

Caring for
**COMPROMISED
CATTLE**



The Ontario Farm Animal Council is the voice of animal agriculture, representing Ontario's livestock and poultry farmers and associated businesses. Working together to advance responsible farm animal care.



Additional copies are available online at www.ofac.org or by contacting the Ontario Farm Animal Council at (519) 837-1326.

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Disclaimer

This guide is intended to assist producers in making ethical and responsible decisions regarding animals at risk. Producers are encouraged to consult with their herd health veterinarian for final culling decisions, as this guide should not be considered as the sole resource in these matters.

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Caring for **COMPROMISED CATTLE**

Farmers work hard to ensure that their animals are properly cared for 365 days of the year. Unfortunately, the reality is that some animals will become injured or sick to the extent that they are considered unfit, compromised or at risk. This would include animals that are non-ambulatory (downers), unable to stand without assistance or to move without being dragged or carried.

This guide is designed to assist dairy and beef producers to recognize health-related problems and respond to them in a timely and responsible manner. Early recognition of problems and prompt, appropriate treatment are key factors in preventing the loss of an animal. Producers are encouraged to work with their herd veterinarians for early intervention treatment and culling decisions.

The detailed chart “Should this animal be loaded?” on page 4 outlines a variety of conditions and scenarios that need to be considered before loading an animal.

Many producers are unaware their animals may be subjected to extended journeys that might last days at a variety of destinations, in either very cold or warm temperatures that will stress them beyond their limits. Only healthy animals that are fit to withstand the journey to the final destination should be loaded and transported.

Producers should simply ask themselves three questions before loading an animal:

- Can it walk?
- Will it be able to walk off the truck at the final destination?
- Would I eat it?

If any of these questions generates a “no” response, a timely decision needs to be made – treat the animal or euthanize it.

It is unacceptable and illegal to load, or cause to load, any animal that is sick, injured or would otherwise suffer unduly due to transport. This includes non-ambulatory animals. All animals that are unfit for transport or unfit for human consumption must be euthanized on farm or treated.

Legislation, both federal and provincial dictates that animals must be handled humanely. Enforcement agencies and the courts will use accepted industry standards and the law to determine which practices are not acceptable. The Recommended Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals are considered the industry standard for farm animal care, on farm and in transit (www.nfacc.ca).

Responsible stockmanship, treatment, culling, transporting and euthanizing decisions must be an industry priority.

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STEPS TO DEALING WITH COMPROMISED CATTLE

The following actions by producers will assist in early detection of problems and options to address them.

- **PREVENTION:** Biosecurity, herd health and vaccination programs, equipment and stall designs as well as early identification of herd or facility related problems will help to prevent many animal health problems.
- **OBSERVATION:** Cattle should be observed several times a day, especially during milking or feeding. Early detection of illness and appropriate treatment are key elements in minimizing disease and discomfort.
- **TREATMENT:** Treatment should be determined and administered as soon as possible to minimize pain, discomfort or further deterioration of the animal. Consult with a veterinarian to develop treatment strategies and protocols for common ailments.
- **SEPARATION:** Segregate compromised animals into designated “hospital” pens or areas to permit close observation and treatment.
- **TRANSPORT:** If animals are fit for transport, decide where and when to ship them, ensuring all medicine withdrawal times have been observed.
- **EUTHANIZE:** All animals unfit for transport or unfit for human consumption must be euthanized on farm (refer to “Should this animal be loaded?” decision tree chart for specific conditions on page 4). Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) enforced laws prohibit the loading, transporting and unloading of non-ambulatory animals for any purpose other than veterinary treatment with advice from a veterinarian.



