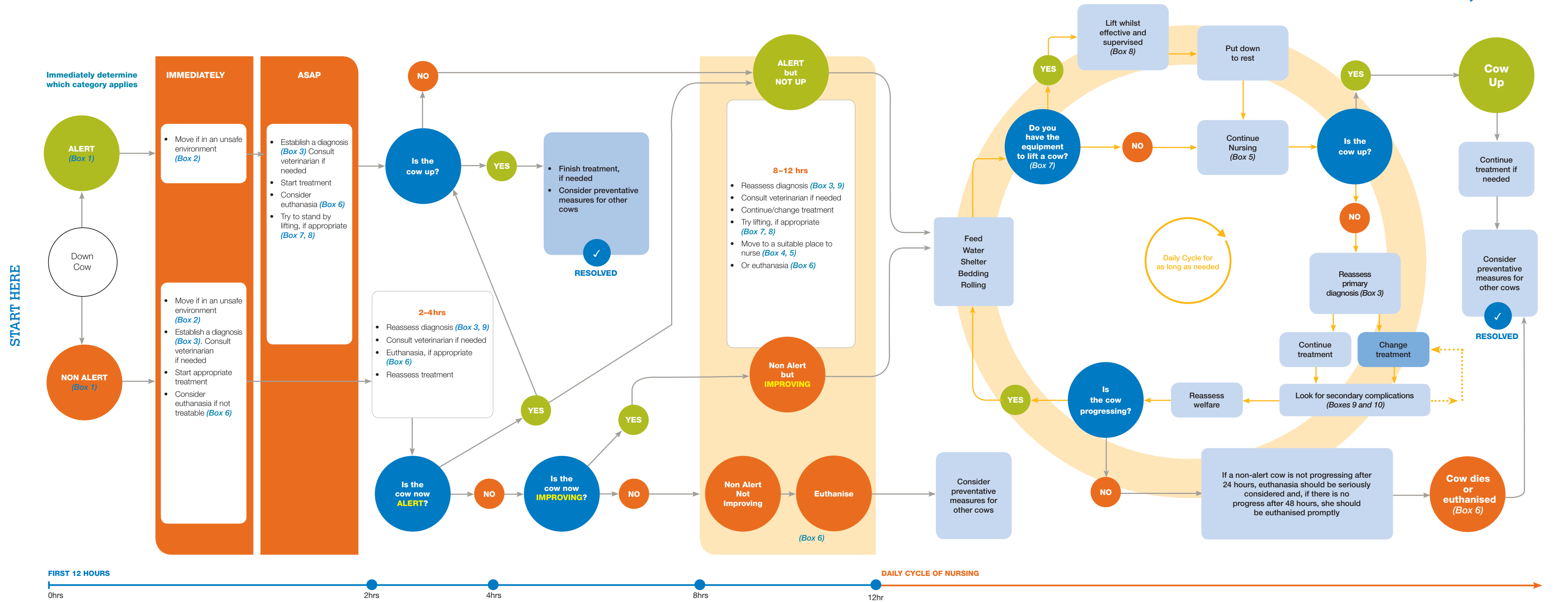


# Down cow decision tree



1. DETERMINE COW'S CONDITION	2. UNSAFE LOCATION	3. WHY IS THE COW DOWN?	4. MOVING DOWN COWS	5. WHAT YOU NEED TO NURSE A DOWN COW	6. WHEN TO EUTHANISE	7. LIFTING OPTIONS	8. LIFTING GUIDELINES	9. COMPLICATIONS	10. ALERT TO NON ALERT
<p><b>ALERT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bright, alert and responsive</li> </ul> <p><b>NOT ALERT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dull, depressed and not responsive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hard surface, especially concrete or gravel</li> <li>On slope with head downhill</li> <li>Lying on side, particularly if bloated</li> <li>Excess cold or heat</li> <li>Location is dangerous e.g. under an electric fence, edge of a creek or dam or in a laneway</li> </ul>	<p><b>ALERT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pregnancy toxemia.</li> <li>Nerve damage to the spine or one of the legs e.g. back injury or calving paralysis</li> <li>Dislocated hip</li> <li>Insufficiently treated milk fever</li> <li>Fracture of legs, pelvis or back</li> <li>Calving</li> <li>Cast</li> </ul> <p><b>NOT ALERT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milk fever</li> <li>Grass tetany</li> <li>Very severe mastitis</li> <li>Very severe illness</li> <li>Severe blood loss</li> <li>Nitrate poisoning</li> </ul>	<p>Down cows need to be moved in a way that avoids causing further damage to them.</p> <p>They can be moved safely by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rolling onto a carry-all and tying them securely</li> <li>Rolling them into a front-end loading "bucket" ensuring their head is tied in a safe position</li> <li>Carrying them in a sling or in the Upsi-Daisy Cow Lifter</li> <li>Lifting them by a hip clamp or pelvic lifter but only with a strap under their chest</li> <li>If there is no alternative, down cows can be moved over a very short distance by pulling on a halter around their head. Avoid any jerking movements and do not drag by pulling on legs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TLC (tender, loving care)</li> <li>Adequate labour</li> <li>Suitable shelter site that is conveniently located to allow regular monitoring</li> <li>Deep soft bedding of hay/straw/sawdust/sand</li> <li>Equipment to keep the area clean</li> <li>Barriers to confine cows on suitable bedding and to prevent crawling</li> <li>Ability to regularly roll the cow if it does not alternate the leg it is sitting on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incurable condition e.g. fractured bones</li> <li>Non alert cow not responding within a suitable time</li> <li>Not eating</li> <li>Always lying on her side</li> <li>Pain that is not responding to treatment</li> <li>Farmer is unable to nurse adequately</li> <li>Complications that cannot be dealt with adequately e.g. pressure sores</li> <li>Deterioration despite adequate treatment</li> </ul> <p><i>When a decision is made to euthanise an animal, it should happen as soon as possible.