

1: Animal Welfare – Levels 1 & 2

Caring for our animals



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Help students to recognise that different types of animals need different care. Students can begin by exploring their responsibilities as pet owners and develop their understandings by investigating the [Animal Welfare Act](#) and its key message that everyone in their community is responsible for animal welfare.

Key understandings

- People have a key role to play in caring for animals. Do animals have different and specific needs?
- Processes are important in animal welfare.

Happy and healthy animals

Students explore the things that animals need to be happy and healthy and the role that people play in this.

1. Identify how many students in the class have pets and list these. Discuss why people have different pets.
2. Visit the SPCA, a farm, or a zoo. Focus the students' attention on what makes these animals healthy and contented.
3. Explore the [5 freedoms](#) for animals. Identify their similarities to human wants or needs.
4. Learn the differences between domestic, farm and wild animals. Discuss whether different categories of animals have different welfare needs. Create a wall chart showing the similarities and differences in the ways humans treat domestic and farm animals. The MPI [Codes of Welfare](#) will help students in this learning.
5. Discuss types of farm animals in New Zealand and have the students in groups develop a display for each. They can gather information and artefacts to display how the animals' needs are met and how they are cared for. Use their displays to stimulate discussion about animal welfare, and discuss what our shared responsibilities are as a community.
6. Design a toy or food treat suitable for a selected animal. This may be to keep them relaxed during transport or help them if they are recovering from injury or disease.
7. Create a set of rules for owning a pet. Consider which of these rules should apply to farmers. Should they apply to pest controllers?



8. Discuss the action we can take when we see animals being neglected or people being cruel to animals.
9. Students cut out photographs or illustrations of three animals they would like to raise if they lived on a farm. Paste each image on paper and draw illustrations of how they will care for each animal to keep it healthy and safe. Prompt them to use diagrams, captions and boxes of text to explain their health and safety plans.

Animal welfare, biosecurity and food systems

Students explore the role of animal welfare within the biosecurity system and food supply chains, specifically how poor animal welfare could affect a food system.

1. An example of animal welfare for younger students is the shearing of sheep. Discuss how students feel if they get too hot, and what they do to cool down. A lot of their cooling off can be done by them (e.g. have a drink, go for a swim, eat an ice block). Get them to role play being a sheep, and what they would do as a sheep to cool down, to emphasise that for most sheep, cooling down in the heat relies on the actions of a farmer. Talk to the students about the [consequences of not being shorn](#), and then they can write, from the point of view of the sheep, reminding the farmer of their duty of care.
2. Another example for younger students is the transportation of farm stock (sheep and cattle). Create an area in the classroom or on the school field to represent a stock truck, and ask the students to stand in it. Ask how they would be comfortable and what they might need for a long journey.
 - Ask what would compromise their needs and act accordingly: make the area smaller, so that they are very cramped; simulate taking away food or water for long periods of time, or not protecting them from the elements. Then ask students to list what they think would be ideal travelling conditions for stock, and create their own code of welfare for transporting animals, including their pets. Use the visuals provided in the MPI publications [Fitness for transport guidance](#)

[brochure](#) and [Fitness for transport guidance poster](#) to stimulate their thinking, and share information from [Caring for bobby calves being transported for processing](#) and the [Animal Welfare \(Transport within New Zealand\) Code of Welfare](#)

3. Students plan and design ideal transport environment and processes for an animal of their choice, such as a giraffe from a zoo, a snake that is a biosecurity risk, a pet cat or a farm animal.
4. Investigate the people involved in supporting animal welfare in your region. Use interviews with them to create a community awareness campaign to support their work and processes.

Related resources

- [SPCA's Teachers' Portal](#) provides primary teachers with innovative resources that provide real-life authentic contexts for teaching and learning about animal welfare.
- This [Ethics thinking tool](#) from the Science Learning Hub is designed to help students explore an issue, using ethical frameworks.
- [Policy for animals in schools](#)

MPI legislative and regulatory documents

- [Animal welfare regulations](#)
- [Animal welfare policy and practice](#)

