

DOING RIGHT BY OUR COWS

Feb 2025

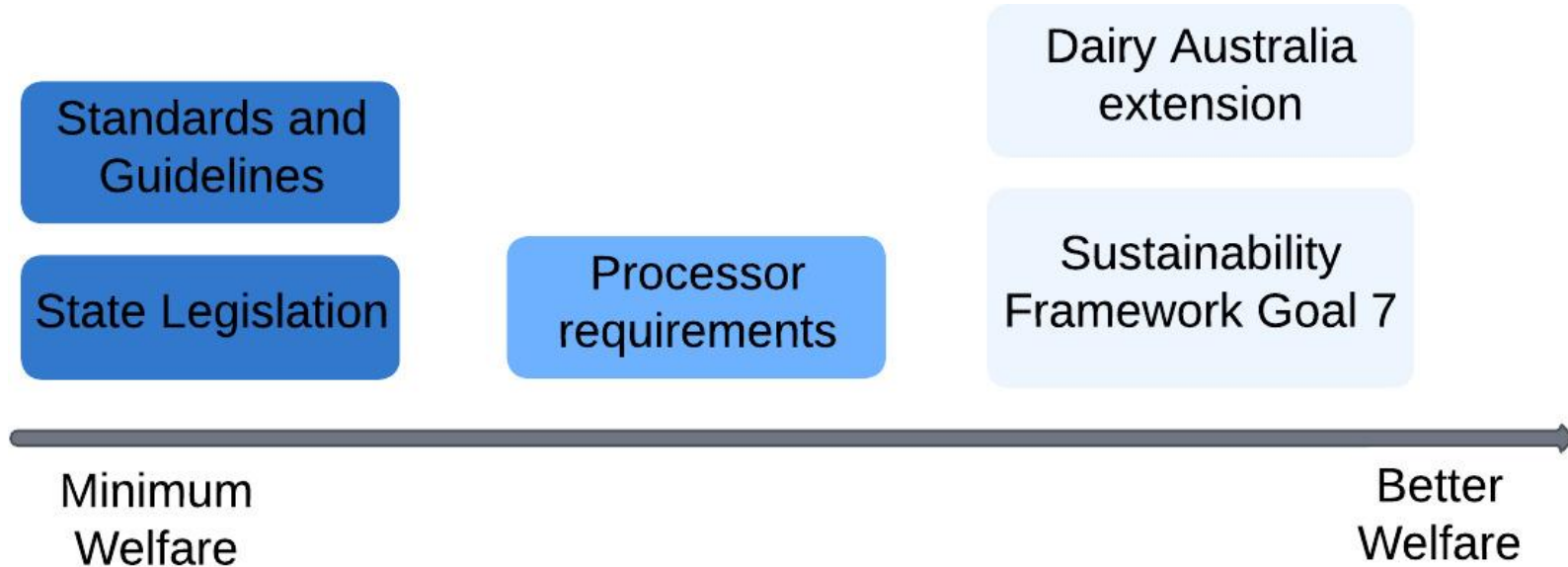


INTRODUCTION

- Louise Sundermann – Policy Lead Animal Health and Welfare



ANIMAL WELFARE GOVERNANCE



Multiple layers of frameworks to ensure continuing improvement

ANIMAL WELFARE GOVERNANCE



State Legislation

- Most states have legislated the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle
- **Minimum legal requirements**
- Basic welfare:
 - No tail docking
 - Pain relief for dehorning adult animals
 - Euthanasia with gun or captive bolt



