



We are committed to working with our farming partners across all species to improve the health and welfare of farmed animals as well as addressing environmental and ethical issues within the supply chain.

We never purchase dairy products on the open market and all of the milk and cream we source for use in our product range is **100% British**.

All of our supplying farms are certified to **Red Tractor Standard**, and along with our farming partners our aim is to improve animal welfare through the monitoring of herd health and husbandry. Through regular meetings with key suppliers we actively monitor industry issues and assist in driving best practice and improved farming methods.

A Livestock Health Plan to proactively manage and improve health and welfare of dairy cows must be established and implemented by all farmers supplying Noble Foods. As part of this, records of animal health and performance must be maintained and reviewed regularly and an annual herd health and performance review must be undertaken by a veterinary practitioner. Key herd health indicators and welfare outcome measures (WOM's) that we review and which are monitored within the Red Tractor scheme are;

- Lameness
- Mastitis
- Culling rate (and reasons)
- Involuntary culls (excluding TB reactors)
- Calf mortality. (0 – 24hrs and 24hrs to 42 days)

All suppliers must notify us of any audit failures or compliance issues and proven or investigated breaches in legislation or welfare standards. Once notified we review on a case by case basis and put into place, with our suppliers, an appropriate management action plan.

Responsibility

The primary responsibility for animal welfare on contract producing farms rests with the producer and his staff. However, responsibility for all the company's Animal Welfare Policies rests with the Group Technical Director in conjunction with the company's Agricultural Director and Head of Agriculture – Retail (Consumer Foods).





Disbudding and Castration

We understand there may be a need to castrate young bull calves and remove horn buds from some calves (disbud), for their safety and that of the stock person. All procedures must be carried out by competent operators who must follow the requirements of the Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock- Cattle, which define age limits and suitable methods; anaesthetic must always be used when disbudding. We encourage early intervention for these tasks and the use of pain relief in line with vet recommendations, to minimise discomfort and pain.

Training

All staff within our supply farms, full and part time and including family members, must be fully trained and competent to carry out their daily activities. Our partners provide technical advice and workshops to farmers, to ensure that they remain compliant and animal welfare is safeguarded at all times.

Antibiotics

We recognise the link between irresponsible use of antimicrobial medicine and the increase in antibiotic resistance. Our focus is on preventing the need for antimicrobial intervention, by improving the overall health status on our supplying farms. As a general principle we do not permit the routine prophylactic use of antimicrobials but we do recognise, as indicated in the RUMA guidelines, that controlled intervention may be required on a clinically-assessed risk basis to prevent the outbreak and spread of disease and to safeguard animal welfare. Medicine records must provide an annual collation of total antibiotic used either by a vet from prescription data or completed by a farmer from medicine records. An annual review of antibiotics used must be undertaken by a vet. For farm to farm sales, animals under statutory withdrawal periods for medicines must be accompanied by a withdrawal period declaration.

Growth Promoters

100% of the dairy cattle within our supply chain are free from any form of growth promoting substances. The use of artificial substances specifically to promote abnormal muscle growth or higher yields is not allowed in the Noble Foods supply chain.

Pre-slaughter stunning

100% of all the dairy cattle within our supply chain are pre-slaughter stunned. All abattoirs and processing plants used by our suppliers are required to work to the standards laid down the Humane Slaughter Association in their Codes of Practice.





CCTV

All of our abattoirs have CCTV at critical welfare points such as at unloading, lairage, stun and slaughter to ensure our welfare standards are met and good welfare is maintained.

Genetics, Engineering

100% of all the dairy cattle within the Noble Foods supply chain are not genetically modified or cloned. Animal Cloning is an assisted reproductive technology that allows farmers to replicate their best animals. We do not permit the use of genetically modified animals, either through genetic engineering or cloning.

Routine Mutilations

100% of the dairy cows in our supply base are free from tail docking. Tail docking is not permitted in England Scotland and Wales and is governed by The Mutilations (Permitted Procedures) (England) Regulations 2007 (similar in Scotland and Wales)

Tethering

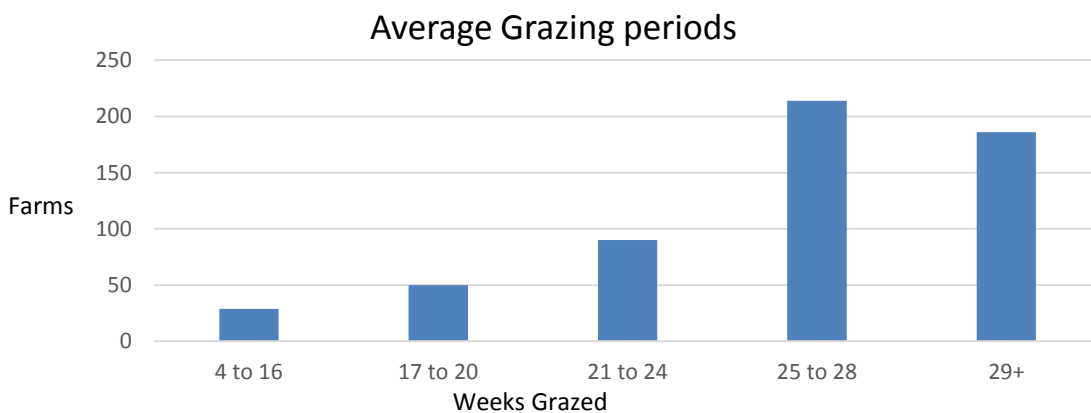
100% of dairy cows in our supply base are free from tethering.

Measures	Loose housed only	Cubicles only	Loose housed and cubicles	Cubicles with slated passages	Tethers
Number	29	243	356	3	0
Percentage	5	39	56	0	0

Grazing

95% of our supplying herds graze for more than 2 months per annum.

88% of supplying farmers ensure their herds have over 150 day's access to grazing



Graphs showing current distribution of supplying herds by number of weeks graze





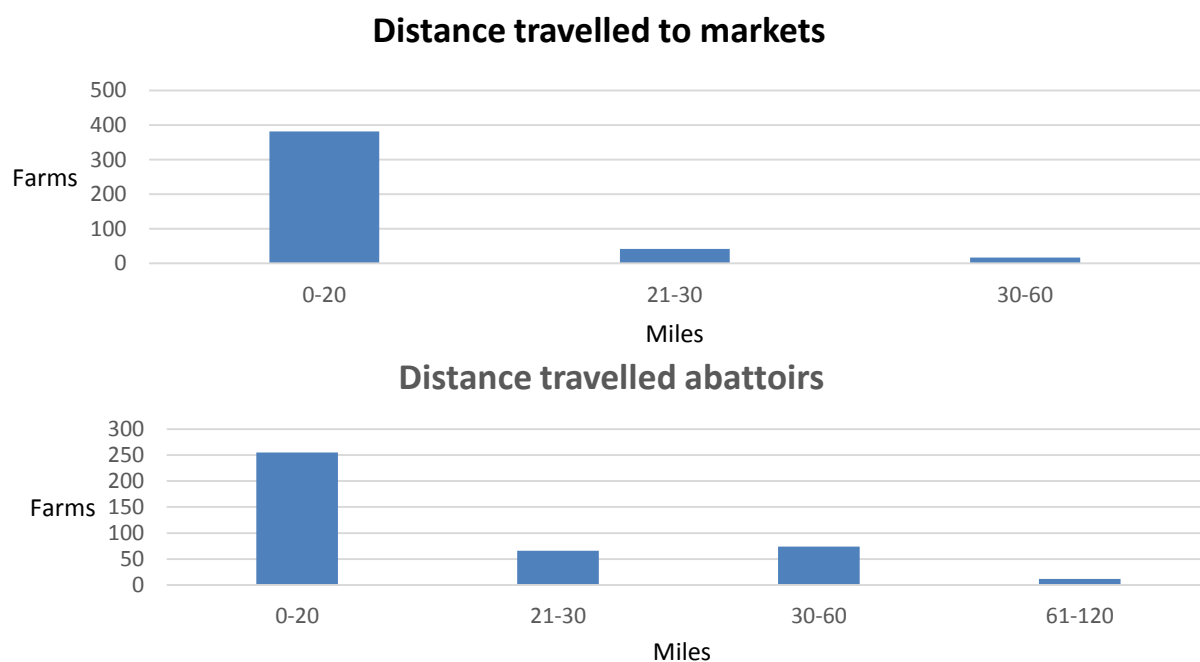
Transport Times

We ensure our supply base keep live animal transportation to a minimum and avoid unnecessary long distance travel.

100% of all dairy cows and calves supplying Noble Foods are transported within the 8 hour specified limit prior to slaughter or sale.

96% of all livestock travel less than 50 miles going to an auction market.

Distribution of distance for livestock transported to Markets (miles)



Herd health and welfare monitoring

In order to give an overall idea of herd health and milk quality somatic cell counts (SCC) are constantly monitored across all the supplying farms. Somatic cell counts are simply a measure of the number of cells in the milk; the higher the somatic cell count the greater the chance that the cow is suffering from mastitis. Uninfected cows and often have a milk SCC of <100 000/ml, and almost always have a SCC <200 000. The same applies to bulk milk SCC - on average, the higher SCC the higher the proportion of infected cows in the milking herd. With good mastitis control, the bulk milk SCC should be below 200 000.

Our average Somatic Cell count across the whole supply base is 177,000/ml
(This has remain consistent from last years figures)

Other useful links - Dairy UK - <https://www.milk.co.uk/>

