

ICOS Calf Welfare Charter

ICOS, together with dairy industry stakeholders and representatives of dairy co-operatives, has devised a Calf Welfare Charter, setting out key principles which the entire industry will abide by to ensure that the highest possible welfare standards apply to all calves produced on Irish dairy farms.

The updated terms of the Charter will be incorporated into the Terms and Conditions of milk supply which apply to the various Milk Supply Agreements in place between farmers and their milk purchasers and into Ornu's Member Supply Agreements.

The terms of the Charter are as follows:

1. The dairy industry commits to a common policy whereby from the 1st of January 2024, no healthy calf can be slaughtered within the first 8 weeks of life, except under force majeure circumstances. Implementation will be pursued in collaboration with DAFM and relevant state agencies.
2. On-farm euthanasia of healthy calves is prohibited.
3. It is not acceptable for herds supplying milk to have an on-farm calf mortality rate that is significantly higher than the normal prevailing range except under exceptional circumstances, e.g., disease outbreak.
4. Dairy and beef stakeholders will commit to the development and adoption of breeding technologies and practices to increase the quality and value of calves from the dairy herd, to enable the functioning of a viable supply chain for all calves.
5. Milk suppliers must adhere to best practice in relation to the early stages of rearing, housing and feeding of all calves, in line with industry best practice guidelines (FAWAC, Teagasc & AHI).
6. Dairy and beef stakeholders will establish a defined programme to support the implementation of the Charter, in collaboration with the DAFM Calf Welfare Stakeholder Group. This will be under-pinned by a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), which will be made available to herds and collaborating bodies, as part of the initiative. In addition, a national publicly funded genotyping programme is an essential element to these efforts.
7. The responsibility lies with DAFM to implement animal welfare regulations.

ENDS

9th November 2022