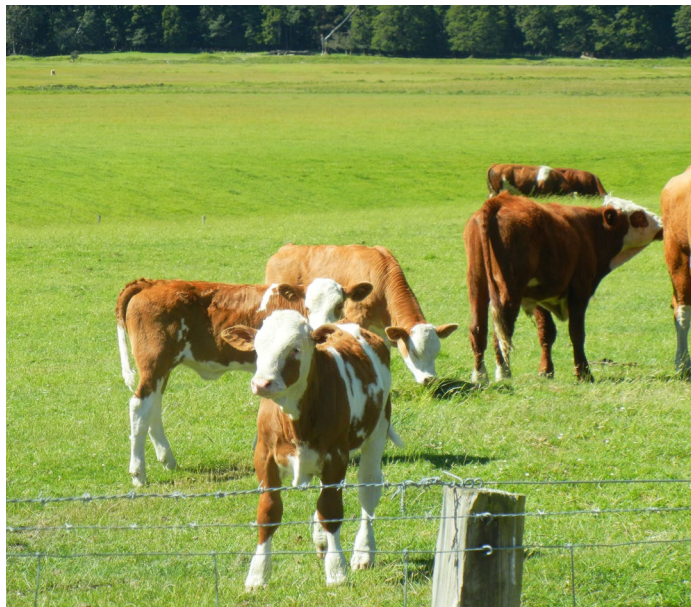


Responsibilities and reputation

In New Zealand, we expect that animals under human care are well looked after. Our reputation for high levels of animal welfare has helped us secure access to markets internationally. Help students examine animal welfare issues and understand their responsibility to show manaakitanga to the animals that live in their community. Students can begin by exploring their responsibilities as pet owners and develop their understandings by investigating their obligations under the [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#), and the New Zealand [Animal Welfare Strategy](#) and its key message that everyone in New Zealand is responsible for animal welfare and maintaining our reputation. [Codes of Welfare](#) may also help students with specific information on a particular animal or practice.

Key understandings:

- The animal welfare system is administered nationally and meets international expectations.
- New Zealanders have responsibilities in supporting the animal welfare system.



How humans use and view animals

- Students consider the animal welfare aspects of a glass of milk. Start with the milk, and get them to work backwards through the food system. Show the students the code of welfare for dairy cattle, the basics of the [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#), and talk about whose responsibility it is to get that glass of milk to you while ensuring animal welfare in the process.
- Have the students discuss the idea of protecting animals. Does this mean conservation of species or looking after the welfare of an animal?
 - In small groups, students list in 5 minutes all the animals in their area.
 - Next students sort all the animals listed into the categories: pets, pests, producers or performers.
 - Swap with another group and examine differences and similarities in choices.
 - Consider why animals were placed in each group, and what sort of protection each animal needs – consider animal welfare, conservation of species, animals as a resource (for food, fibre or entertainment), and any other reasons students think of.
 - Look at the balance between the needs of people (using animals for food and fibre, etc.) and the needs of the animal.
- Through discussion, debate, persuasive writing or art, students can explore:
 - the similarities and differences in the ways animals are treated in different contexts
 - the place of the [5 freedoms](#) in a variety of contexts (the home, farm, sanctuary, zoo, laboratory)
 - how and why humans value different animals differently
 - the hierarchy of animals as decided by humans – which animals are classed as “good” or “bad”, “useful” or “non-useful” and why
 - examine different cultural norms around animal use and why people from different ethnicities, geographical regions or occupations might view and use animals differently.

What humans are doing to help improve animal welfare

1. Discuss how animal welfare is safeguarded in New Zealand – through the law ([MPI](#) and [SPCA](#)) and through other agencies such as the [National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee \(NAWAC\)](#).
2. Interview an animal welfare professional (such as an SPCA inspector, an MPI inspector or animal welfare team member) and find out what their roles and responsibilities are, and the wider animal welfare issues they see in their job.

3. Find out about national and international animal welfare agencies and the different strategies they employ to communicate animal welfare messages.
4. Discuss why there is controversy surrounding some animal rights groups or campaigns, as well as controversial areas of animal use.
5. Investigate animal welfare on farms in your local area. Students could talk to farmers who have animals to find out about the personnel, technology and planning that is in place to ensure animal welfare. If there are no farms with animals in your community, there may be a zoo or a wildlife park.
6. Look at new technologies associated with animal management. Can you identify any risks for animal welfare. For example, could a move away from only human handling of animals be detrimental for animal welfare?
7. Investigate existing housing and shelter for animals such as sheep, cattle, chickens, or working farm dogs, looking at any rules or regulations around animal shelter, animal shelters designed by technologists such as [Tony Prentice](#), and the differences different shelters can make to animal welfare. Also helpful for this could be the SPCA, local council, codes of welfare and this [MPI booklet](#) about sheep and cattle.
8. Compare the work and role of ministerial advisory committees like NAWAC and the [National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee](#), and organisations like MPI, SPCA, and animal rights groups. How well do these groups work together?

Related resources

- This [Ethics thinking tool](#) from the Science Learning Hub is designed to help students explore an issue, using ethical frameworks.
- Look at the [New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy](#) document from MPI, which includes a great diagram to give an easy-to-read overview of the purpose of New Zealand's Animal Welfare Strategy.
- The SPCA has developed a range of [resources](#) to look at the caring relationship between humans and animals. Access for teachers is via a login.

Extensive and Intensive Farming

A range of farming systems are used in New Zealand. In this topic, students will look at different systems, using a variety of sources for information. Emphasise to the students the importance of acknowledging bias and controversy when dealing with this topic, as there are many strong, conflicting opinions about animal welfare and farming systems. Ideally students should investigate both an intensive and extensive managed farm. While visiting farms would be ideal, observational evidence may not be available to all students.

Using laying hens as a case study, encourage students to look at a variety of sources for information on how they are kept and managed in the range of systems used within New Zealand. Be aware that some sources may have images that students may find disturbing and will come from a particular viewpoint. Look at the [NAWAC layer hen code](#) report which accompanies the [Layer hen Code of Welfare](#). They can independently explore websites such as the [Egg Producers Federation](#), [Poultry Industry Association of NZ](#), and [SPCA Blue Tick](#). Students may need more guidance with some sites and images. Students need to balance and explore sources from both sides of the farming debate to reach an unbiased view of the issue.

Further activities include:

- Students define intensive farming and extensive farming, and discuss the evidence and opinions around the different farming systems and their pros and cons.
- Create a continuum showing the range of ways animal food products (eggs/chicken/pork/fish) are produced. How have these changed over time and why?
- Investigate the type of produce sold at their local supermarket and the kinds of farming methods that were used to produce them. This information may be available on food labels. Students can discuss why foods might be labelled with their farm of origin, and design a label that they think will give accurate information to the consumer.
- Design a set of rules around animal welfare at the farms they have visited, and justify their reasoning.
- Investigate the technology used on these farms, and design housing, feeding or ventilation systems that enhance animal welfare.
- Individually or in a group, develop a product or system to address an animal welfare issue in your region.

