

MILKING AND MASTITIS MANAGEMENT

On-farm Coach – Session 1

SESSION 1: BRINGING IN THE COWS (MUST DO)

Instructions:

Complete “Bringing in the cows” online module on Enlight.

Print this page for use during the second on-farm coaching session – use the below to as a guide for your coaching.

Setting up the dairy for milking and keeping safe

- ☐ Walk around the dairy and show the important parts and any hazards. Examples of hazards may include:

Slip/trips	Chemicals
Hot water	Low bars
Slippery surfaces	
- ☐ Demonstrate how to set up the dairy (including gates, vat connection and turning vat on) ready for milking.
- ☐ Show where written instructions for dairy set up can be found.

Milking start times and how long needs to be allowed to bring the cows in

- ☐ Outline AM and PM milking start times and how long it takes to bring cows in.
- ☐ Discuss possible variations to how long it may take to bring cows in (e.g. location, hot weather).

Using vehicles to bring in the cows calmly and safely

- ☐ Demonstrate safe use of vehicle used to bring cows in, including:
 - Induction to farm Standard Operating Procedure(s) (SOP)
 - Safety equipment required (e.g. helmets)
 - Speed limits
 - Hazards (e.g. inclines, humps, bumps, holes).
- ☐ Point out any areas on the track where cows might slow down.
- ☐ Demonstrate use of cows' flight zones to direct them towards the dairy.
- ☐ Demonstrate use of vehicle at an appropriate distance from the cows.
- ☐ Observe cows walking at comfortable pace with heads down.

The milking process (watching the team in action)

- ☐ Provide them with any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for milking (e.g. rubber boots, apron, milking gloves)
- ☐ Allow employee to observe milking process from a safe location.

SESSION 1: COACHING QUESTIONS (OPTIONAL)

The following are some suggested discussion points from the online module to have with your employee.

Questions	Suggested answers
Why don't cows want to be by themselves?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cows are prey animals and feel safer in a group • They become distressed if forced to be by themselves • Can become dangerous and unpredictable if left alone
What are some examples of negative behaviour to avoid?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hits with poly pipe or anything else • Slaps • Tail twists • Quick or sudden movements • Shouting or other loud noises like banging pipe
What are some examples of positive behaviours to encourage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pats and strokes • Hand resting on the cow's back • Talking quietly • Slow and deliberate movement
Why do we want to bring cows in slowly/calmly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid foot damage and lameness (cows can see where they are placing their feet) • Minimise mud/manure splashing onto teats • Better milk let down (giving of their milk)
What is a flight zone?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance at which a cow shows avoidance to humans • Usually 3-5 metres in commercial herds • Smaller for docile cows; larger for more flighty cows • Enter flight zone from behind to move cow forward • Enter from front if you want the cow to turn away from you
When would you expect cows to go slower when bringing them in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot weather or rain • When cows are very full (i.e. not hungry) • Tracks being used have exposed rocks • When cows are heavily pregnant • When there is anything new
What else can you do to fill in time after the cows' have all turned to head back towards the dairy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up gates for next paddock • Check water troughs (empty, leaking or overflowing) • Checking for hazards or repairs (e.g. broken fences) • Move strip-fence • Checking for any missed or down cows
What would indicate to you that you are pushing the cows too fast?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads up instead of preferred lowered position • Cows bunching up at the back of the group not wanting to go past other cows in front