Updated 05/10

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**



Delay Transportation and Reassess

- Exhaustion
- Calving/lambing/kidding
- Dehydration
- Weakness/unstable
- Acute mastitis
- Ketosis
- Fever:



cattle > 102.5°F
39.1°C
sheep/goats > 103.3°F
39.6°C

Euthanize

- **Non-ambulatory (see box below)**
- Fractures of limb or spine
- Arthritis in multiple joints
- Cancer eye (severe)
- Cancer/leukosis (extensive)
- Extremely thin
- Pneumonia (unresponsive with fever)
- Prolapsed uterus
- Water belly
- Nervous disorders, such as rabies must be reported to CFIA
- Hernia that impedes movement



**Transport With Special Provisions
Direct to Slaughter**

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
- Penis injuries
- Pneumonia (without fever)
- Prolapsed vagina or rectum
- Animals that have given birth within 48 hours

Within 12 Hours

- Seek advise from your veterinarian
 - Advise inspector at the destination plant.
 - Hardware with localized signs
 - Intestinal accidents
 - Recent injury*
 - Urethral blockage (acute)*
 - Broken tail or jaw
 - Smoke inhalation
- *Animals must travel in a small compartment, either individually or with one quiet animal.

Non-ambulatory animals: Unable to stand without assistance, or unable to move without being dragged or carried (downers). **Do not load or transport.**

Lame animals:

- Animals should not be loaded if at risk of going down in transit.
- Animals that can't bear weight on all four legs may be in pain and are at risk of going down during transit. These animals are often euthanized at sales and plants.

Lactating animals: Dry off heavy lactating cows before shipping when possible or ship directly to an abattoir.

Animals with multiple conditions may not be fit to transport.

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.

Guidelines for Dealing with Compromised Cattle, Sheep & Goats

Federal Transportation Regulations (2010)

Health of Animals Regulations www.inspection.gc.ca

DO

- Segregate animals of different species, or substantially different weights and ages, or if incompatible by nature.
- Provide proper ventilation, drainage and absorption of urine.
- Have sufficient headroom for animals to stand in a natural position.
- Spread sand in the vehicle or have vehicle fitted with safe footholds, in addition to appropriate bedding.
- Ensure that animals unloaded for feed, water and rest remain at least five hours and longer, if necessary, for all animals to receive food and water.
- Ensure that calves too young to exist on hay and grain are provided with suitable food and water at intervals of no more than 18 hours.*
- Ensure that animals segregated in trucks receive extra protection from cold and wind chill; supply ample bedding.
- Euthanize animals promptly when you identify conditions outlined in the "Should this Animal be Loaded?" chart.

*Note: The Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals - Transportation suggests no more than 12 hours between intervals for calves.

DO NOT

- Transport a sick or injured animal where undue suffering may result.
- Transport when the animal is liable to give birth during the journey, unless under the advice of a veterinarian for medical care.
- Continue to transport an animal that is injured, becomes ill, or is otherwise unfit to travel beyond the nearest place it can be treated.
- Use goods or prods on the face, anal, udder or genital area.
- Load or unload animals in a way that would cause injury or undue suffering.
- Crowd animals to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering.
- Transport livestock, in trailers not designed for safe handling of that species or class of livestock.

Source: *Transporting Livestock by Truck (CFIA)*



www.bcfacc.ca
(604) 287-3276



www.afac.ab.ca
(403) 932-8052



Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.
www.facs.sk.ca
(306) 249-3227

Lameness Classes

These categories can be used to determine the status of an animal's mobility, from normal to non-ambulatory.

Transport as soon as possible

- Class 1**
Visibly lame but can keep up with the group; no evidence of pain.
- Class 2**
Unable to keep up; some difficulty climbing ramps. *Load in rear compartment.*

Do Not Load or Transport*

- Class 3**
Requires assistance to rise, but can walk freely.
- Class 4**
Requires assistance to rise; reluctant to walk; halted movement.
- Class 5**
Unable to rise or remain standing.

* **Any animal, including Lameness Classes 3, 4 or 5 may be transported for veterinary treatment, on the advice of a veterinarian.**

**CFIA Livestock
Emergency
Transport Line
1-877-814-2342
(Ontario only)**

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www.mfiac.ca
(204) 632-9047



www.hoafac.org
(519) 837-1326

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CAUTION

Transport With Special Provisions

Animals that are to be transported with special provisions are not to be transported to sales or auction barns or collection yards. Selling these animals to a dealer who will then transport them to a sales barn, auction barn or collection yard is unacceptable. Special provisions could include extra bedding or segregating them on the truck to ensure their welfare and comfort during transit.