Processor requirements

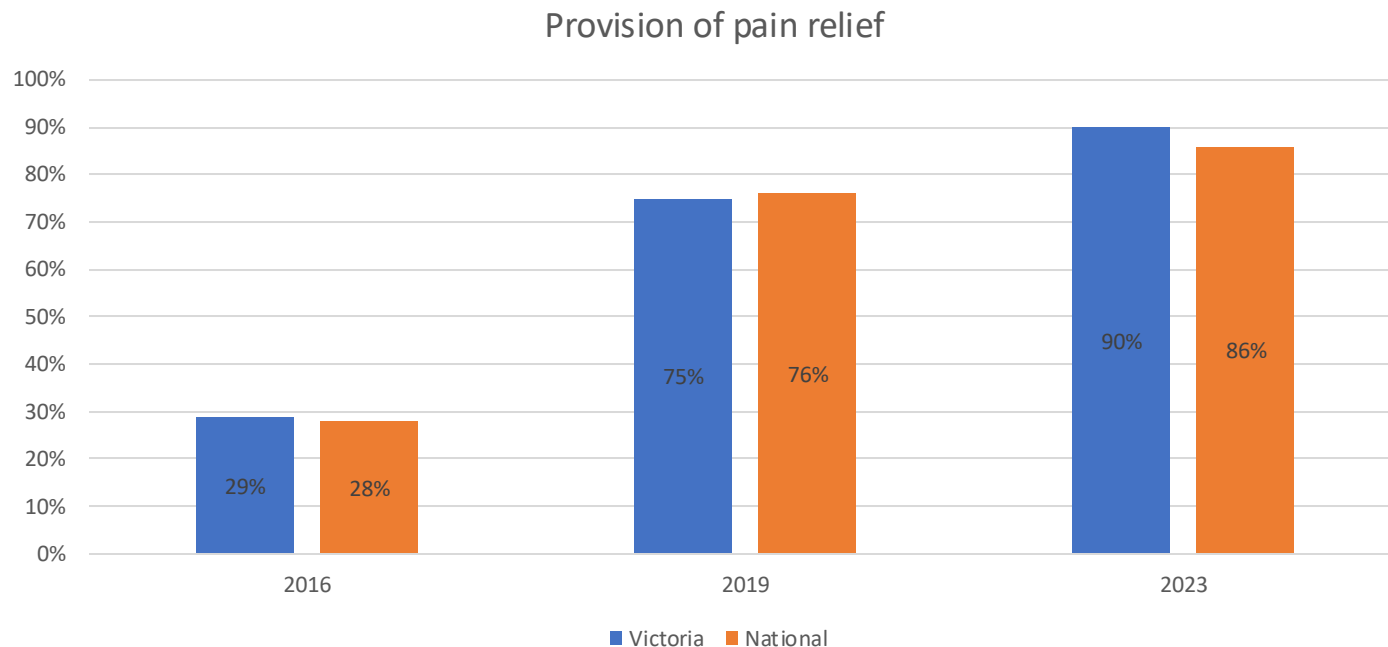
- Not required by law, but most dairy processors have some animal welfare requirements for supply, checked at audit
- Most major processors have requirements for:
 - Provide pain relief for all disbudding/dehorning
 - Banning routine calving induction



