



Media release
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Cows are on the move for Gypsy Day

Hundreds of cows will be on the move next month for the start of the new dairy season, also known as Gypsy Day.

Selwyn District Council is reminding farmers and motorists to be extra cautious on the roads around this time.

Celebrated nationally, Gypsy Day falls on June 1 and, as the name suggests, it is a day for travelling. It marks the changeover of the dairy seasons when farms change ownership and families move entire households, farm equipment and cattle to a new property. Some cows are even moved hundreds of kilometres between the North and South Islands.

Cows can be moved on Gypsy Day or the days surrounding it. Canterbury is home to over 1.3million cows - half of the South Island's dairy cattle population. Care should be taken when driving on Selwyn's rural roads around this time as many cows will be moving between farms if it's a short distance, or shifted in trucks if they need to travel further.

Farmers who are droving their stock will need consent from the New Zealand Transport Agency to move cattle along State Highways, and council consent for roads with a 70kmp/h speed limit and other high volume roads. Cattle must be moved in mobs smaller than 400 on roads in Selwyn.

It is highly recommended that drovers wear high visibility garments to ensure they are clearly visible from 150metres by using flashing lights and temporary warning signs.

Gypsy Day tips for farmers:

- Plan ahead – choose the most direct route to move cattle and only cross or follow the road if it is necessary. Move stock in the day time and avoid peak driving times. Keep the stock off well maintained verges. If you need consent from the council for the move, apply for one at least two working days in advance. Consent applications can be made online www.selwyn.govt.nz/stock.
- Be particularly cautious when moving stock on roads with bends. Signs or a pilot vehicle will be needed around the corner to warn motorists of the stock ahead to avoid a crash.
- If moving machinery drive slowly and, if necessary, have a pilot vehicle to warn other drivers of the wide vehicle following.

Motorists also need to be patient. If you are approaching a mob of animals being moved on the road, slow down and assess whether you can wait for the mob to reach their destination, or quietly move through the mob if it is safe to do so - do not toot or sound your horn as it may cause the animals to panic and behave unpredictably.

If you are planning to move stock on Gypsy Day, you may need consent to move your cattle along the road. To check if you do, more information and an online application form are available at www.selwyn.govt.nz/stock. A free Council guide for farmers on droving stock is available at Selwyn libraries.

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