National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Work Programme 2026-2027

Preamble

The role of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) is defined in the Animal Welfare Act Part 4. Administrative provisions relating to NAWAC are found in the Animal Welfare Act Schedule 1. As a Ministerial Advisory Committee, NAWAC is subject to strategic direction from government and the Minister and Associate Minister for Agriculture.

NAWAC relies on a technical secretariat hosted in the MPI Agriculture and Investment Services (AIS) business unit Animal Welfare team. The Codes of Welfare development and review process requires input from MPI Policy, who are responsible for developing any regulations associated with Codes. Therefore, the NAWAC work programme is subject to constraints associated with NAWAC's own capacity and that of the MPI teams.

NAWAC has created a strategic plan as a framework for its responsibilities (Appendix 1), which is used for planning purposes. This Work Programme covers a two-year period but is annually updated. In that way it provides a comprehensive view, while recognising an operating environment which requires a degree of flexibility and regular prioritisation, including resourcing constraints, unexpected events, and new requests.

Pillar I. Strengthening Codes

Priorities arising from Government direction through the Primary Sector roadmap *Fit for a better world: Accelerating our economic potential.*

Ongoing:

a) Dairy: initially recommended to Minister (29 May 2024); re-recommended after responding to Ministerial direction (02 October 2025); Awaiting Ministerial decision and/or direction.
b) Pigs: recommended to Minister (10 May 2023); recommendation transferred to new Minister (1 February 2024); re-recommended after responding to Ministerial direction (23 October 2025); Further Ministerial direction received (14 May 2026); responded with recommendations to Minister (30 July 2026).
c) Sheep and Beef: public consultation (June-July 2025); review submissions and recommend to Minister (6 August 2026).
d) Poultry - Layers, Meat chickens, Breeders:
    1. Phase 1 targeted review of Layer Hens Code of Welfare in the context of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza preparedness: initial drafting and targeted stakeholder engagement; public consultation (June-July 2026); review submissions and recommend to Minister (Q4 2026).

2. Phase 2 comprehensive review across poultry Codes; scoping and analysis (Q3-4 2026); initial drafting and targeted stakeholder engagement (Q1-2 2027); public consultation (Q3: 2027)

e) Post-Farm Gate Code (new Code combining and reviewing Slaughter and Transport Codes): planning and prioritisation; scoping and analysis; initial drafting and targeted stakeholder engagement (2027). Unlikely to proceed to public consultation prior to 2028.
f) Aquatic Animals: awaiting prioritisation

Priorities arising from Ministerial direction.

Ongoing:

g) Rodeos: public consultation (Q3 2026); review submissions; likely further targeted consultation; finalise recommended drafts (Q3-4 2026); recommend to Minister (Q1 2027).
h) Greyhound Racing (N.B. non-Code activity): retain a watching brief over the welfare of ex-racing dogs as they are rehomed by the transition authority following the closure of the industry.

Priorities arising from external drafting (Animal Welfare Act s70(2)) or NAWAC guideline to review after 10 years[1]

Ongoing:

i) Rabbits: External drafting (version received from SPCA-led working group, 2024); initial drafting (2025); paused and awaiting prioritisation. Unlikely to proceed to public consultation prior to 2028.
j) Cats: External drafting (version received from SPCA-led working group, 2024). Paused and awaiting prioritisation. Unlikely to proceed to public consultation prior to 2028.
k) Dogs: Version received from SPCA-led working group (2024). Scoping and analysis (Q3-Q4, 2026); initial drafting and targeted stakeholder engagement (Q1-Q2, 2027). Public consultation (Q3-Q4, 2027).

Pillar II. Credible and Trusted Adviser

a) Development and review of the NAWAC guidelines
   i. The following represents an update perspective on a 3-year programme initiated in 2023, prioritising guidelines based on age, relevancy, and urgency.
   ii. Six revised NAWAC guidelines approved in 2023-2025 have now been published to the NAWAC website:
      1. Guideline 1: Development, review and content of Codes of Welfare
      2. Guideline 2: Consultation
      3. Guideline 3: Recommending Regulations on care and conduct towards animals
      4. Guideline 4: Activities using animals for exhibition, entertainment and encounter (3Es).
      5. Guideline 5: Role of science in setting animal welfare standards.

[1] *Refer to Appendix 3. for planning and prioritisation associated with Codes of Welfare that have not been substantively reviewed in >= 10 years.*

6. Guideline 6: Fulfilling NAWAC's advisory mandate

iii. The next Guideline to be developed will be:
    1. Guideline 7: Managing Conflicts of Interests during development and review of Codes of Welfare. (N.B. Framework developed.).

iv. Guideline 1 will be reviewed to include full range of options possible under Animal Welfare Act s75, including referral back to NAWAC by Minister

v. Guidelines and advisory work relating to pest control activities prioritised as a result of the Predator Free 2050 Strategy include:
    1. New public guidance on humane pest control best practices: scope revision in consultation to stakeholders.
    2. Snare trap prohibition proposal.

b) Develop the NAWAC Operating Manual:
    i. Continue developing NAWACs key planning and reporting documents (strategic plan, work programme, annual report)
    ii. Continue review of guidelines
    iii. Compile and progressively publish to website.