Industry targets and extension

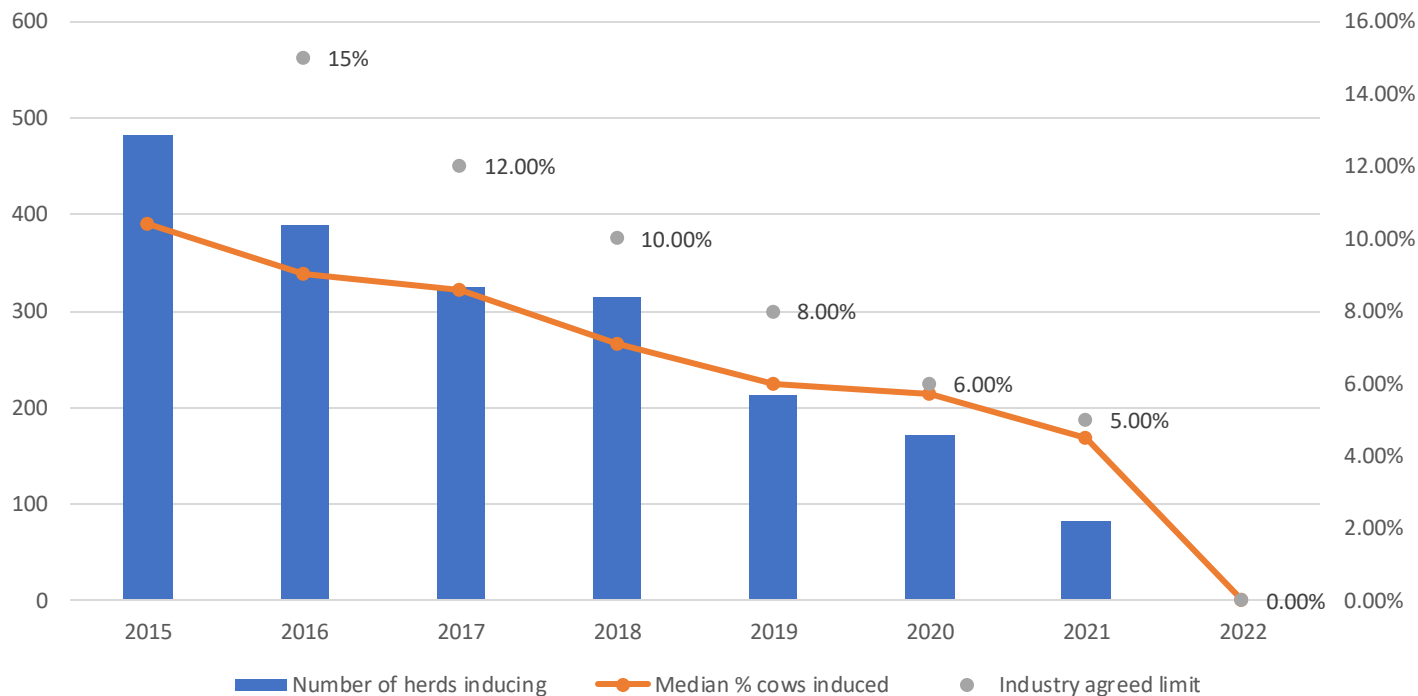
- Industry targets for welfare – not requirements
- Used to guide training (extension) provided to farmers
- Progress reported on regularly

PAIN RELIEF FOR DISBUDDING



ROUTINE CALVING INDUCTION

Use of calving induction 2015 - 2022



Data from annual veterinary survey + veterinary reports

Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework Commitments



Enhancing economic viability
and livelihoods



Improving wellbeing
of people



Providing best care
for animals



Reducing our environmental
impact

Goal 7 – Proposed targets

	Baseline	2030 Target	WG comment(s)
7.1. An Australian Dairy Industry Animal Care Assessment Program is developed.¹			
7.2. A whole-of industry Surplus Calf Roadmap is developed.¹			
7.3. All farmers adopting relevant recommended industry practices for animal care.			
All calves disbudded prior to two months of age with pre-operative local anaesthetic and an anti-inflammatory.	21% ²	100%	When compared with local anaesthesia alone, this combination results in the lowest incidence of pain related behaviours and changes in serum cortisol (stress hormone) levels over the 24 hours following cauterly disbudding.
All animals receive pain relief for painful conditions including clinical mastitis, lameness, and dystocia.	TBA ³	100%	Pain relief in this instance is defined as the administration of a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID).
All farmers implementing an appropriate lameness management strategy that includes key practices for prevention, early detection, and effective treatment (including pain relief).	0.5% ^{2,4}	100%	
All farmers implementing appropriate strategies to manage inclement weather, including access to drinking water at all times from birth, sufficient shelter to prevent heat or cold stress and the use of sprinklers at milking time during hot weather.	TBA ³	100%	
All farmers implementing a documented biosecurity plan.	42% ²	100%	42% of farmers have a written plan and report that they always follow it.
Downer cows are assessed and treated, including appropriate nursing, or euthanised if required without delay.	TBA ³	100%	
For animals requiring euthanasia, it is performed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by a trained and competent individual - by close-range, licensed firearm or captive bolt to the brain stem 	89% ²	100%	
All farmers actively feeding high quality supplementary first-milking colostrum within 12 hours of birth, over and above what is obtained from suckling from the dam.	78% ^{2,3}	100%	This metric is currently reported as <24 hours in AHGS and colostrum quality is not reported. Therefore, baseline figures need to be updated following 2025 Survey.
7.4. The dairy industry is committed to antimicrobial stewardship and uses antimicrobials responsibly, as little as possible, as much as necessary, to protect the health and welfare of animals, people, and the environment.			
All dairy farmers use antimicrobials appropriately under veterinary direction:			
- All farmers following treatment protocols for common conditions that have been developed with their veterinarian.	TBA ³	100%	
- All farms have an annual veterinary visit which includes a review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Treatment protocols for common conditions o Dry cow antibiotic therapy strategy o Where used, antimicrobials of high importance to human health⁵ o All S4 in-feed antimicrobials, with the farms' nutrition consultant. 	TBA ³	100%	Antimicrobials of high importance to human health according to current Australian rating system (ASTAG) include ceftiofur and virginiamycin.
The Australian dairy industry monitors dairy cattle for the development of resistance in bacteria to antibiotics of high importance to human health in Australia ^{1,5} .			