In addition to the cases outlined producers must assess each animal based on its individual state of health prior to making a decision to load or not, and whether it should go to an auction or directly to a processing plant. Animals must only be loaded if they are assessed to be fit at the farm and able to withstand the journey to its destination.

NON-AMBULATORY ANIMALS AND LAMENESS

Non-ambulatory animals (sometimes referred to as “downers”) are those unable to get up, walk or remain standing without assistance. Animals may become downers from an obvious physical problem, such as a broken leg, or from weakness caused by emaciation, dehydration, exhaustion or disease.

Leg problems in cattle can be caused by a variety of factors including fractures, abscesses, arthritis, laminitis and foot rot. The entire animal should be assessed, as a lame animal in poor body condition will likely be condemned at the processing facility.



Photo Courtesy of the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan

Feet and leg problems can result in poor performance and substantial economic loss. Several factors might be responsible for causing problems:

- Nutrition and feeding practices
- Facility and physical environment
- Genetic predisposition
- Other ongoing diseases

A lame animal can only be transported if it can rise, stand and walk under its own power. Use the following lameness classes to determine the best option when dealing with sick or injured cows and calves.

LAMENESS CLASSES:

Class 1: Visibly lame but can keep up with the group; no evidence of pain.

Class 2: Unable to keep up; some difficulty climbing ramps. Load in rear compartment.



- Animals in lameness classes 1 and 2 can be transported directly to slaughter or to a veterinary clinic for treatment.
 - Segregate and load class 1 and 2 animals in rear compartments with ample bedding.

LAMENESS CLASSES:

Class 3: Requires assistance to rise, but can walk freely.

Class 4: Requires assistance to rise; reluctant to walk; halted movement.

Class 5: Unable to rise or remain standing.



- Do not load or transport class 3, 4 or 5 animals except for veterinary treatment and with the advice of a veterinarian.

Producer Actions: Prevent. Detect. Treat. Cull. Euthanize

- ✓ Keep accurate records of all animals.
- ✓ Improve poor facility design – lying, walking and loading surfaces.
- ✓ Hoof trim and/or evaluate feet at least once per year.
- ✓ Cull animals with persistent problems.
- ✓ Assess the risk of an animal becoming non ambulatory in transport before loading the animal.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize animals in lameness class 3, 4 and 5.
- ✓ Emergency on farm slaughter if animal is fit for human consumption and under 30 months of age.

ABSCESS

An abscess is a localized collection of pus in a cavity of disintegrated tissue. Some minor abscesses can be treated on farm. Multiple abscesses may be caused by a major illness involving other portions of the body and may result in condemnation of the carcass at slaughter.



- Transport animals with minor abscesses directly to slaughter.



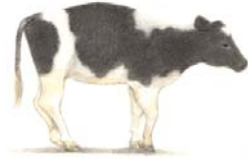
- Do not load or transport animals with multiple abscesses.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Check animals for abscesses regularly and treat affected animals as soon as possible.
- ✓ Try to identify source if multiple abscesses are present, in consultation with veterinarian.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize animals with multiple abscesses.

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is an inflammation of the joint, characterized by a progressive difficulty moving and increased time spent lying down with the affected joints flexed. Swollen joints can be a symptom of arthritis. Treatment is dependent on the degree of lameness. Two or more affected joints can cause an animal to be condemned at slaughter.



Animals should be assessed according to the lameness class 1 through 5. See page 7 for more information on lameness classes and how to proceed with animals with varying lameness scores.



- Animals with arthritis in multiple joints or animals that are judged to be in lameness classes 3, 4 or 5 should not be transported.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Observe all cows and calves for swollen joints.
- ✓ Determine cause if several animals are affected.
- ✓ Detect and treat early or ship promptly.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize animals in lameness classes 3, 4 and 5.
- ✓ Emergency on farm slaughter if the animal is fit for human consumption and under the age of 30 months.

BLINDNESS IN BOTH EYES

Animals with total blindness in both eyes should be transported as soon as possible. Producers should exercise caution when handling these animals to reduce the risk of injury to themselves and the animal.



- Transport animals directly to slaughter with special provisions; load with care in separate compartment, preferably with one other quiet animal.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize affected animals.
- ✓ Emergency on farm slaughter if animal is fit for human consumption and under 30 months of age.

