

Why care about your bobby calves?

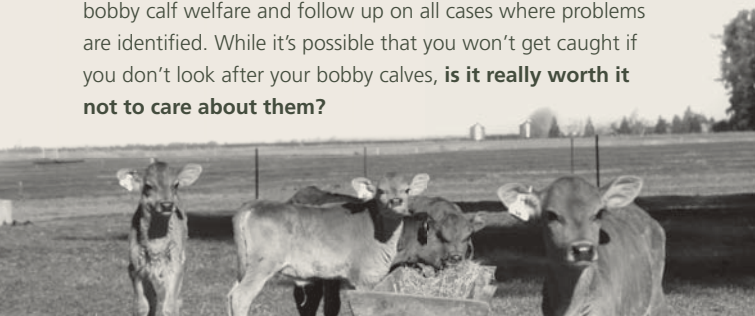
They aren't replacements, they aren't worth much and they aren't going to be around for long, so why care about them?

Well for a start, the **Animal Welfare Act 1999** places a '**duty of care**' on all those involved with livestock. Failure to meet the needs of a bobby calf may lead to prosecution. At the very least, **calves require a warm, sheltered environment and regular feeding** in order to meet their welfare needs while in your care.

Once they leave the farm, although every effort is made to transport and process them as quickly as possible, there are occasions where **bobby calves can be on the truck for 12 hours or more**. There are also times when the nearest processing plant is full and animals have to be diverted to other sites, further increasing the time spent in transit.

Although many **processing plants give priority to 'at risk' stock**, such as those transported long distances, there are times where calves are held overnight before being processed. This places further stress on the animals, especially if they have not been properly looked after on-farm.

Finally, meat processing inspectors take an active interest in bobby calf welfare and follow up on all cases where problems are identified. While it's possible that you won't get caught if you don't look after your bobby calves, **is it really worth it not to care about them?**



Guidelines for bobby calf welfare

On the farm

- Feed colostrum to all calves.
- Give calves access to good quality water at all times.
- Protect calves from the wind, rain and cold at all times.
- Handle calves gently and with care at all times.
- Only select fit and healthy calves for transport.

On the truck

- Handle calves gently and with care at all times.
- Cover calves during bad weather.
- Load calves at the correct density, so they can stand/lie naturally.
- Aim to transport calves for the shortest possible time/distance.

At the processing plant

- Handle calves gently and with care at all times.
- Protect calves from the wind, rain and cold at all times.
- Water and feed calves as appropriate.
- Process calves humanely and as soon as possible after arrival.

Contacts

For more information contact your dairy company, veterinarian or:

MAF Enforcement Group: 0800 327 027

MAF Animal Welfare Directorate: 04 894 0366