

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals

Transportation

THE CODES OF PRACTICE:

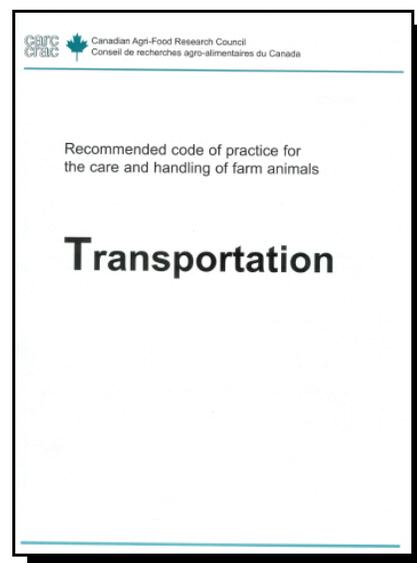
The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of different species of farm animals. Codes are not intended to be used as production manuals but rather as an educational tool in the promotion of sound husbandry and welfare practices. The Codes contain recommendations to assist farmers and others in the agriculture and food sector to compare and improve their own management practices.

THE RECOMMENDED CODE OF PRACTICE: Transportation

This code is intended to achieve a workable balance between the best interests of the animals and the transportation industry. Transportation can be one of the most stressful situations an animal experiences and can cause a number of physiological and behavioural changes. This code recognizes the basic principle that humane treatment of animals is the prime consideration in animal transportation and that animals which are treated well and protected from stress arrive at their destination in far better condition. This results in significant benefits and economic advantages no matter what the reason for transport.

This factsheet highlights a small amount of the information found in the complete Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals:
Transportation.

A copy of the complete Recommended Code of Practice can be found at the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council's web site:
www.carc-crac.ca



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RECOMMENDED CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF FARM ANIMALS: TRANSPORTATION

Section 1 ◆ Introduction

- This code can serve as a guide to commercial transporters, producers and hobbyists in assessing their facilities, equipment and practices with regard to livestock transportation and may provide guidance for improvement in deficient areas.
- The livestock transportation industry must continuously keep abreast of new research and technological advances in facilities and equipment to enhance transportation practices and ensure that animals are transported in the most humane, safe and effective manner possible for the benefit of both humans and animals.

Animal Behaviour:

- Animal behaviour is a prime consideration in the transportation of animals. A transporter with a thorough knowledge of the behaviour patterns of the species he or she is hauling can significantly reduce the amount of handling and goading needed to move, load or unload animals.
- A thorough knowledge of the transportation of one species does not ensure success in the transportation of another. Behaviour patterns are species specific and facilities or practices that work well with one species are often ineffective or even dangerous with another.
- A thorough knowledge and understanding of handling techniques is best acquired through careful observation of animals and their responses. Drivers and handlers should undergo a period of apprenticeship with an experienced driver prior to being assigned to haul a new species of animal.

Duration of Transport:

- The duration of time that animals are in transit is a significant risk that transportation poses to the animals.
- Long haul transportation (generally longer than 6 hours) may expose animals to significant environmental changes and/or increase the length of time they are exposed to risk factors such as heat, cold, jostling and piling.
- Transporters engaged in the long haul transport of livestock must therefore be more careful in planning. Factors that must be investigated, considered and addressed include:
 - ✓ Expected weather conditions en route.
 - ✓ Emergency procedures should problems be encountered.
 - ✓ Possible off-loading sites along the route.
 - ✓ Expected delays, such as road construction or repairs, ferries, borders and unloading hours at destination.

Section 2 ◆ General Considerations

Responsibilities:

- Humane transport of animals is a joint responsibility of buyers, sellers, assembly point managers and truckers.
- Transportation starts at the time of loading at the point of origin, continues through the sale and reloading of animals at auction markets and assembly yards and ends after unloading at the final destination.
- Animals should be transported from point of origin to final destination by the safest route available. Transportation should be completed as soon as possible.
- Knowingly inflicting physical injury or causing unnecessary pain to animals is a criminal offence.

Risk Factors:

The following factors have been found to increase the risk for animals in transit:

- a) long-distance transportation, from loading at the place of origin, including poultry catching, to unloading at final destination;
- b) low economic value of the animals being transported;
- c) adverse weather conditions; and,
- d) other factors that compromise the ability of animals to withstand transport - e.g. pregnant, very young or old animals.

Section 3 ◆ Vehicles, Containers and Equipment

General:

- All vehicles used to transport animals should be in excellent condition and must be in full compliance with provincial highway traffic legislation.
- Vehicles and containers used for feeding, watering and resting animals on long trips shall be suitably equipped for the purpose.
- Vehicles and containers used to transport livestock should be cleaned, sanitized and equipped with suitable fresh bedding material before each new load.
- Sufficient ventilation must be available at all times while the animals are on a vehicle. Aerodynamic airfoils, where installed, must not restrict airflow into the trailer.

Section 4 ◆ Loading and Unloading

General:

- In a new situation or location, all normal, healthy animals are alert and inquisitive. Consequently, every change or disturbance in surroundings, such as noises, breezes, movement or objects, and flashes of light, should be avoided.
- Animals should not be rushed during loading and unloading.
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- The use of electric prods is discouraged for all species and shall not be applied to the head or

genital regions of any animal. Electric prods are not acceptable in handling horses. The use of canvas slappers and other goads should be kept to a minimum. An accurate understanding of animal behaviour and a careful, un-hurried approach by the handler will make loading and unloading easier.

Space Requirements:

- In transport, animals require sufficient floor space to allow for adequate ventilation.
- Overcrowding can cause bruising or other injuries.
- Each animal should be able to assume its natural position for transport without coming into contact with the roof or upper deck of the vehicle. The amount of headroom also depends upon the species.

Section 5 ♦ Care and Protection During Transport

Precautions in Extreme Weather:

- Animals must be protected during transit to prevent suffering caused by exposure to severe weather conditions.
- No matter what type of transportation is used, adequate airflow throughout the vehicle or container must be provided to keep the animals comfortable.

All Recommended Codes of Practice are presently developed by a national committee consisting of representatives from farm groups, animal welfare groups, veterinarians, animals scientists, federal and provincial governments, industry and related agriculture sectors. The following are some of the organizations that provided input at various stages in the drafting of this Code:

- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
- Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- D & D Livestock Trucking
- Heartland Livestock Services

In 1993, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada asked the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council (CARC) and its Canada Committee on Animals and Expert Committee on Farm Animal Welfare and Behaviour to take the lead in cooperation with the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies in updating existing Codes and developing new Codes. CARC officially agreed to take on this responsibility in February 1995.

Further information on the process of Code development can be obtained from the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council (CARC), Heritage House, Building 60, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C6.

This factsheet was prepared by Penny Lawlis, Animal Care Specialist, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with the assistance of an Editorial Committee. Animal welfare factsheets have been printed and distributed through the financial support of your provincial agriculture department.