Down cow decision tree

1. DETERMINE COW’S CONDITION
   - ALERT: Slight, at rest and responsive
   - NOT ALERT: Cold, depressed and not responsive

2. UNSAFE LOCATION
   - Not Alert
     - Milk fever
     - Grass tetany
     - Very severe mastitis
     - Severe blood loss
     - Nefrotic poisoning
   - Alert
     - Pregnancy toxemia
     - Nerve damage to the spine or one of the legs e.g. back injury or calving problems
     - Dislocated hip
     - Insufficiently treated milk fever
     - Infections of legs, pelvis or back
     - Casing
     - Card

3. WHY IS THE COW DOWN?
   - Alert
     - Pregnancy toxemia
     - Nerve damage to the spine or one of the legs e.g. back injury or calving problems
   - Not Alert
     - Milk fever
     - Grass tetany
     - Very severe mastitis
     - Severe blood loss
     - Nefrotic poisoning

4. MOVING DOWN COWS
   - Alert
     - Put down in an unsafe environment
   - Not Alert
     - Establish a diagnosis (Box 2)
     - Consult veterinarian if needed
     - Start temporary treatment
     - Consider euthanasia (Box 4)
     - Try to keep the cow within 2 degrees of plane of the lift

5. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO NURSE A DOWN COW?
   - Alert
     - Manage condition e.g. fractured bones
     - Provide appropriate care
     - Provide appropriate care
   - Not Alert
     - Make sure the cow is comfortable
     - Can be moved by rolling or lifting
     - Provide appropriate care

6. WHEN TO EUTHANISE
   - Alert
     - Incurable condition e.g. fractured bones
     - Non alert cow not responding within a suitable time
     - Not eating
     - Animal lying on its side
     - Pain that is not responding to treatment
     - Euthanasia needed
     - Consider preventative measures for other cows
   - Not Alert
     - Look for secondary complications
     - Reassess diagnosis
     - Consult veterinarian if needed
     - Reassess treatment
     - Euthanasia, if appropriate
     - Consult veterinarian if needed

7. LIFTING OPTIONS
   - Alert
     - Lift until effective and experienced (Box 6)
   - Not Alert
     - Reassess primary diagnosis (Box 6)

8. LIFTING GUIDELINES
   - Alert
     - Upsi-Daisy Cow Lifter
     - Mobile Stretcher
     - Pelvic Lifter
     - Hip Clamps
     - Slings
     - Designated by the lift and as soon as the cow is able to take weight on its legs

9. COMPLICATIONS
   - Alert
     - Dislocated hip
     - Muscle damage
     - Nerve damage
     - Pressure sores
     - Soreness
     - Head stress or hypothermia
     - Pain
     - Depression
   - Not Alert
     - Consider preventative measures for other cows
     - euthanised

10. ALERT TO NON ALERT
    - Alert
      - Slight, at rest and responsive
      - Put down in an unsafe environment
      - Establish a diagnosis (Box 2)
      - Consult veterinarian if needed
      - Start temporary treatment
      - Consider euthanasia (Box 4)
      - Try to keep the cow within 2 degrees of plane of the lift
    - Not Alert
      - Look for secondary complications
      - Reassess diagnosis
      - Consult veterinarian if needed
      - Reassess treatment
      - Euthanasia, if appropriate
      - Consult veterinarian if needed

Cows can be moved over a very short distance by pulling on legs or under their chest. They can be moved safely by:
- Rolling onto a carry all and lifting them securely
- Rolling them into a short and broad "bunk" ensuring that they lie in a safe position
- Caring them in a slat or in the Upsi-Daisy Cow Lifter
- Lifting them by hip, limb or pelvis that is not in contact with the lifting device. It does not appear to be at risk

If a non-alert cow is not progressing after 24 hours, euthanasia should be seriously considered and, if there is no progress after 48 hours, she should be euthanised promptly.

Pain that is not responding to treatment is an indicator of recovery.

If a non-alert cow is not progressing after 24 hours, euthanasia should be seriously considered and, if there is no progress after 48 hours, she should be euthanised promptly.

NOT UP

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