VIRTUAL FENCING



VIRTUAL FENCING



[Halter's Guidance Cues and System Overview - YouTube](#)

VIRTUAL FENCING

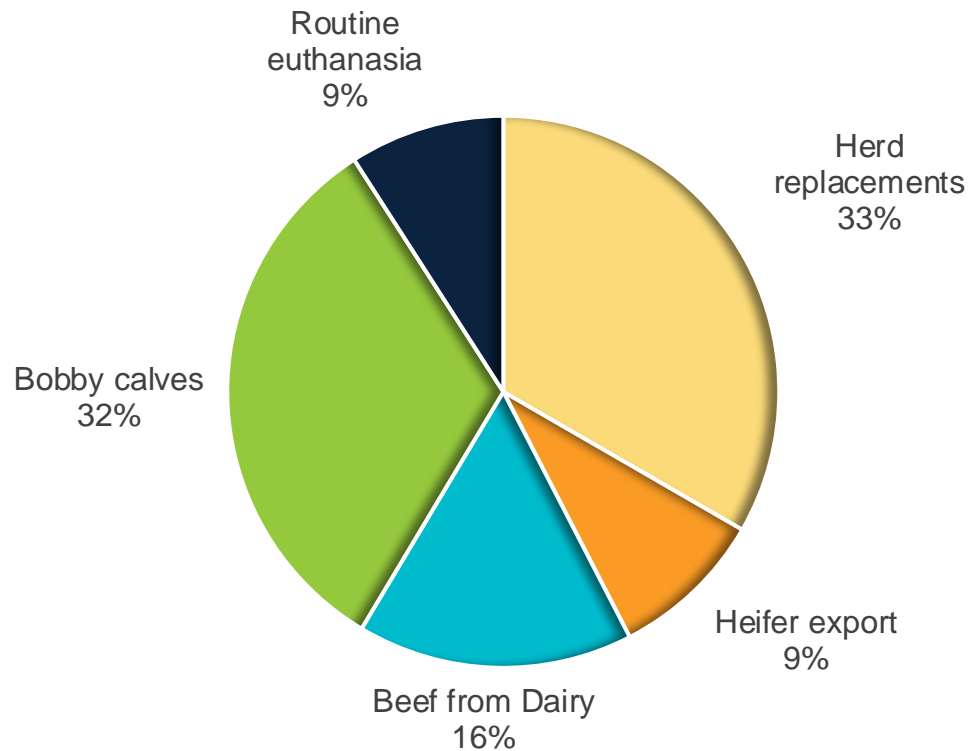
- Currently a trail of technology at Ellinbank research farm (visit later this week)
- Working with advocacy, technology firms and government for access for farmers



CALFWAYS

Roadmap for non-replacement calves

CURRENT PATHWAYS



Source: Meridian Agriculture. Calfways economic analysis 2024 – part 1.

CALFWAYS TIMELINE



2022

Determination

The policy for surplus calf management is endorsed by the ADF Board. Dairy Australia leads the roadmap development.



2023

Discovery

Review of current barriers and challenges undertaken and a series of recommendations for the roadmap development.



2024

Development

Co-design process to develop test and gain support for the roadmap with a diverse range of dairy and beef stakeholders.



2023-2025

Delivery

Dairy and beef stakeholders collaborate on the implementation of goals, objectives, strategies and tactics under CalfWays.

CALFWAYS – WHATS NEXT

- Report Launch
- Strategic Partnerships to achieve targets

THANK YOU

Louise Sundermann

louise.sundermann@dairyaustralia.com.au

