



Australian Dairy Industry Council Inc.

Routine Calving Induction to be phased out by 2022

Key points

- Agreed phase out date
- Progress against calving induction phase out policy
- Dispensation process
- Industry programs support phase-out
- Learning from New Zealand

Agreed phase out date

The Australian dairy industry has agreed that the end date for the phase out of routine calving induction will be 1 January 2022.

The industry agreed limits of percentage of cows per herd will reduce in the intervening years, with the following targets agreed:

- 2019 – 8 per cent
- 2020 – 6 per cent
- 2021 – 5 per cent
- 2022 – 0 per cent

The annual review of current and future targets will continue until complete phase out.

Caring for cows is always a key priority for Australian dairy farmers and the broader industry. The industry is dedicated to providing a high standard of care for our animals, and to changing practices when in the best interests of livestock.

While the industry first committed to phasing out calving induction in 2015, new targets have now been set to reduce calving induction to eight per cent in 2019, six per cent in 2020 and 5 per cent in 2021, before completely phasing out the practice by 2022.

Progress since 2015

Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF), Dairy Australia, vets and processors have since been working on implementing the revised policy which is:

“ADF does not support routine calving induction and will work to phase it out through improved herd improvement practices, tools and technologies.”

Calving induction had already been reducing in Australia and the dairy industry’s breeding programs such as InCalf and the improvement of fertility by genetic selection continue to make a difference.

A Steering Group, including dairy farmers, representatives from the Australian Cattle Veterinarians, Dairy Australia and the Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF), was established to progress the phase out.

A survey of veterinary practices performing inductions has been undertaken every year since 2015. In this time period, the number of farms using calving induction has reduced by nearly 40 per cent, and of the farms using calving induction, the median percentage of their herd routinely induced has reduced from 10.4 per cent in 2015 to 7.09 per cent in 2018, well ahead of the industry target of 10 per cent in 2018.

Dispensation process

Farmers will continue to be able to apply to the Oversight and Engagement Panel via their vet for special dispensation to carry out inductions in excess of the industry targets for routine calving inductions. Veterinarians are able to access this process at: www.dairyaustralia.com.au/calvinginduction

The Oversight and Engagement Panel including representatives from ADF, the Australian Cattle Vets and ADPF has been formed. The panel, with support from Dairy Australia, has establish guidelines and consider requests for exemptions exceeding the industry target set for that year.

Whilst there is no legal requirement for dairy farmers to achieve the industry target, the dairy industry is seeking to achieve industry-wide practice that is over and above the legal requirements and is confident farmers will adopt the recommended voluntary industry targets as the phase out progresses.

The Steering Group will work with the Oversight and Engagement Panel to monitor progress and review the target each year in order to establish updated annual targets.

Industry programs

Improving herd fertility is a fundamental requirement to reduce the need for routine calving induction and it also delivers many benefits for farm profitability and resilience. The industry is working closely with veterinarians and reproduction advisors to ensure advice and services are available to assist farmers with fertility management.

Industry programs such as InCalf, the Repro Right network and InCharge Workshops will continue to be available to those farmers most in need.

Dairy Australia has developed case studies of farmers who have successfully transitioned away from routine calving induction, without compromising their calving pattern. These can be accessed at: www.dairyaustralia.com.au/calvinginduction

New Zealand

The New Zealand dairy industry has phased out routine calving induction over a period of time and has banned the practice as of 1 June 2015. The industry is liaising with counterparts in New Zealand to understand and learn from their approach, in particular how they are managing the dispensation process after complete phase out.

*Routine calving induction is all non-therapeutic inductions