



Animal Welfare in New Zealand

November 2017



New Zealanders strongly value both good animal husbandry and ethical treatment of all animals.

New Zealand has progressive animal welfare legislation that goes further than just preventing cruelty, by placing an obligation on all people in charge of animals to meet their animals' physical, health and behavioural needs.

New Zealand's animal welfare systems are world-class, as demonstrated by our "A" grading for animal welfare, alongside the United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland and Austria, in the Animal

Protection Index produced by World Animal Protection.

New Zealand's animal welfare system is well-regarded internationally. It's based on conceptually sound and contemporary legislation, internationally recognised animal welfare standards, extensive research, policies based on science and ethics, and proven on-farm practices.

The government, primary production sector and animal welfare organisations all have a part to play in building and reinforcing New Zealand's international animal welfare reputation.

Adherence to international standards

International standards have helped New Zealand to develop its national framework for animal welfare. These standards support free and fair rules-based trade, and are actively supported by New Zealand.

New Zealand works to encourage the development and implementation of evidence-based recommendations and standards through the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). New Zealand will continue to take a central role in the development of these standards, in light of the importance of animals and animal products to New Zealand.

Much like the development of international guidelines on animal welfare, bilateral cooperation with trading partners on animal welfare

rules builds mutual trust and understanding of each other's systems and standards.

Animal welfare: relationship with the EU

New Zealand has a strong and supportive relationship with both the European Union (EU) and the UK governments. Together we cooperate and advance international standards in areas such as animal health, welfare and food safety.

New Zealand and the EU have a strong history of cooperation in the animal welfare arena. This was formalised under the EU-New Zealand Partnership Agreement on Relations and Cooperation.

The Agreement states that New Zealand and the EU will continue to share information and cooperate within the Animal Welfare Cooperation Forum of the European Commission, and work closely together in the OIE.

The Animal Welfare Cooperation Forum meets annually in May during the OIE General Session in Paris, and there is also an annual meeting of both EU and New Zealand scientists working in the animal welfare field.

New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy 2013

The New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy developed by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) reinforces the following:

- » Animal welfare has both domestic and international dimensions – even isolated cases of poor animal welfare could damage New Zealand's reputation;
- » Not complying with minimum animal welfare standards is unacceptable;
- » Professional and industry groups should take a proactive and leading role in animal welfare, particularly in educating their members; and
- » Good care of animals and animal husbandry are fundamental.

For a full copy of the Animal Welfare Strategy, called 'Animal Welfare Matters', visit www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/overview



New Zealand's Animal Welfare Act 1999

New Zealand's animal welfare practices add value to our exports by contributing to our reputation as a responsible agricultural producer. Animal welfare is increasingly important for accessing premium markets and differentiating New Zealand's products.

New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy 2013

Implementing and monitoring animal welfare standards are important towards growing and protecting the value of New Zealand's animal products exports.

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 recognises that animals are sentient and requires owners and persons in charge of animals to attend properly to their welfare. Animals covered by the Act include all vertebrates (and some of their foetal or early life stages), octopus, squid, crab, lobster and crayfish (both freshwater and saltwater).

The Act clearly establishes the obligations on animal owners to meet the physical, health and behavioural needs of animals, as appropriate to the animal species, circumstances and environment. These needs include:

- » proper and sufficient food and water;
- » adequate shelter;
- » the opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour;
- » physical handling in a way which minimises the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress; and

- » protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, injury or disease.

Regulations under the Animal Welfare Act 1999

Changes to the Animal Welfare Act in May 2015 improved the enforceability, clarity and transparency of New Zealand's animal welfare system. The changes also gave MPI the ability to make regulations under the Animal Welfare Act. These regulations introduced new penalties and fines to deal with animal mistreatment more effectively.

A suite of 46 regulations were approved for development in 2017 to provide immediate animal welfare benefits. These regulations relate to stock transport, farm husbandry, companion and working animals, pigs, layer hens and the way animals are accounted for in research testing and teaching.

From 2018, a further suite of regulations will be developed relating to carrying out surgical and painful procedures on animals.

Regulations under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 applying to young calves

MPI recognises that calves are vulnerable and we have set clear guidelines and expectations for their care. MPI issued seven regulations in 2016 to strengthen the rules around calf welfare. Four came into effect in August 2016, and three in 2017.

The regulations affect any farmer who sends calves off-farm for sale or slaughter, as well as transport operators and meat processors of young calves.

The regulations:

- require young calves to be at least four full days of age and physically fit before they are transported off-farm for sale or slaughter or as a result of sale;
- set a maximum of 12 hours' journey time for young calves;
- prohibit the transport of young calves by

sea across Cook Strait (a body of water separating the South and North Islands of New Zealand);

- prohibit the killing of any calves by use of blunt force to the head, except in an emergency situation;
- require that young calves be slaughtered as soon as possible after arrival at the slaughter premises, and within 24 hours of their last feed on-farm;
- require that suitable shelter be provided for young calves before and during transportation, and at points of sale or slaughter; and
- require that loading and unloading facilities be provided and used when young calves are transported for sale or slaughter or as a result of sale.



Codes of Welfare

In addition to complying with the Animal Welfare Act, owners or people in charge of animals must comply with minimum standards for animal care and management in codes of welfare, including for animal husbandry, slaughter and transport of animals.

Codes of welfare also include recommended best practices.

These recommendations set out standards of care and conduct, over and above the minimum required to meet the obligations in the Act. They are included to encourage higher standards of animal welfare. In the future, codes of welfare will be complemented by regulations to broaden enforcement powers.

Education and enforcement

One of the strengths of New Zealand's animal welfare system is that the main players – Government, industry, professionals, scientists, and non-government organisations – all work together.

New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy 2013



MPI jointly enforces the Animal Welfare Act and regulations with the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Farmers, veterinarians and the general public are encouraged to report poor animal husbandry or animal abuse. Complaints are investigated and penalties are applied, as appropriate.

If found in breach of the Animal Welfare Act, individuals who do not care for their animals may be imprisoned for up to 12 months and fined up to NZD\$50,000. Corporations may be fined up to NZD\$250,000.

For serious cases of ill-treatment, individuals may be imprisoned for up to five years and fined up to NZD\$100,000. Corporations may be fined up to NZD\$500,000.

In addition, MPI works with industry, the veterinary profession and others to promote regulations and codes of welfare so that everyone working with animals understands their obligations.

Independent committees also provide expert advice on animal welfare, and matters arising from research, testing and teaching involving animals.



**Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua**

Pastoral House, 25 The Terrace
PO Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand 6140
Phone: 0800 00 83 33

www.mpi.govt.nz

ISBN No: 978-1-77665-714-8 (print)

ISBN No: 978-1-77665-713-1 (online)

Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate, the Ministry for Primary Industries does not accept any responsibility or liability for error of fact, omission, interpretation or opinion that may be present, nor for the consequences of any decisions based on this information. Any view or opinion expressed does not necessarily represent the view of the Ministry for Primary Industries.

© Crown Copyright – Ministry for Primary Industries, November 2017

New Zealand Government

