FIT TO TRANSPORT CATTLE

1. PURPOSE

1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) instructs farm staff on making decisions regarding transporting animals in order to avoid causing injury or undue suffering to the animals.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This SOP will describe how to decide if an animal is fit to transport. It will also provide a general overview of important points to remember which impact the welfare of the animal.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

3.1. The Operations Manager is responsible for reviewing and updating this procedure as required, and ensuring that personnel are familiar with its contents.

3.2. Farm workers are responsible for learning how to safely move animals, and following those methods at all times.

3.3. The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring Canada’s animal transport requirements are followed.

3.4. The Operations Manager or herd veterinarian are the only persons responsible for making the decisions regarding the fitness of animals to be transported, or arranging for their transport, and will ensure that the entire transportation process (including loading, transit, and unloading) does not cause injury or undue suffering to the animals.

4. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

All personnel entering the cattle facilities will wear personal protective equipment overalls and dedicated facility footwear.

5. TRAINING

Training on how to safely move animals is needed prior to carrying out this SOP. Two in-house training video modules are located in Rm 205 of the office/lab building. See SOPs on Student Training, Staff Training, and Moving & Chasing Cattle.
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6. GENERAL

6.1. Every animal must be assessed before being transported - Refer to the NFACC “Guidelines for Dealing with Compromised Animals”, and “Should this Animal be Loaded?” pg 3&4.

6.2. Only fit animals are sold or shipped to auction.

6.3. Non-ambulatory animals, animals with a body condition score indicating emaciation or weakness, or animals with severe lameness must not be transported, except for veterinary treatment or diagnosis.

6.4. Do not transport animals that are likely to give birth during the intended journey.

6.5. Do not transport cattle that require hobbling in order to walk.

6.6. Animals unfit for transport will be euthanized on site (See SOP on Euthanasia).

6.7. All decisions regarding the transport of animals are made by the Operations Manager using the decision tree developed by the National Farm Animal Care Council (Appendixes G & H, 2009) See pg. 3&4 of this document. The herd veterinarian can also make decisions regarding fitness of animals for transport.

6.8. Additional resources to aid in assessing fitness for transport can be found at:


7. PROCEDURE

7.1. Verify the identification of the cow or calf to be transported by ID number, and record reason for transport (health, lameness, temperament etc.) in the barn day book located in the vet room.
7.2. If, after consulting the herd veterinarian and the NFACC decision tree (see below) the animal is considered fit for transport, call the livestock hauler a few days before shipping:

7.3. Animals typically leave the farm after morning milking. The hauler alerts the farm as to their estimated arrival time so that the animals are moved out of their pen of residence just before the hauler arrives, and are therefore standing and waiting for a minimal amount of time.

7.4. Bull calves being shipped are fed in the morning and removed from their pen when the truck arrives.

7.5. Livestock traceability requirements are mandated by the federal government and require that both the animal and the premises it comes from have a unique identifying number, provided by the animal’s RFID ear tag. Using a hand held device, the hauler scans the ear tags of any animal leaving the farm so that its movements can be recorded.

7.6. To comply with Biosecurity procedures, the hauler remains outside of the barn facilities. Farm workers or the Operations Manager bring the animals to be transported (see SOP on Moving & Chasing Cattle) to the gate closest to where the truck & trailer are parked.

7.7. The gate between the barn alley and the trailer is opened, and adult animals walk into the low bed trailer.

7.8. Calves are also brought to where the truck is parked and manually pushed/carried into the trailer by a farm worker or the Operations Manager.

7.9. A completed manifest form is left with the Operations Manager when the animals leave the farm.
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SHOULD THIS ANIMAL BE LOADED?
Guidelines for Transporting Cattle, Sheep & Goats

Load Healthy Animals

Do Not Load
Do Not Transport

Do Not Transport to a Sale

Transport With Special Provisions
Direct to Slaughter

Animals with multiple conditions may not be fit to transport.

As Soon As Possible
- Abscess
- Blind
- Frost bite
- Cancer eye (eye intact)
- Lameness Class 1 & 2
- Left/right displaced abomasum
  (without weakness, toxicity)
- Lumpy jaw
- Perine injuries
- Pneumonia (without fever)
- Prolapsed vagina or rectum
- Animals that have given birth
  within 48 hours

Within 12 Hours
- Advise inspector at the destination plant.
  - Blot
  - Hardware with localized signs
  - Intestinal accidents
  - Recent injury
  - Urethral blockage (acute)
  - Broken tail or jaw

*Animals must travel in a small compartment, either individually segregated or with one quiet animal.

Delay Transportation and Reassess
- Exuisation
- Calving/lambing/kidding
- Weakness/instable
- Acute mastitis
- Ketosis
- Fever:
  - Cattle > 103.5°F
    39.8°C
  - Sheep/goats > 103.9°F
    39.6°C

Euthanize
- Non-ambulatory (see box below)
- Fractures of limb or spine
- Arthritis with multiple joints
- Cancer eye (severe)
- Cancer/leukemia (extensive)
- Extremely thin
- Pneumonia (unresponsive with fever)
- Prolapsed uterus
- Water belly
- neurological disorders, such as rabies must be reported to CFIA
- Hernia that impedes movement, is painful, touches the ground

Non-ambulatory Animals
- Unable to stand without assistance, or unable to move without being dragged or carried.
  Commonly called “downers.”
- Animals should be able to bear weight on all four limbs to be suitable for transport.
- Lameness Classes 3, 4 and 5 can be transported for veterinary treatment on the advice of a veterinarian

Emergency On-Farm Slaughter
If an animal is fit for human consumption but not fit for transport (i.e., injured but not sick) emergency on-farm slaughter may be an option. Please consult with your provincial government for more information on the availability of emergency on-farm slaughter in your province.
8. REFERENCES


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9. REFERENCED SOPS

9.1. SOP-General-001 Student Training

9.2. SOP-General-007 Staff Training

9.3. SOP-Cow-003 Euthanasia

9.4. SOP-Cow-004 Downer Cows

9.5. SOP-Cow-006 Moving & Chasing Cattle

10. APPROVAL AND REVISION HISTORY

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