



# Statement: Induction of Calving in Cattle

*Issued April 2022*

## Background

The Code of Welfare: Dairy Cattle states:<sup>1</sup>

Where early termination of pregnancy is warranted on welfare grounds, veterinarians may use induction on individual cows to treat particular extreme health problems.

However, [the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee] does not support the use of induction of otherwise healthy cows in order to manipulate calving patterns because it has the potential to affect the welfare of both cow and calf adversely.

The Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines unit with the Ministry for Primary Industries has advised that all products registered with a claim for induction are classed as Restricted Veterinary Medicines for the use of therapeutic induction. This means that nontherapeutic induction would be an off-label use of a medicine, requiring vet authorisation for use.

## VCNZ position

Non-therapeutic induction of parturition in (dairy and beef) cattle is prohibited. It is not acceptable to induce otherwise healthy cows for economic and/or herd management purposes (e.g. to manipulate calving patterns).

Veterinarians must only undertake induction of parturition in cattle in therapeutic situations (i.e. where an individual animal is diagnosed with a condition that necessitates premature delivery of the calf in order to protect the welfare of the cow and/or calf).

Notes:

- “Therapeutic” in this statement means “of, or relating to, the health and welfare of an animal”.
- The use of the word “must” in VCNZ standards indicates the minimum standard that all veterinarians are required to adhere to, and which they may be measured against.

See also:

- Technical Advice: Cattle pregnancy termination considerations

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Welfare: Dairy Cattle 2019 The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee