

# *Mycoplasma bovis* Programme

July 2020

Dear teachers and students,

Calf club is part and parcel of rural life, and I know people are looking forward to parading their pet animals from the farm.

But because *Mycoplasma bovis* is now in New Zealand, we're asking everyone to be extra careful when our calves get close to other calves.

The disease spreads primarily through nose-to-nose contact.

We've created a poster and a teacher resource designed to remind everyone that by taking some basic steps, we can all do our bit to keep calves healthy.

We also need to keep in mind good health and safety practices, as a result of COVID-19. Frequent use of hand sanitiser and hand washing are important steps in keeping everyone safe and healthy.

*M. bovis* is an awful disease that we don't want affecting all of our cattle. Working with the farming sector and people like you, we're doing all we can to get rid of it. To find out more about the *M. bovis* Eradication Programme, check out [www.mbovis.govt.nz](http://www.mbovis.govt.nz)

I hope you enjoy your calf club.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Anderson  
Director *M. bovis* Eradication Programme



# Holding a safe calf club

## Teacher & organiser resource

**Kia ora, here is some information to assist you in planning a safe calf club.**

Keeping calves separated is the key, as *Mycoplasma bovis* (*M. bovis*) is mainly spread via prolonged nose-to-nose contact. While there is only minimal risk at most calf clubs, steps can be taken to make your event safer.

### Holding calves

- If pens are available, this is the best way to keep individual calves separated from each other.
- Alternatively, ensure calves are tethered at least two metres apart.
- Calves should have access to individual food and water containers.
- Calves should not share milk.

### Transport

- Calves from different herds or farms should be transported to and from calf club separately, and keep them separate at all times.
- If calves are sick they should stay on the farm.

### Parading calves

To help reduce contact between calves while they're parading:

- Calves should wear a halter at all times.
- Have someone supervise calves while they're being led around, to ensure they're being kept under control and apart from each other.
- Consider separate entry and exit points to the parade area.

### Ensure full NAIT compliance

- Keeping complete and accurate NAIT (National Animal Identification and Tracing Act) records is extremely important to the success of the *M. bovis* eradication Programme.
- This means all calves attending calf club must have a readable NAIT ear tag.
- To ensure a safe event, schools should remind everyone planning to attend calf club of their NAIT obligations.

### Low risk of environmental transmission

We have seen no evidence that *M. bovis* survives for very long once exposed to air and UV light, so there's a very low risk that it can be spread via effluent.

However, in the interests of general hygiene and biosecurity it's a good idea to:

- Lay down straw to collect effluent.
- Regularly remove any faeces from the ground.
- Use hand sanitiser & hand washing to minimise any risks of transmitting disease.

#### More information and support

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Phone 0800 00 83 33  
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Animal effluent can contain bacteria, causing a significant health risk, especially for young people. Make sure everyone washes their hands or uses hand sanitiser after touching calves or coming into contact with effluent.