

Animal welfare

How New Zealand stacks up

At Beef + Lamb New Zealand we believe good animal welfare is synonymous with good farming – and Kiwi farmers have a lot to be proud of in this area.

New Zealand was ranked second only to Switzerland and equivalent to the European Union for its animal welfare legislative and regulatory framework.

Regulatory bodies such as the European Union and [World Organisation for Animal Health](#) are promoting higher animal welfare standards across the world's livestock systems.

Meeting consumer demand for ethically sound meat

Consumer expectations are just as important as those of global regulators because people are increasingly seeking more ethically sound products. This demand is driving the development of a host of private standards encompassing a range of sustainability attributes, including animal welfare.

One of the challenges for New Zealand is demonstrating that our meat production systems deliver similar or better overall standards of animal welfare to those overseas (where a different climate or raising systems might require more stringent standards).

B+LNZ invests farmer levies in research, education and liaison so that New Zealand sheep and beef farming has an animal welfare reputation to be proud of.

Research improves animal welfare standards

In the pastoral sector, commercial drivers and welfare promotion are often closely linked, which means healthy and productive animals are also likely to experience a high level of welfare.

Consequently, much of the research within the sector directly benefits animal welfare. This holistic view is particularly apparent in our considerable investment in research into sheep and beef genetics.

We have also invested heavily in research into:

- reducing the impacts of internal parasites
- the epidemiology, pathogenicity and management of Johne's disease
- developing / assessing objective measures of animal welfare
- lamb survival
- calf rearing
- managing stress in cattle before slaughter
- management of bearings, facial eczema, pneumonia, footrot and flystrike in sheep.

For a full list of research reports and resources see [Animal health and welfare](#)

Industry representation

We employ technical staff to represent the sector in wider discussions with regulators and other stakeholders about sheep and cattle welfare.

Our representatives are guided by the following principles on animal welfare policy:

- Good welfare must be promoted
- Poor welfare must be prevented
- Interventions should be proportionate and focused on outcomes
- Interventions should be based on scientific evidence
- B+LNZ has a role in educating levy payers regarding regulatory requirements and encouraging good animal welfare – it is not an enforcement agency

Informing animal welfare policy development

We are involved in shaping technical policy that affects beef cattle and sheep welfare. Some of our work in this area includes:

- providing technical and administrative input into the development and delivery of Codes of Welfare, published under the Animal Welfare Act
- participating in the National Animal Behaviour and Welfare Consultative Committee
- being a partner in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's National Animal Welfare Compliance Plan and participant in the Farm to Processor Welfare Forum
- advising farmers, industry regulators and other stakeholders – domestically and internationally – on technical policy relating to sheep and cattle welfare.

MAF's Biosecurity website has the full [Codes of Welfare](#) as well as more information about [animal welfare in New Zealand](#)

Advice and support for farmers

B+LNZ provides farmers with practical, research-backed support and advice about animal welfare.

We do this in a number of ways: through an extensive library of research available on this website, newsletters, and on-the-spot information to help farmers care for their animals in emergency weather situations.

These communication activities are underpinned by our regional presence, where our local teams actively promote good stock welfare.

Extension activities

B+LNZ has a regional structure to make real and effective connections with farmers. Our regional extension managers co-ordinate local events, projects and programmes and provide on-farm technical advice and support. Find out [what's happening in your area](#)

B+LNZ Farmer Council

The Farmer Council is our wonderful grass-roots network made up of farmers from each region. It helps set priorities for extension activities and takes things like the Codes of Welfare out into the regions. The Council is also a great sounding board for gauging the appropriateness of communications material for a farmer audience. Find out more about the [Farmer Council](#)

Monitor farms

Our world-leading monitor farm programme aims to improve the profitability of participating farms by encouraging the adoption of new techniques and monitoring.

Farms that take part receive advice from an advisory group comprising local farmers and often agribusiness consultants and vets.

Welfare best practice is a key part of the programme. By improving farm practices and productivity you can achieve significant benefits for the welfare of your stock. Find out more about [Monitor farms](#).

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