

revising Codes of animal welfare in New Zealand, and provides a list of the current animal welfare Codes.

**Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010** (2010). Available from National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, Animal Welfare Directorate, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, P O Box 2526, Wellington, 6140, New Zealand. ISBN 978-0-478-36341-8 (print), ISBN 978-0-478-36342-5 (online). <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare>.

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### **New Zealand welfare Code for sheep and beef cattle**

The New Zealand Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), together with the National Animal Welfare Advisory Council (NAWAC), has recently published a new Code of welfare for sheep and beef cattle. Welfare Codes play a key role in improving the care of animals by describing how best to keep and manage animals and by laying out minimum standards. Codes also provide extra detail about areas covered by animal welfare legislation and, although not legally binding in themselves, may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the relevant legislation. It is a requirement that all Codes are reviewed at least every 10 years.

The Sheep and Beef Cattle Code of Welfare applies to all sheep and cattle in New Zealand which are principally farmed for meat, fibre and/or offspring, rather than milk. It also covers animals of recognised dairy breeds if they are being reared and farmed for meat production.

Twenty minimum standards are listed under six main headings: Stockmanship and Animal Handling; Food and Water; Shelter; Behaviour; Health, Injury and Disease; and Husbandry Practices. Each section follows a similar format, including a general introduction, background information, the relevant minimum standard and, in some sections, recommended best practice. Also included for useful reference are body condition score charts for sheep and beef cattle, a list of interpretations and definitions of terms used within the Code and a section on legislative requirements.

**Animal Welfare (Sheep and Beef Cattle) Code of Welfare 2010** (June 2010). A4, 49 pages. National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, New Zealand. ISBN: 978 0 478 363531. The guidelines are available at the MAF Biosecurity website: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/stds/codes>, or by emailing: [animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz](mailto:animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz).

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### **FAO animal welfare guidelines on cattle identification**

The Animal Production and Health Division (AGA) of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations

(FAO) has produced a working document for consultation purposes on the identification of beef cattle. It is intended that, *Guidelines for Animal Welfare: Identification of Beef Cattle*, will form the first publication of an FAO series focused on animal welfare during key livestock husbandry practices.

Individual identification of animals is necessary to define ownership, to enable traceability and to aid disease control. Additionally, identification allows farmers to monitor the performance of individual animals, the herd as a whole, and enables review of management practices. However, the process of animal identification often involves handling, herding and restraint, followed by a marking procedure which may be painful. Identification can therefore be a stressful event in an animal's life and it is important that handlers give due care and consideration to animal welfare when carrying out the procedure.

A number of permanent and temporary identification methods are available to farmers. The guidelines recognise that there is no one 'ideal' method and rate twelve possible methods (ear tattooing; ear tagging [plastic and electronic]; fire, freeze and chemical branding; intra-ruminal bolus; injectable transponder; nose printing; retinal scanning; ear notching; and paint marks) against six desired characteristics: (1) permanence, (2) ease of application, (3) low cost, (4) legibility at a distance, (5) safety for operators, and (6) animal welfare.

A summary chart illustrates how well each identification method meets the six criteria and a further table expands on risks to animal welfare by scoring the potential for each method to cause: pain, stress/distress, infection, parasite infestation, extra handling, later site lesions, or allergic reaction. Detailed explanations are then given on how best to carry out the five most commonly used identification procedures (ear tattooing, ear tagging [visual and electronic], fire branding, freeze branding and paint marking) to ensure that risks to animal welfare are minimised.

Throughout the guidelines, there is emphasis on the capacity of cattle to learn and handlers are reminded that cattle will remember people, facilities and places, and any positive or negative incidents associated with them. It is recommended that habituation and operant conditioning, together with positive reinforcement, are used when training and handling cattle to minimise negative reactions. Advice and practical tips are given on how best to achieve this.

The FAO hopes that the guidelines will serve as a general training tool and that they will be of use to farmers, veterinarians, animal scientists and cattle handlers.

**Guidelines for Animal Welfare: Identification of Beef Cattle** (2010). Working document for consultation purposes. FAO (eds) MJR Paranhos da Costa, F Galindo Madonado, X Manteca i Vilanova, SM Huertas Canén, D Dahlanuddin, C Phillips and D Battaglia. FAO Animal Production and Health Guidelines, No 4, Rome. Available for download at: <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/themes/animal-welfare/aw-awhome/detail/fr/item/42766/icode/>.

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