

NLIS

- The **National Livestock Identification System** (NLIS) has been introduced to enable the rapid tracing of animals in the event of a major disease outbreak or the contamination of meat or dairy product by pesticides.
- All cattle leaving a property must have an **NLIS identifier** (an eartag or a rumen bolus and tag combination). The only exceptions are bobby calves or mature bulls (until 2008) sent straight to slaughter.
- If you own cattle or if you have someone else's cattle on your property, you will need to get a **Property Identification Code**, or PIC. If you do not already have a PIC, contact the Registrar of Brands on 1300 368 550 or download the application form from the DPIPWE website.
- For cattle born on your property, the NLIS identifier must carry your PIC.
- When cattle are brought onto your property, if you bought the cattle through an agent, s/he will report the movement to the NLIS database. But if you bought privately, you should report the movement to the NLIS database yourself.
- If you have someone else's cattle on your property, it is the cattle owner's responsibility to ensure the cattle movements onto and off your property are reported to the NLIS database. However, s/he will need your PIC to do that.

Cattle welfare

- Always treat any disease or injury promptly.
- Cattle should never be allowed to fall below body condition score 2 out of 5 for beef cattle and 3 out of 8 for dairy cattle
- The most common welfare problem in cattle on smallholdings is poor nutrition – and this is usually caused by overstocking. The carrying capacity of your property is determined not only by rainfall and soil type, but also by soil fertility and pasture composition. This means, the carrying capacity of your land may differ greatly from the district average.

To prevent Mad Cow Disease, it is illegal to feed cattle anything that contains “Restricted Animal Material” or RAM – that is, any animal product such as meat, bone meal or fish meal. So, if you buy processed feed, check the label to ensure it's suitable for cattle. And if you have pigs or poultry, make sure their feed (which will probably contain RAM) cannot be accessed by your cattle.

Need more information?

*Visit us at
www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au
or contact your local
vet.*



CATTLE and the Smallholder



Some biosecurity tips

Introducing cattle onto your property

- If you are **buying cattle**, try and do so from a property that you know practises good biosecurity.
- If using a carrier to deliver your cattle, make sure the **truck is clean**.
- **Isolate all new arrivals** from your other animals, for two weeks if possible, and monitor them closely for disease.
- “**Quarantine drench**” all new arrivals – ideally with a combination cattle drench
- Check all new arrivals for **weed seeds** – especially in the belly hair and tail brush.
- Check your **boundary is stockproof** and that there are no hazards (such as loose wire) in the paddock.
- You must not remove the NLIS identifier from any new arrivals and you should report the cattle movement to the NLIS database (unless you bought through an agent who will do that for you).
- All of the above still apply if you agist cattle onto your property (or if you borrow a bull).

Cattle health

- In most smallholding situations, cattle that have adequate feed will have few health problems.
- Calving difficulties can occur if the cow is allowed to become overfat before calving. If a calf gets stuck during birth, it is important that you get help from a vet or an experienced farmer to help with the delivery.
- Mastitis can be a problem in house dairy cows and it usually due to poor hygiene when milking.
- If the ground stays wet for long, cattle can develop foot abscesses. They are easily treated by a vet.
- There are several plants that are **poisonous for cattle**. Ragwort is the most common of these in pasture, but you should ensure that cattle cannot access garden plants such as oleander and rhododendrum. Bracken is also poisonous, but adult cattle rarely eat it while there is other feed available.

The information in this pamphlet is general advice only and is intended for smallholders and hobby farmers. You should always get professional advice for your specific situation from your local vet.

Farm practices

- The best (and cheapest) feed for cattle is **good pasture**. Most cattle need some supplementary feeding during late winter and, in some areas, late summer as well. Grain and pellets are usually available all year round. But its usually worth getting your hay early, otherwise you may find it unavailable or very expensive when your cattle need it.
- If you buy in hay or grain, **check for weeds and weed seeds**.
- Whenever you use drench, vaccines or other chemicals, always read the label and, in particular, **follow the instructions about dosage rates and withholding periods**. Don't assume that they are the same for all types of drench, vaccine etc.
- If you use herbicide or insecticide in your paddock, check the label for information about how long the paddock must be destocked.
- If you spread poultry litter/manure on onr of your paddocks, keep your cattle off it for 3 weeks.

All livestock owners are required by law to report any signs of an emergency animal disease, such as Foot and Mouth Disease or Mad Cow Disease. If you think your cattle are showing the signs, you must immediately contact your local vet or the DPIPWE all hours hotline on 1800 675 888