BLOAT

Bloat is caused by trapped gas in the rumen, which causes the left side of the animal to distend. Animals that experience conditions of severe bloat have difficulty breathing and/or walking and grind their teeth in pain. Animals with severe bloat are likely to become non ambulatory if transported.



- Transport affected animals with mild bloat (i.e. show no signs of pain) direct to slaughter with special provisions; load in a separate compartment.



- Don't transport animals showing signs of severe bloat.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Monitor for signs of the condition daily, especially animals on large amounts of feed.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ On farm emergency slaughter if animal is fit for human consumption and under 30 months of age.
- ✓ Euthanize animals showing signs of severe bloat.

BONE FRACTURES

Fractures can cause an animal immense pain and can result in severe lameness and impede normal movement.



- Transport animals with non-limb fractures (i.e. tail or jaw) directly to slaughter with special provisions.
 - Load in small compartment, with ample bedding and either individually or with one quiet animal.





- Do not transport an animal with limb or spine fractures (i.e. pelvis, hip, skull), except under the order of a veterinarian.
- Never lift or drag a conscious animal.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Emergency on farm slaughter (for limb and spine fractures), with appropriate certification. This is not an option for animals over 30 months of age.
- ✓ Euthanize animals with limb or spine fractures on farm.

CANCER EYE

Cancer eye (ocular squamous cell carcinoma) is the most common type of cancer in cattle and is characterized by a pink, fleshy growth on the eyeball, eyelids and/or third eyelid. Untreated cancer eye progresses inwardly, invading deeper tissues behind the eye.

The early stages of cancer eye are characterized by a lesion or lesions affecting the eye that are confined to the orbit region of the eye; the eye is still intact.

Advanced stages of the disease are characterized by the lesion obliterating the eye and the affected area extends outside the orbit region of the eye.



- Transport animals affected by early stages of the condition directly to slaughter as soon as possible.



- Do not load or transport animals that have advanced stages of the condition.

Producer Options: Detect. Treat. Cull. Euthanize

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize animals on farm with advanced stages.
- ✓ Consult veterinarian if unsure if condition is pink eye or cancer eye.
- ✓ Consider culling animals with early symptoms.

CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

Congestive heart failure, a common heart disorder, appears as fluid (edema) builds up in the jowls, neck and brisket. Affected animals are reluctant to move. It is not treatable.



- Do not load or transport the affected animal.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize affected animal.

CUTS AND WOUNDS WITH ASSOCIATED PROFUSE BLEEDING

Puncture wounds or cuts resulting in excessive bleeding and/or lameness require attention. It is key to observe animals daily to detect wounds and cuts. Assess the severity of the injury and treat accordingly.



- Do not load or transport animals with these conditions.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Treat the wound(s).
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize affected animals that cannot be treated or transported.

DISPLACED ABOMASUM

A displaced abomasum (twisted stomach) is a repositioning of the fourth stomach from its normal position on the bottom of the abdomen to the upper left side in most cases. It occurs most frequently in high-producing, heavily fed dairy cattle. One of the chief symptoms is a sudden or gradual decrease in appetite. Other symptoms include scanty bowel movements, soft and discoloured with some occasional diarrhea.



- Transport animal directly to slaughter with special provisions in separate compartment with adequate bedding.
- Transport only if animal is not showing signs of weakness, dehydration or pain (i.e. grinding teeth, arched back).

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Preventable by dietary adjustment.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Consult veterinarian to distinguish from ketosis.
- ✓ Treatable by surgery.

EXHAUSTION OR DEHYDRATION

This would include animals that appear to be exhausted and in a physically depressed state.



- Do not transport animals in this condition.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Delay transportation until animal is rested and/or rehydrated.

FEVER

Fever is a symptom of an infectious disease. A fever higher than 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit or 39.1 degrees Celsius for three days or more is a sign of a serious health problem.



- Do not load or transport animals with a fever, except for veterinary treatment.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize on farm if not responding to treatment.

