



Young calf regulations for 2017 – What you need to know



Seven new regulations have been developed to strengthen the rules around young calf welfare with a range of fines and infringements. Four regulations are already in force. One more will take effect from 1 February 2017, and then two more from 1 August 2017.

The new rules may involve some changes to current practice and farm infrastructure. Communication is key. Farmers, transporters and processors should ensure that they talk to each other and know what to do to put the right processes and facilities in place to meet the requirements.

This is a summary of the regulations. The full regulations are available at www.legislation.govt.nz.

Definition: Young Calf means a bovine that is up to 14 days of age and has been separated from its mother.

Regulations taking effect on 1 February 2017

Maximum time off feed before slaughter

This applies to all young calves that are being held for slaughter, and requires the processing company to work with farmers and transporters to make sure they meet this regulation. This may require the time of last feed on farm to be noted so that processors can meet their requirements.

Young calves must be slaughtered as soon as possible after arrival at slaughter premises. If it is not possible to slaughter a young calf within 24 hours after it was last fed on farm then:

- if the calf is able and willing to feed, it must be fed a volume of colostrum, milk, or milk replacer that equates to at least 5% of the calf's body weight and it then should be slaughtered as soon as possible; or
- if the calf is unable or unwilling to feed, the calf must be humanely euthanised or slaughtered without delay.

Any person who does not follow this regulation may be liable on conviction for a fine of:

- up to \$5000 for an individual; or
- up to \$25,000 for a body corporate.

A person in charge of a young calf being held at a slaughter premises for slaughter must have a system in place that will ensure these regulations are complied with. Individuals should check that they know what to do and have put the right procedure in place to meet the requirements.

Further Information

Preparation and Selection

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 requires that owners/persons in charge of animals ensure that the physical, health, and behavioural needs of the animals are met (Section 10). Calves must be healthy, strong and fed to be considered fit for transport. Prior to transport, calves should receive proper and sufficient food to ensure that their needs are met both during the total length of the journey that they will take, and the time that they will spend in holding pens before they are slaughtered. Communication between the processor, livestock agent, transport operator and farmer is key to achieving good welfare outcomes and to ensuring that the requirements of this regulation are met. This regulation must be considered alongside the regulation around fitness for transport.

Regulations taking effect on 1 August 2017

Requirements for loading and unloading facilities

This applies to any young calf that is being transported for sale or slaughter or after its sale. The requirement is to provide and use appropriate loading and unloading facilities.

Firstly, a person, i.e. farmer, processor, or sale yard operator, must provide facilities designed to, or make available other means that:

- enable the calf to walk onto or off the stock transport vehicle by its own action; and
- minimise the risk of a calf slipping and injuring itself, falling off the facilities or other means, or becoming otherwise injured or distressed.

Responsibility for providing these facilities falls on a person who is, or will be, the owner or person in charge of a young calf at a place at which the calf is intended to be loaded onto, or unloaded from, a stock transport vehicle used for transporting the calf off farm or from a place of sale for the purpose of sale or slaughter or as a result of sale. Responsibility does not apply to a person who is in charge of transporting the calves (i.e. the truck driver).

Any person who does not follow this regulation may be issued an infringement fee of \$500. A compliance notice ordering that the loading facilities are provided may also be issued.

Secondly, a person in charge of a young calf, including transporters, must take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that the calf is:

- loaded onto a stock transport vehicle for transport off farm or from a place of sale, using the facilities or means referred to above; or
- unloaded from a stock transport vehicle using the facilities or means referred to above.

In this regulation, **stock transport vehicle** means a vehicle that has a loading height of 90 centimetres or more from the lowest point of the tyres to the height of the deck or body of the vehicle onto which a calf will be loaded. This doesn't include calf trailers or vehicles lower than this height.

Any person who does not follow this regulation may be liable on conviction for a fine of:

- up to \$2000 for an individual, or
- up to \$10,000 for a body corporate

Further Information

Farmers should talk with their transport operator before finalising a design or location to ensure that facilities are fit for purpose. DairyNZ provides some further guidance on possible design options, and potential building consent requirements associated with these.

Shelter requirements before and during transportation and at points of sale or slaughter

This applies to any young calf being:

- held on farm for collection before being transported off farm for the purpose of sale or slaughter or as a result of sale; or
- held off farm while awaiting sale or slaughter; or
- transported off farm for the purpose of sale or slaughter or as a result of sale.

Owners or persons in charge of the young calf must ensure that the calf has access to shelter, that:

- is ventilated to the extent that there is no threat to the health or welfare of the calf due to insufficient ventilation; and
- provides protection from adverse weather, including precipitation and extremes of heat and cold; and
- enables the calf to stand up and lie down in a natural posture.

Persons in charge of a vehicle must not transport a young calf off farm unless their vehicle provides the shelter requirements specified above.

All individuals must also ensure that faeces and urine do not accumulate in the shelter or vehicle to an extent that may pose a threat to the health or welfare of the calf.

Any person who does not follow this regulation may be liable on conviction for a fine of:

- up to \$2000 for an individual; or
- up to \$10,000 for a body corporate.

Further Information

Shelter must be provided to calves at all stages of transport; awaiting pick up, on the truck and in holding pens at the slaughter premises or saleyard. If the calves are being loaded using a race/ramp and are only on the structure in the short time it takes to load them, the race/ramp does not need to be covered.

More information

For more information please visit www.mpi.govt.nz/calves or contact our Animal Welfare team: animalwelfare@mpi.govt.nz. To report concern about the welfare of any animals, please phone **0800 00 83 33** and select option 1.