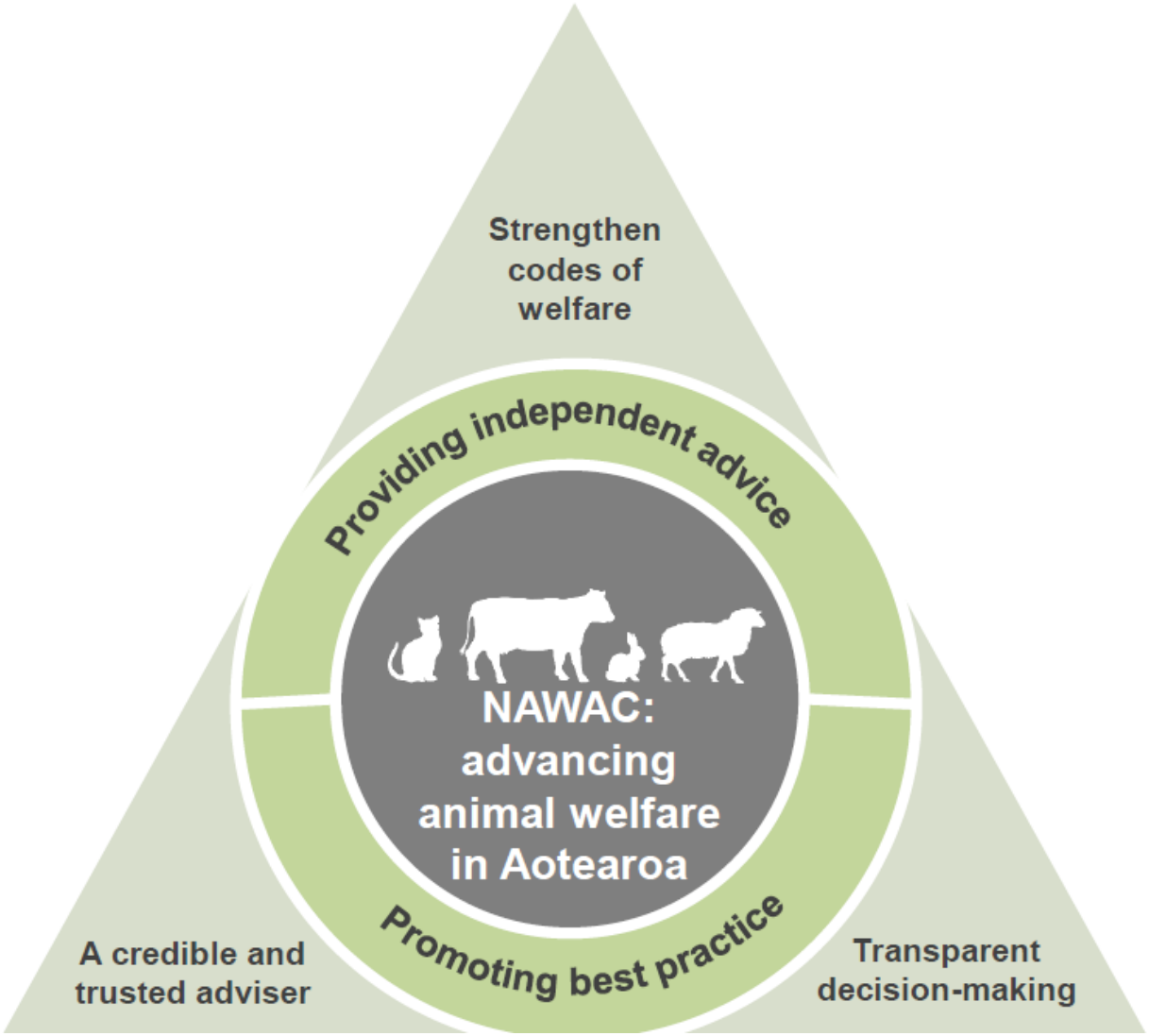
c) Develop advice to the Minister on departmental proposals or general matters in relation to the welfare of animals in New Zealand, as required e.g.
    1. Wearable and internal devices that apply electricity directly to animals
    2. Gene Technology Bill and its implementation
    3. Dog Control Act review
    4. Veterinarians Act review
    5. Emergency Management

d) Participate in review of NAWAC's functions, membership and mandate.

