

**SOP 10 – DOWNED CATTLE**

*Purpose: Farmers manage their cattle to prevent injuries and illness, but accidents happen and cattle do get sick, which can result in down cattle. Down cattle are an emergency and need to be managed carefully to ensure adequate care and minimal discomfort.*

• If an animal becomes sick, injured or goes down, promptly diagnose the condition of the animal and the likelihood of recovery.

• Determine if the animal can be treated and/or cared for where she is lying or if she needs to be moved.

• If it is determined that veterinary intervention is required, call:  
Vet: [redacted] phone number: [redacted]  
(clinic and doctor name)

• If you have to move the animal but cannot do so humanely, euthanize her where she is, according to euthanasia protocol (SOP 11).

- The person(s) authorized to complete euthanasia on or farm are:
  - [redacted]
  - [redacted]
  - [redacted]

• If the animal can be treated and/or cared for where she is lying, treat her there until she recovers and can get up. If she is beyond recovery, euthanize her humanely according to your euthanasia SOP.

• **If the animal is in an area where she must be moved (e.g. in the milking parlour or walk-way), follow the farm procedure below.**

- Farm personnel must be trained in cattle behaviour and quiet handling techniques so that they understand how to handle and move cattle quietly, and with low stress.

○ Electric prods should only be used in extreme situations, such as when an animal's safety is at risk.

- Down cattle may be lifted to help them stand, to make an initial assessment of their condition/injury. If lifting a down animal, lower the animal immediately if it cannot support its weight immediately after lifting.

○ Move the animal as gently as possible and over the shortest distance possible to minimize stress and trauma.



**Describe any specialized equipment used on the farm to move cattle, and how to use it.**  
Use specialized equipment according to manufacturer's instructions.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- Gently rock or roll an animal onto special equipment whenever possible.
- Use equipment according to the manufacturer's specifications, and support the animal as necessary during movement.
- **Do not pull, push, drag or lift an animal by the neck or legs unless human or animal safety is at risk and there is no other option.** Even then, only do so for a few feet with force being applied for a very brief period of time. Carefully protect the animal as much as possible, and then use your preferred method of moving the animal.
- **Never use hip lifters or clamps to move or carry down cattle from one location to another.**

- **Stalls:** cattle down in stalls often have their rear leg tucked underneath in an awkward position. Try to rock and move the animal's hindquarters so that her leg can be positioned properly. If that does not help, your only alternative may be with a halter on her head or a padded chain around her neck.

- **Wherever the animal is located for recovery, ensure the following are provided:**

- Proper non-slip footing (i.e. sand applied around the animal) or, if in a stall, ensure the gutter is covered.
- Shelter from the elements (i.e. direct sun, rain, extreme cold or heat, moisture) and protection from predators.
- Frequent easy access to fresh food and water. Isolation from other animals to prevent injury and support recovery

- To support the animal's recovery:
  - Assess animal regularly to monitor progress.
  - Roll animal from side to side every two hours initially for the best chance of recovery.
  - Provide udder pressure relief by maintaining milking routine or milking as necessary.

