



The
**Co-operative
Difference**



The Co-operative Difference

Animals Factsheet

We are proud of the care we show our animals throughout their lives. It's also important that the practices we use on farm are aligned with the expectations of our farmers, customers, consumers and communities.

Why

Animals are the heart of every dairy farm and the wellbeing of cows and calves is of critical importance to our farmers. Our customers and consumers increasingly require food producers to demonstrate that animals are healthy, productive, contented and treated with respect throughout their lives.

This achievement is designed to ensure that the relationship between our farmers and their vets is strong and that animal wellbeing is actively planned for on our farms. When we get these things right, we see improved animal wellbeing.



What do I need to do?

Your farm needs to have and implement an Animal Wellbeing Plan that has been developed with your veterinarian. It must cover the topics listed below as a minimum. Note that additional calf welfare topics have been added for the 2022/2023 season.

Nutrition

- Herd body condition
- Calf nutrition

Health

- Mastitis
- Lameness
- Mortality
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Calf health

Environment

- Adverse weather mitigation
- Heat stress mitigation
- Calf housing

Behaviour

- Herd improvement strategies, for example the use of polled and/or thermally tolerant genetics, dairy beef, sexed semen

This plan must be issued within the previous 12 months and be developed with and signed by your veterinarian.



Verification

Whilst the plan must address the topics outlined above as a minimum, ultimately, it's up to you and your veterinarian to determine the format, content and the right actions for you to take on your farm. The Farm Dairy Assessor will check that you have a current plan in place, that it has been developed with your veterinarian, and that it covers the required topics.

Meets the achievement
An annual plan developed with and signed off by your vet. The plan can be in any format, so long as it addresses the required topics and is no older than 12 months.
Examples that will not meet the achievement
A plan that has not been developed with a veterinarian.
A plan that was developed more than 12 months ago that has not been reviewed.
A plan that does not cover all required topics.
A verbal plan developed after a chat with the vet.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Why have new topics been included this season?

While the milking cows tend to be front of mind when talking about dairy cattle, calf care is hugely important too. A focus on calf wellbeing benefits our farmers through improved replacement stock, and benefits the co-op by showing customers and consumers that our animals are well cared for throughout their entire lives.

Q. I developed my plan with my vet before the season started, is it still valid?

Yes, as long as it meets the requirements of the achievement and is for the coming 12-month period. Remember to get it renewed after 12 months to remain eligible.

Q. I developed my plan with my vet prior to the announcement of the new achievement. It doesn't include the latest topic areas, is it still valid?

Yes, if it was developed prior to 1 April 2022 and it meets the requirements of the 21/22 season it will remain valid until the 12-month anniversary of the plan, at which time it will need to be updated and include the new topics.

Q. Why is Fonterra dictating what genetics I can have in my herd?

You do not need to change your breeding plan to meet this achievement. Genetic tools are improving all the time, and reviewing these regularly allows farmers to take full advantage of new genetics which can enhance the wellbeing of their animals.

Q. Do I need a certified body condition scorer to meet this achievement?

No, the achievement requires discussion of body condition scoring as a tool to monitor and manage herd nutrition, but this is not required to be with a certified body condition scorer.

Q. Vets will charge me for this, why is Fonterra adding this extra cost?

The benefits of this type of review and planning far outweigh the costs. If by having this discussion you can prevent one cow death or a couple of lameness cases, it's more than paid for itself. For many farms, this is already a standard practice because they've seen the benefits that can be gained.

Q. I've got years of experience farming and caring for animals, can I prepare the plan myself without using a vet?

No, the plan must be developed with a veterinarian. Just like taking your car to the mechanic for a warrant of fitness, reviewing the wellbeing of your herd should be done with the support of the right professional.

Q. I already have an extensive Animal Wellbeing Plan that covers all of these topics and more, and now you're telling me I need another plan?

No, if your plan covers the relevant topics, has been reviewed in the last 12 months and has been signed off by your vet, you do not need to create another plan to meet this achievement.

Support

Your veterinarian should be your first call for any issues relating to animal wellbeing.

You'll also find guides, tools and support material on the DairyNZ website: www.dairynz.co.nz/animal

If you have questions about The Co-operative Difference, you can contact your Area Manager or the Farm Source Service Centre on: **0800 65 65 68**