LACTATING CATTLE

Lactating dairy cows should be properly dried off and their udders dried up in advance of the shipping date to reduce discomfort and additional health problems. **Extended journeys for lactating animals is a distinct welfare concern when they cannot be milked causing them extreme discomfort.**



- Ship lactating dairy cows and cows not conditioned for transport directly to slaughter as soon as possible.



- Do not ship heavy lactating dairy cows to an auction yard for further sale or transport to another auction.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Dry off heavy lactating cows destined for slaughter before shipping to auction.

MASTITIS AND NECROTIC UDDER

Mastitis is an inflammation of the udder caused by a bacterial infection that can cause illness resulting in fever, dehydration, depression and even death. The infection is recognizable when the infected quarter is swollen and/or hot to touch and the cow has a rapid pulse and loss of appetite.

Necrotic udder or udder sores are lesions that appear on the udder of the animal. This illness if left untreated can result in fever and death. Animals with advanced cases of this ailment are condemned at the auction yard and processing facility.



- Do not transport animals with mastitis or necrotic udder. Reassess animals once they have been treated and withdrawal times have been met.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Ensure that milking equipment is clean and cows have clean bedding.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Cull cows with incurable cases and cows that have chronic mastitis problems.
- ✓ Inspect udder for signs of sores and mastitis daily.

LUMPY JAW

Bacteria can invade wounds in the mouth and gums and localizes in the upper or lower jaw resulting in a hard boney lump. Advanced cases can interfere with an animal's ability to eat.



- Transport affected animal (early stages, body condition score greater than 2) directly to slaughter with ample bedding.



- Do not load or transport animals that have advanced stages (body condition score of less than 1 and/or showing signs of weakness or dehydration).

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize (advanced stages) or on farm emergency slaughter if animal is fit for human consumption and under 30 months.

NERVOUS DISORDERS OR SUSPECTED POISONING

Animals which have been poisoned or are suffering from a nervous disorder will be stumbling, hyper excited, staggering, bawling and can be unresponsive to treatment. Animals may lie with neck fully extended backwards and one or more legs extended.



Lead poisoning, ketosis, polioencephalomalacia and hypomagnesaemia (grass tetany) are treatable diseases.

Animals that are unresponsive to treatments may have a contagious reportable disease, such as rabies. If a reportable disease is suspected, producers **must** notify the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.



- Do not load or transport animals that have been poisoned or are suffering from a nervous disorder.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency if it's a reportable disease (i.e. rabies).
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize affected animals.

PNEUMONIA (WITHOUT FEVER)

Animals with signs of laboured breathing may have pneumonia. The animal's tongue may be out and it may have foam around its mouth. An animal with respiratory disease can become very sick if transported and advanced cases could die.



- Delay transportation of animals and treat for condition.
- Transport animals directly to slaughter (early stages only) with special provisions (in separate compartment).

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Emergency on farm slaughter if animal is under the age of 30 months and fit for human consumption.
- ✓ Euthanize affected animals with advanced stages of the disease.

PREGNANCY/CALVING

It is illegal to load or transport any animal that is likely to give birth during the journey. Cows in later stages of pregnancy should be evaluated to determine if they can withstand the stress of the journey which can cause the onset of labour or abortion.

Delay transportation if weakness or exhaustion is present or the animal is not able to stand for long periods of time or the animal has undergone surgery.



- Transport cows that have calved within 48 hours directly to slaughter only if the animal does not show signs of weakness or exhaustion.



- Do not transport any animals that are likely to give birth during the intended journey.
- Do not transport calves under one week of age.

PROLAPSE

A prolapse is the protrusion of an organ or part of an organ from its normal position outside the body due to increased pressure in the abdominal cavity.

Uterine Prolapse

A uterine prolapse usually occurs right after calving and appears as a large, elongated mass, deep red in colour, covered with "buttons" on which the placenta was attached. A uterine prolapse is life threatening and is a veterinary emergency.



- Do not load or transport an animal with a uterine prolapse.

Rectal or Vaginal Prolapse

Vaginal prolapses generally occur before calving. They appear to be the size of a large grapefruit or volleyball. The bladder can also become involved causing the animal to have difficulty urinating.

Rectal prolapses can occur during calving due to excessive straining. Steers can also be affected with rectal prolapses.

