

Caesarean Section in Cattle

A caesarean section (or “C-section”) is a surgical procedure where the calf is delivered through the side abdominal wall in stead of per vagina.

A caesarean section may be required to be carried out in the following circumstances:

- The calf is too big (common in heifers and for embryo transfer calves).
- Malpresentation of the calf that cannot be corrected per vagina.
- Foetal deformities such as schistosomus reflexes and arthrogyposis.
- Uterine torsion.
- Insufficient cervical dilation.
- Abnormal pelvic bone structure in the cow/heifer.
- Abnormalities of the cow’s/heifer’s uterus or vagina.



The caesarean section procedure involves giving the cow or heifer the following treatments:

- An epidural
- A uterine relaxant
- An antibiotic
- An anti-inflammatory
- Local anaesthetic nerve blocks

Once the above treatments are carried out, an incision is made through the abdominal wall (commonly on the left side) into the abdomen and where the uterus is located. The uterus is then exteriorised through the abdominal wall, and an incision is made through the uterine wall to deliver the calf. Once the calf has been delivered, the uterus and abdominal wall are sutured closed.

Aftercare involves, encouraging the cow to nurse the calf, monitor the surgical wound for signs of infections (heat, swelling and discharge), monitor for retained placenta and monitor the cow for signs of illness.

The prognosis for survival and future reproductive performance is generally good, unless complication develop.