



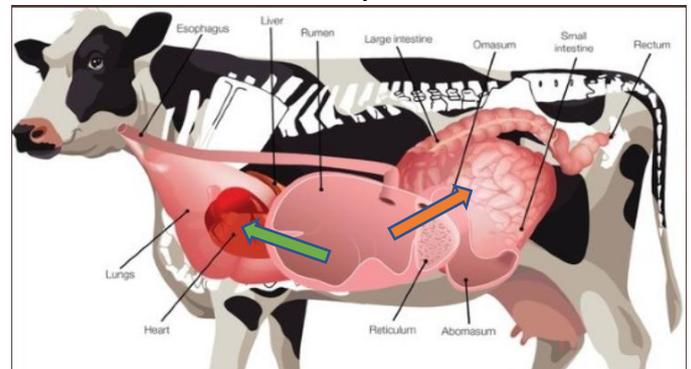
ON FARM HAZARDS

AIM: TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO FARMERS ON FARM HAZARDS THAT CAN INJURE OR KILL YOUR COW

- ❖ Dairy cows are valuable animals. As well as producing milk they also produce female calves for future milk and herd production.
- ❖ The death of a female animal can be a big loss to a dairy business.
- ❖ It is both costly (veterinary treatment, lost production, loss of an animal) and unfortunate if a dairy cow becomes sick and dies from something that could have been prevented.
- ❖ Below are some farm hazards and preventive measures you can take.

1. Eating metal objects

- Whilst cows are grazing, they may swallow metal objects, e.g. bits of wire, nails.
- If these objects are sharp, they can pierce the stomach wall and heart (**green arrow**) or other organs (**orange arrow**).
- The cow can become sick and may die.



<https://twitter.com/MurrayDairy/status/1338359312406732800/photo/1>

2. Eating plastic and other rubbish

- Whilst eating, cows may swallow pieces of plastic, netting, etc.
- These items can get stuck in the cow's intestines and cause an impaction.
- This can make your cow sick and may cause your cow to die.

<p>Metal objects and fibres found in a cow's stomach (Copperbelt)</p>	<p>Bits of rope and other fibres found in a cow's stomach (Central Province)</p>	<p>Plastic removed from a dairy cow (Paw Veterinary Group)</p>

3. Calves being strangled by a tether rope

- **NEVER** put a rope around a calf's neck. The rope can tighten and strangle the calf.



ON FARM HAZARDS

4. Snake bites

- Snake bites can be poisonous for cattle. They can be costly to treat and, depending on the snake, can result in the cow dying.
- Pay special care and attention to pregnant cows as snakebites can result in the loss of the unborn calf.

5. Accidents – falling in ditches, electrocution, slippery surfaces

- Like humans, cows can trip and fall on wet surfaces (e.g. in a cow shed) or into ditches.

		
Heifer with dislocated hip after falling on a slippery surface (Paw Veterinary Group)	Heifer electrocuted by a fallen electrical pole (Paw Veterinary Group)	Cow being pulled from an open ditch (Paw Veterinary Group)

Things you can do to keep your cows safe

A. General farm management

1. Keep your farm tidy and clean of rubbish and metal objects;
2. Identify hazards on your farm (e.g. ditches, lagoons) and fence them off;
3. Keep cattle in well fenced areas and keep grass around cattle areas short to reduce access by snakes and other wild animals.
4. Keep calves in their own pen and provide them with feed and water.
See fact sheets in our *H05 Calf Care* series for more information.

B. Ensure animals are well fed with quality feed

1. Only buy feed from reputable sources and remove any dangerous objects.
2. Feed cattle in troughs and racks, i.e. not from the floor or soil surface;
3. Ensure cattle have a balanced diet so they don't scavenge;

C. Preventive management

1. Ask your vet to put a ruminal magnet in your cows' stomach which will attract metal items. Metal items will stick to the magnet.
2. Check cattle regularly so you can promptly provide them with veterinary treatment.

For further information, contact your **local veterinary** or **extension officer**.

The ZDTP is focused on supporting dairy farmers to improve their productivity, milk quality and linkages to urban markets. The views expressed in this publication are those of the implementers of the programme and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Government. For further information, please contact ZDTP Country Manager Tania Thomson on tania@primeconsultants.net or +260 96 456 4206