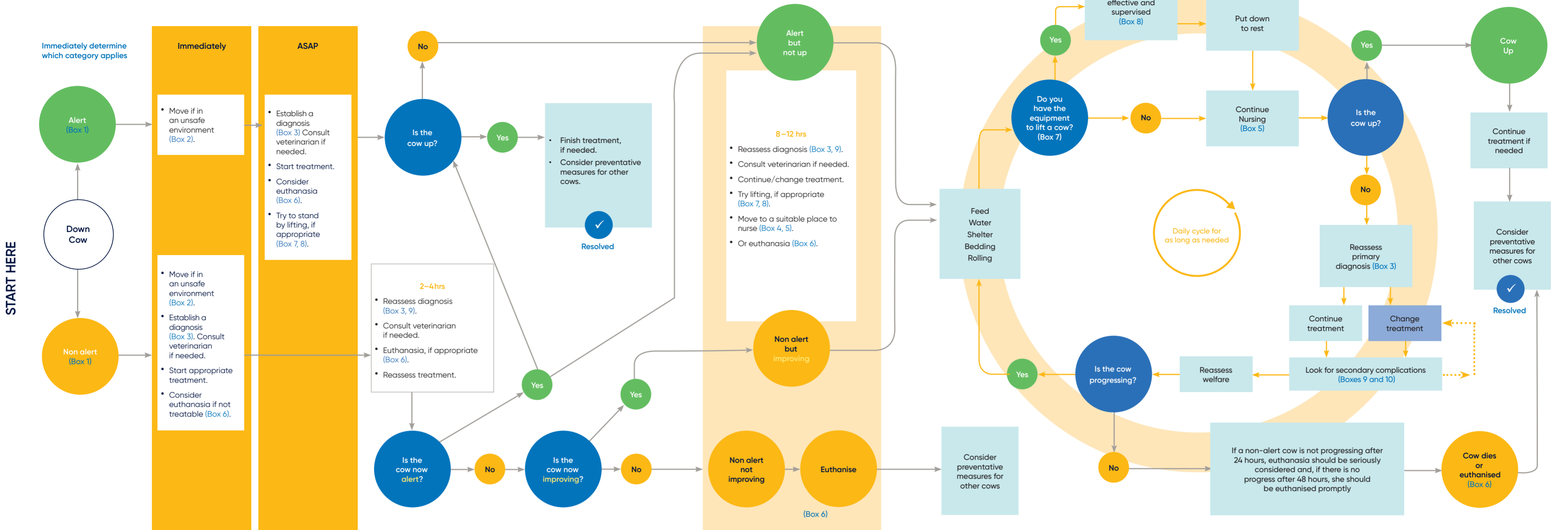


Down cow decision tree



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>Alert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bright, alert and responsive <p>Not alert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> dull, depressed and not responsive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hard surface, especially concrete or gravel on slope with head downhill lying on side, particularly if bloated excess cold or heat location is dangerous e.g. under an electric fence, edge of a creek or dam or in a laneway. 	<p>Alert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pregnancy toxemia nerve damage to the spine or one of the legs e.g. back injury or calving paralysis dislocated hip insufficiently treated milk fever fracture of legs, pelvis or back calving cast. <p>Not alert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> milk fever grass tetany very severe mastitis very severe illness severe blood loss nitrate poisoning. 	<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"> Rolling onto a carry-all and tying them securely. Rolling them into a front-end loading "bucket" ensuring their head is tied in a safe position. Carrying them in a sling or in the Upsi-Daisy Cow Lifter. Lifting them by a hip clamp or pelvic lifter but only with a strap under their chest. 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TLC (tender, loving care). Adequate labour. Suitable shelter site that is conveniently located to allow regular monitoring. Deep soft bedding of hay/ straw/sawdust/sand. Equipment to keep the area clean. Barriers to confine cows on suitable bedding and to prevent crawling. Ability to regularly roll the cow if it does not alternate the leg it is sitting on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incurable condition e.g. fractured bones. Non alert cow not responding within a suitable time. Not eating. Always lying on her side Pain that is not responding to treatment. Farmer is unable to nurse adequately. Complications that cannot be dealt with adequately e.g. pressure sores. Deterioration despite adequate treatment. <p><i>When a decision is made to euthanise an animal, it should happen as soon as possible.</i></p>	<p>Hip clamps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best if they are padded to minimise damage to the hips. Easy to use but only lifts the hind quarters and can injure cows if used inappropriately. <p>Pelvic lifter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hip clamp combined with a seat that fits under the pelvis. Easy to use, like Hip Clamps but with extra support for the pelvis. <p>Slings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sling with straps to support the whole animal. There is a risk of pressure sores if straps cut into the groin <p>Mobile stretcher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stretcher on wheels, which supports the whole animal. Can produce pressure sores if left on for too long. <p>Floatation tanks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to allow cow to stand unrestrained in warm water. Leave cow in for up to 8-12 hours at a time. <p>Upsi-daisy cow lifter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A metal chair to support the rear end with a chest strap for the fore quarters. Gives better support than hip lifters. 	<p>Use a suitable lifting device (see Box 7 – Lifting Options).</p> <p>Only lift if it is effective and supervised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective lifting 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" Supervised 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 <p>A cow being able to support her weight for an increasing time is a good indicator of recovery.</p> <p>CAUTION Over-lifting a cow can be counter-productive.</p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dislocated hip muscle damage nerve damage pressure sores mastitis swollen and damaged joints heat stress or hypothermia pain depression. 	<p>If an "Alert down" becomes a "Non alert down" the prospects for survival are poor and euthanasia is usually required.</p>