</i></p>	<p><b>Hip Clamps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best if they are padded to minimise damage to the hips</li> <li>Easy to use but only lifts the hind quarters and can injure cows if used inappropriately</li> </ul> <p><b>Pelvic Lifter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hip clamp combined with a seat that fits under the pelvis</li> <li>Easy to use, like Hip Clamps but with extra support for the pelvis</li> </ul> <p><b>Slings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sling with straps to support the whole animal</li> <li>There is a risk of pressure sores if straps cut into the groin</li> </ul> <p><b>Mobile Stretcher</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stretcher on wheels, which supports the whole animal</li> <li>Can produce pressure sores if left on for too long</li> </ul> <p><b>Floatation Tanks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designed to allow cow to stand unrestrained in warm water</li> <li>Leave cow in for up to 8-12 hours at a time</li> </ul> <p><b>Upsi-Daisy Cow Lifter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A metal chair to support the rear end with a chest strap for the fore quarters</li> <li>Gives better support than hip lifters</li> </ul>	<p>Use a suitable lifting device (see Box 7 - Lifting Options)</p> <p>Only lift if it is <b>EFFECTIVE</b> and <b>SUPERVISED</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Effective lifting</b> means that the cow is able to take some of her weight and stand with the assistance of the device. It does not mean "hanging".</li> <li><b>Supervised</b> means that the cow is observed regularly during the period of the lift and as soon as she is unable to take her weight she is lowered.</li> </ul> <p>A cow being able to support her weight for an increasing time is a good indicator of recovery.</p> <p><b>CAUTION</b> <i>Over-lifting a cow can be counter-productive.</i></p> <p><i>Lifting a cow that is unable to stand effectively and/or fights against the lifting device will cause more harm than good. These cows will have a better chance of recovery if they are NOT lifted, providing they have suitable bedding and are rolled regularly.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dislocated hip</li> <li>Muscle damage</li> <li>Nerve damage</li> <li>Pressure sores</li> <li>Mastitis</li> <li>Swollen and damaged joints</li> <li>Heat stress or hypothermia</li> <li>Pain</li> <li>Depression</li> </ul>	<p>If an "Alert Down" becomes a "Non Alert Down" the prospects for survival are poor and euthanasia is usually required.</p>