These are more common in older cows, but can also occur in first calf heifers.



- Transport direct to slaughter as soon as possible.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Routinely observe and monitor all cows prior to and after calving.
- ✓ Cull cows with pre-calving and/or prolapses.
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Treat prolapses promptly to avoid infection.
- ✓ Euthanize cows with untreatable cases.

PERITONITIS AND HARDWARE DISEASE

Diffuse peritonitis is an infection of the abdominal cavity (peritoneum). The animal may show signs of shock and pain, smell rotten, appear thin, distressed and tired, refuse to remain standing and may have fluid in the belly.

Hardware disease is a treatable local peritonitis between the reticulum and the diaphragm. It is caused by a sharp object that pierces the stomach wall. Affected animals have poor appetites and are reluctant to move.

Animals exhibiting early stages of the disease show no signs of pain, shock and refuse to remain standing. Animals showing signs of advanced stages of the disease have a fever (>102.5°F or 39.1°C) and show signs of pain.



- Transport animals with early stages of hardware disease direct to slaughter.



- Do not transport animals with advanced stages of hardware disease.
- Do not transport animals with peritonitis.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize animals with advanced stages of peritonitis and hardware disease.

URINARY TRACT AND PENIS INJURIES

Urinary tract injuries, commonly known as water belly, can result from a ruptured bladder. These animals are toxic and will be condemned at the processing facility.

Bulls and steers may suffer from a rupturing of the blood vessels in the penis causing severe bruising and swelling or a broken penis. The animal may be in pain or shock. The animal may wring the tail, grind its teeth, get up and lie back down and kick at its stomach.



- Transport animals with penis injuries directly to slaughter with special provisions in separate compartment.



- Do not transport animals with urinary tract injuries.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize animals with urinary tract injuries and advanced cases of penis injuries.

EXTREMELY THIN (EMACIATION)

Emaciated animals are extremely thin or weak animals with a body condition score (BCS) of 1 or less and should not be loaded for transport if they are not deemed fit to withstand the journey.

Body condition is an indication of the body reserves carried by the animal. Animals may be thin due to early lactation, sickness, poor quality or restricted feed intake. Emaciation can be a symptom of other diseases or conditions. Extremely thin animals are often condemned at the abattoir.

The ideal BCS for transporting animals is greater than 2. Very thin animals (BCS<2) are more likely to be injured or suffer bruising during transport, and have a greater likelihood of becoming “downers”. For more information on Body Condition Scoring, see pages 17.



- Do not load or transport animals with a body condition score of 1 or less.

Producer Actions:

- ✓ Observe animals regularly to assess body condition.
- ✓ Monitor closely for early signs of weight loss.
- ✓ Condition cows from tie stall for a period of time to prepare them for transport (i.e. place cows in a box stall for several days of exercise).
- ✓ Provide prompt medical care in consultation with your veterinarian.
- ✓ Euthanize emaciated animals.

BODY CONDITION SCORING FOR DAIRY CATTLE

Body condition scoring (BCS) is a tool for determining if an animal is too thin, too fat or in ideal condition. Ideal BCS is a range and will vary depending upon the stage of lactation. Cows should not lose more than 1 BCS at any time.



BCS 1:

- SHORT RIBS:**
- Loin prominent, shelf-like appearance
 - Obvious scalloping over top and ends

- BACKBONE:**
- Vertebrae prominent in chine, loin and rump area
 - Individual bones easily visible
- HOOK AND PIN BONES:**
- Sharply defined, very angular in appearance
 - No discernable fat pad

- TAIL HEAD:**
- Sunken and hollow on either side of tail head with obvious folds of skin; Vulva prominent
 - Ligaments connecting pin bones to spine are sharply defined.

