



Options if you need to cull stock on farm

Drought and the effects of COVID-19 restrictions have created feed pressure for farmers in many regions. There are a range of options available to work through these issues and maintain the welfare of your stock.

While it should always be a last resort, there may be a need to undertake on-farm culling.

Before you consider on-farm culling, think about the following:

- If you normally cull stock through meat processors, be aware processing capacity may be limited this year – you may have stock on-farm longer than usual.
- Complete a plan for feeding your stock over winter and into the spring.
- Order supplementary feed now while some is available.
- Book stock needing to be processed well in advance. Ask your processor's agent about options.
- Ask for help and advice – see [Feed Shortages – You can get through](#) on MPI's website
- Contact a veterinarian or other rural professional. They may be able to help you develop a feed plan or help you find feed or resources for your animals.

If you've explored all options above and feel you have no choice but to cull stock on farm

1. Contact your veterinarian

Veterinarians may be able to train farm staff to undertake euthanasia competently, and/or may be able to provide euthanasia services.

In some circumstances, your veterinarians may be able to provide advice on other options for offloading stock, and/or connect you with other on-farm slaughter service providers in your area.

2. Contact a verified slaughter-person

You may not want to carry out the culling yourself, so you could speak to a homekill service provider, a pet food operator, or your vet.

- MPI maintains a list of Homekill and Recreational Catch Service Providers [here](#).
- Pet food operators can be found [here](#).

The verified slaughter-person must be trained and demonstrate the necessary competency and skills required to cull livestock in a safe and humane manner. They should only be authorised to carry out the depopulation of your stock if they can meet these requirements and prove it.

3. Check your disposal plan (or write one)

It is good practice to have a disposal plan that sets out written policy and procedures for the humane slaughter of livestock.

DairyNZ and trusted rural consultants can all help with this. This can help you in your decision-making.

4. Be aware of your obligations

The welfare of your animals is your legal responsibility. If farm staff are carrying out euthanasia, they must be trained and competent to do so.

There are specific codes that set out your animal welfare obligations.

- [Code of Welfare for Dairy Cattle](#).
- [Code of Welfare for Sheep and Beef Cattle](#).
- [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#).

Homekill providers need to meet the requirements of the Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.

For clarification on any of these obligations, contact your industry representative or visit MPI's Codes of Welfare page [here](#).

5. Contact your Council

Find out what the disposal options are in your region. For example, a burial pit might be restricted by size, depth, or its proximity to a waterway. They will also be able to advise if there is a suitable landfill facility in the region, and if this is a suitable option for carcass disposal.

6. Slaughter

When conducting the slaughter of animals, always consider:

- Human safety.
- Whether the person performing the task is trained, competent, and able to comply with relevant animal welfare law.
- Where the slaughter is taking place. Is it visible to the public?
- The welfare of people involved. Are you, or is someone else on-farm, likely to experience distress as a result? This can be a very upsetting time.
- The welfare of the animals involved. The entire process should be as low-stress as possible, ending with humane slaughter.

- The environment. Are you near a river, stream or other waterway? What measures should you take to prevent contamination?

A Humane Slaughter Education Pack can be downloaded from the DairyNZ website: <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/welfare/humane-slaughter/>

7. Disposal of Carcasses

Carcasses can carry diseases which affect human and animal health. They must be disposed of quickly to avoid the contamination of waterways, or contact with remaining stock on your property.

Refer to DairyNZ's [Dead Stock Disposal Best Practice Guideline](#).

What is the best carcass disposal option for you?

On-farm burial

- The on-farm disposal of dead stock is regulated at the local government level. You should contact your local council to find out what rules apply.
- A regional guide on stock burial and offal pits can be found on the Federated Farmers website [here](#).
- DairyNZ also has a [dead stock disposal best practice guideline](#).

Rendering

- The carcasses may be able to be processed for rendering.
- A list of rendering plants in New Zealand can be found [here](#).