

NEWSLETTER

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Seasonal reminders:

- Early removal of eye cancers is much easier and more likely to be successful. If you are not sure if an eye problem is cancer or not get the eye checked promptly.
- Check “at risk” autumn calving cows for uterine infections 2 to 4 weeks after calving. These include assisted calvings, twins and cows with retained afterbirth.



- One important cause of us running late is “while you’re here” as in “while you’re here could you have a look at this lame cow or sick calf”, If you know that you might have extra animals, please ring the office to let us know so that we can adjust our plan of attack.
- Plan for autumn calves to be veterinary disbudded. Ideally calves should be disbudded between 2 to 6 weeks of age.

Aulds Knackery Service Change

Many of you may already be aware that Aulds Stock Removals will no longer be providing deceased cattle collection services as of Monday, 17 March 2025. We understand the challenges this change may bring.

However, Aulds will continue to collect animals that are still alive and euthanised by an Aulds employee.

We do have some concerns regarding animal welfare, particularly in situations where a sick or severely injured animal is kept alive solely for collection. If an animal is suffering, it is essential that it is humanely euthanised without unnecessary delay. Ensuring timely and appropriate care remains a priority.

To assist you, Murray Dairy have gathered key resources to help ensure livestock disposal remains compliant with current regulations (outlined below):

Humane Euthanasia & Disposal – Dairy Australia provides a detailed factsheet with best practices - <https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/resources-repository/2020/09/01/humane-killing-and-disposal-of-cattle-factsheet>

On-Farm Disposal Options – Useful guidance is available from: EPA Victoria’s Farm Waste Management Guide (IWRG641) Composting Mortalities (Publication 2050) - <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-epa/publications/iwrg641-1>

Agriculture Victoria’s Alternative On-Farm Stock Disposal Options - https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1299603/animal-carcass-disposal.pdf

DPI NSW’s resources on animal carcass disposal https://www2.dairyaustralia.com.au/l/99032/2025-03-26/lt5nt4/99032/1743035360UCgRmNHq/On_farm_stock_disposal_options_LICG_24Mar2025.pdf

Traceability Requirements – For off-

farm disposal will require the animals NLIS to be transferred to PIC of where the animal is buried/composted etc and marked as deceased.

Additionally, Murray Dairy, in collaboration with Agriculture Victoria and Dairy Australia, is organizing a webinar to support farmers through this transition and provide practical solutions for managing deceased livestock.

Managing Fresh Cows and Preventing Metabolic Disorders

The transition period (three weeks before to three weeks after calving) is critical for cow health and productivity. Fresh cows, particularly later calvers and carry-over cows are at higher risk of metabolic disorders such as milk fever (hypocalcaemia) and ketosis, which can lead to reduced milk production, LDA's, fertility issues, and even increased culling rates.

Some tips for best practices for fresh cow management include:

- **Balanced Pre-Calving Nutrition** – Ensure dry cows receive a diet with controlled calcium and potassium levels to help prevent milk fever. DCAD (Dietary Cation-Anion Difference) diets can be useful in high-risk herds.
- **Adequate Energy Intake** – After calving, cows need high-energy, palatable feed to reduce the risk of ketosis. Some herds implement in the bail dosing of propylene glycol ('pink drench') for the first 3 days post calving.
- **Additional Calcium** - Provide oral calcium supplements to older or high-production cows at calving to prevent subclinical and clinical milk fever, which can impact immune function and feed intake.
- **Early Disease Detection** – Regularly check fresh cows for signs of metabolic disorders:
 - Milk fever: Weakness, cold ears, difficulty standing.

- Ketosis: Reduced appetite, weight loss, sweet-smelling breath/milk.
- **Encourage Feed Intake** – Fresh cows should have constant access to fresh water and high-quality forage. Avoid overcrowding in the fresh cow group to reduce stress.
- **Post-Calving Checks** – Conduct daily monitoring for the first 10 days post-calving to quickly identify and manage any issues. It also a good idea to have at-risk cows (cows that experienced calving difficulties, twin calves, carry over calving, RFM cows, and cows that had experience milk fever around calving) vet checked 10 - 14 days post calving.

Salmonella in Calves: Prevention and Management

This autumn we have diagnosed several farms with having salmonella in the calves.

Young calves are particularly vulnerable to Salmonella infections, which can lead to severe illness, growth setbacks, and high mortality rates if not managed effectively.

Given the recent cases in local herds, it's essential to recognize the risks and take proactive steps to protect calves.

Signs of Salmonella in Calves:

- Severe, watery diarrhea – Often yellow or brown, sometimes containing blood or mucus.
- Depression and weakness – Infected calves may become lethargic and reluctant to stand.
- Fever and dehydration – Sunken eyes, dry gums, and reduced suckling behaviour.
- Septicaemia (Blood Infection) – In severe cases, bacteria enter the bloodstream, leading to swollen joints, pneumonia, and sudden death.

How do calves get infected?

- Contaminated milk or water – Bacteria can spread through feeding equipment and troughs
- Dirty calving pens and housing – Manure buildup increases infection risk.
- Contact with infected animals – Calves exposed to sick cows or carrier animals can quickly become infected.
- Stress and weakened immunity – Transport, overcrowding, poor nutrition, or cold weather can make calves more susceptible.

Prevention Strategies:

- **Colostrum Management** – Ensure calves receive at least 3L of high-quality colostrum within the first 12 hours of birth.
- **Strict Hygiene** – Clean and disinfect feeding equipment, calf pens, and water troughs regularly.
- **Isolate Sick Calves** – Quickly remove affected calves from the group to prevent further spread.
- **Provide Electrolytes and Fluids** – At the first sign of diarrhea, support hydration to prevent dehydration.
- **Vaccination** – Some vaccines may help reduce the severity of infection in at-risk herds.
- **Rodent and Bird Control** – Reduce wildlife access to calf areas, as they can carry Salmonella.

If you suspect Salmonella in your calves:

- Contact us immediately for testing and treatment options.
- Begin aggressive fluid therapy to keep sick calves hydrated.
- Review biosecurity protocols to minimize further spread.

Early intervention is key to reducing losses and protecting herd health.