



If you observed a cow on a calving camera most take up to an hour to calf naturally. Sometimes there is too much panic around calving. As long as the cow is making progress leave her alone.

If the cow is not making progress then she should be examined to see if there is an issue. This procedure should include some attention to detail and basic hygienic principles

- Clean the cow's perineum and insert a clean gloved hand when examining cows. Do not introduce infection
- Check the presentation – is there a head and two legs? Is the calf coming backwards? Is there a leg/head back? Is the calf too big?
- If you can correct any malpresentation then the next question is whether you can bring the calf with traction?

### **Assisting cows to calf**

It is important to decide if the calf can be born naturally in advance of putting on the calving jack. When you get stuck halfway out it is too late! A general rule we follow is that if you can move the forelegs a little bit by hand then the rear end of the calf should be deliverable with assistance of the jack. If you have to “jack” the front legs out then you are at risk of getting stuck at the hips.

Use the jack to assist the cow rather than to force the calf out. Give the cow and calf time to rest between contractions. The calf cannot breathe whilst in full traction – this is important to remember. Downward levering of the jack is inadvisable before the ribs are fully out as fractured ribs are a possibility. Once the hips engage the pelvis the trajectory of the pull should be downward to mimic a normal birth.

Once the calf is born place in the recovery position (see below) and stimulate breathing by gentle compression of the ribs, rubbing of the calf with straw, pouring cold water into its ears and clearing its airways.



Check for injuries to the calf and the cow at this stage. Always check for another calf.

Remember the calf born requires 3L of colostrum within the first 12 hours of life for maximum survival rates.

If you are unsure whether you can bring the calf successfully call us.