Pillar III: Transparent Decision-Making

a) Continued development of the NAWAC website as a communication tool:
b) Liaison with various stakeholders:
    i. Farm to Processor Animal Welfare Forum
    ii. Animal Welfare Network Aotearoa
    iii. Animal production and care industry groups
    iv. Animal welfare advocacy groups
    v. Undertake public engagement on Codes in accordance with statutory obligations and our own evolving Good Regulatory Practices, on our other activities, and on the wider role of NAWAC in the Animal Welfare system.
c) Develop and publish the NAWAC Annual Report.

Appendix 1. NAWAC Strategic Plan and framework for action



DRAFT NAWAC FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

2021-2024

Focus

NAWAC advances animal welfare in Aotearoa by:
providing independent advice to Ministers and promoting best practice in animal welfare

Principles

Te Tiriti	Partnership Participation Protection	**Decision-making**	Informed Independent Accountable Collective responsibility	**Conduct of hui**	Respectful Inclusive Focused Efficient and effective Free and frank

Strengthening Codes	**Credible and trusted adviser**	**Transparent**
What we will do		
NAWAC provides independent advice to strengthen codes of welfare	**NAWAC enhances its reputation as a credible and trusted adviser**	**NAWAC is open about how decisions are made and takes an inclusive approach to the development of wefare standards**
Our advice promotes positive welfare and is based on evidence and best practice The Codes of Welfare work programme is regularly reviewed and priorities agreed Advice is provided on emergent and/or cross-cutting issues that may impact across the Codes	Ministers are provided with an independent view of animal welfare concerns and priorities We engage in constructive ministerial dialogue We communicate effectively with our stakeholders and other interested parties	We engage appropriately with relevant stakeholders and interested parties An independent publicly accessible NAWAC website is implemented and maintained NAWAC committee meetings are inclusive and open to the public as appropriate

Appendix 2. Codes of Welfare: summarised steps in development and review

Within the Pillar 1 work plan, the following steps are used to summarise the development process of Codes of Welfare described in the Animal Welfare Act and NAWAC Guidelines.

1. Planning and prioritisation
2. Scoping and analysis
3. Initial drafting
4. Targeted stakeholder engagement
5. Finalise consultation draft
6. Request Minister approval to consult
7. Public consultation
8. Review submissions
9. Undertake further targeted consultation [Optional]
10. Undertake further public consultation [Optional]
11. Economic analysis [Optional]
12. Finalise recommended draft
13. Recommend to Minister
14. Respond to Ministerial direction [if referred back]

Appendix 3. Codes of Welfare: Dates of latest amendment and substantive review

Code of Welfare	Last Substantive Review	Date associated with accompanying report	Amendments
Circuses *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	1st January 2005	25th August 2004	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Companion Cats *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	1st March 2007	25th July 2006	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Dairy Cattle *Current code dated:* *31 October 2019*	18th Feb 2010	Reported dated: 2010 Reported signed: 15th December 2008	• 5th May 2021 • 31st October 2019 *(addition of 2 MS relating to outdoor access for dairy cattle held in off-paddock facilities)* • 19th September 2018 • 15th December 2016 • 12th June 2014 *(to address the use of manually applied blunt force trauma.)*
Deer *Current code dated:* *11 August 2025*	11th August 2025	11th August 2025	
Dogs *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	10th June 2010	30th October 2009	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Goats *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	22nd March 2012	1st August 2011	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Horses and Donkeys *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	28th January 2016	29th April 2014	5th May 2021 19th September 2018

Layer Hens *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	6th December 2012	29th June 2012	5th May 2021 19th September 2018 19th December 2013 6th September 2007
Llamas and Alpacas *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	26th April 2013	Report Dated: 2013	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Meat Chickens *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	26th July 2012	12th October 2011	19th September 2018
Ostriches and Emus: *(Code of recommendations and minimum standards for the welfare)*	June 1998		
Painful Husbandry Procedures *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	22nd December 2005	11 October 2005	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Pigs *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	2nd December 2010	20th October 2010	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Rodeos *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	30th October 2014	5th September 2013	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Sheep and Beef Cattle *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	24th June 2010	29th March 2010	5th May 2021 19th September 2018 15th December 2016

Commercial Slaughter *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	27th May 2010	22nd April 2009	16th March 2022 5th May 2021 19th September 2018 15th December 2016 *(incorporate changes made by the AW (calves) Regulation 2016 and the naming and reformatting of the Code of Welfare)* 16th December 2010 *(inclusion of a further MS)*
Temporary Housing of Companion Animals *Current code dated:* *1 October 2018*	19th September 2018	Reported Dated: 1st October 2018 Report Signed: 15th March 2018	5th May 2021
Transport of Animals	15th September 2011	8th April 2011	19th September 2018 15th December 2016
Zoos	9th December 2004	24th August 2004	5th May 2021 19th September 2018
Rabbits	-	-	-

Colour code:

Green: review underway within current work programme

Orange: >10 years since last substantive review