



Feed Shortage 2018/19

Cow health and welfare

Making decisions in tough times

Showing we care

Farmers want to do what's best for their cows. But in tough times, making decisions that relate to the cows' health and welfare can be particularly difficult. We want to ensure that no matter what the situation, we can always be proud of the way we treat our cows.

Taking time to look and being patient

Obviously **careful monitoring** of the herd at all times is vital if we are going to pick up on problems early. When times are tough, it can be easy to forget to check, or even become impatient. This could lead to more stress in the cows, which can increase the risk of them becoming sick or lame. Try to remain calm and patient around the cows at all times.

Making early decisions

The most important aspect of maintaining optimal welfare through tough times is to make early decisions about treatment of sick or injured cows.

If a cow is showing signs of pain, is injured or is sick, the most important step you can take is to **act decisively**.

You have three main options:

1. Treat the cow yourself
2. Call the vet
3. Euthanase the cow.

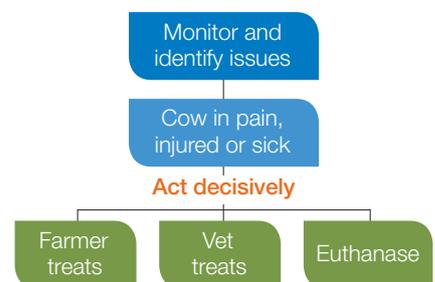
Sometimes these decisions can be tough to make, but the most important thing is that a cow is not suffering unnecessarily, or for any prolonged period of time.

Management of a down cow

The following principles apply to all down cows, whatever the cause:

- › check the cow's environment
- › determine the cause (get a diagnosis) immediately
- › treat the problem appropriately and promptly - early treatment promotes early recovery
- › if possible, get her back on her feet quickly to avoid secondary damage

- › if her chances of recovery are low, arrange for the cow to be humanely destroyed on site without delay



Resources available

- › Body condition scoring handbook
- › Animal welfare standards and guidelines for cattle
- › Caring for our cows booklet
- › Healthy Hooves field guide
- › Fast Facts online guide to diseases of dairy cattle dairyaustralia.com.au/fastfacts
- › How to manage a down cow booklet, wall chart and online videos <https://bit.ly/2QLyxl7>

Published by Dairy Australia Limited.

Whilst all reasonable efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of the *Animal health and welfare* fact sheet, use of the information contained herein is at one's own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by Australian law, Dairy Australia disclaims all liability for any losses, costs, damages and the like sustained or incurred as a result of the use of or reliance upon the information contained herein, including, without limitation, liability stemming from reliance upon any part which may contain inadvertent errors, whether typographical or otherwise, or omissions of any kind.

© Dairy Australia Limited 2018. All rights reserved.