BCS 2:

- SHORT RIBS:**
- Ends not as prominent as BCS 1
 - Edges have slight fat cover, and slightly more rounded appearance

- BACKBONE:**
- Overhanging shelf effect less apparent
 - Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump area less visually distinct
- HOOK AND PIN BONES:**
- Bones still prominent, angular
 - No fat pad palpable

- TAIL HEAD:**
- Both sides of the tail head are sunken and hollow
 - Sharply defined ligaments connecting pin bones to spine

BCS 3:

- SHORT RIBS:**
- Ribs appear smooth without noticeable scalloping
 - Overhanging shelf effect much less apparent

- BACKBONE:**
- Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump area appear rounded
 - Backbone visible, but individual vertebrae not distinct
- HOOK AND PIN BONES:**
- Visible, but smooth, with rounded appearance
 - Fat pad palpable

- TAIL HEAD:**
- Both sides of tail head somewhat hollow, but skin folds not distinct
 - Ligaments connecting pin bones to spine are rounded in appearance

BCS 4:

- SHORT RIBS:**
- Individual rib ends not visible
 - Overhanging shelf effect slight, barely visible

- BACKBONE:**
- Vertebrae in chine rounded, smooth
 - Loin and rump areas appear flat
- HOOK AND PIN BONES:**
- Rounded, with obvious fat covering

- TAIL HEAD:**
- Sides of tail head not hollow, no skin folds

BCS 5:

- SHORT RIBS:**
- Ends can't be seen
 - No overhanging shelf effect
- BACKBONE:**
- Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump not visible

- HOOK AND PIN BONES:**
- Very round, buried (almost disappearing) in fat tissue

- TAIL HEAD:**
- Hollow filled in
 - Areas on both sides of tail head buried in fat tissue

Source: *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle*, 2009.
 For more information on Body Condition Scoring for Dairy Cattle, see OFAC's *Too Fat, Too Thin or Just Right* brochure at www.ofac.org.
 For more information on Body Scoring for beef cattle see "What's the Score? Body Condition Scoring for Livestock" CD-ROM, Alberta Agriculture. Order online at www.agric.gov.ab.ca

PAIN IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT

PAIN:

An unpleasant sensation occurring in varying degrees of severity as a result of injury or disease. Signs of pain and suffering may include one or more of the following:

- Unwillingness to rise to its feet
- Restlessness, lying down and getting up frequently
- Unwillingness to walk
- Reluctant to put a leg on the ground and bear weight
- Mouth open, breathing fast
- Arched back and abdomen tucked up
- Head down, ears drooping
- Unwilling to eat or drink
- Standing separate from group, not following group
- No response when touched or prodded

PAIN MANAGEMENT

The use of pain medications in treating sick or injured cattle has been underutilized on many farms in the past. Cattle suffering from ailments such as lameness or mastitis would benefit if the pain associated with the condition could be reduced. Recent studies have shown that reducing pain in sick animals decreases healing time and improves appetite. Some pain medications (analgesics) also decrease fever and inflammation (are anti-inflammatory) and thus may improve outcomes through other pathways as well.

Remember that not all pain or anti-inflammatory medications are equal. Similar to the use of an ineffective antibiotic, if a pain medication is not producing the desired effect, you should consult with your veterinarian regarding an alternative product or action.

Producers are encouraged to discuss pain management options with their veterinarian.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

Farmers and anyone who works with farm animals have a legal responsibility to do so in accordance with industry standards (i.e. Code of Practice) and all relevant laws.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT

Inspectors and Agents appointed under the OSPCA Act have the authority of police officers when enforcing laws pertaining to the welfare of animals. The OSPCA has had this authority since the Act's inception in 1919.

Distress – Orders and removals

- An Inspector or Agent of the Ontario SPCA may order the owner or custodian to take such action as may be necessary to relieve the animal of its distress, or have the animal examined and treated by a veterinarian at the expense of the owner or custodian.
- An Inspector or Agent of the Ontario SPCA may remove an animal from the building or place where it is and transport it to a location where the animal may be provided with food, care or treatment to relieve its distress.
 - *Distress* means that an animal is in need of proper care, water, food or shelter or being injured, sick or in pain, suffering or being abused, subject to undue or unnecessary hardship, privation or neglect.

Immediate distress – Entry without warrant

- Where an Inspector or Agent of the Ontario SPCA has reasonable grounds to believe that an animal is in immediate distress, he or she may enter, without warrant, any premises, building or place other than a dwelling either alone or accompanied by one or more veterinarians or other persons as he or she considers advisable.
 - *Immediate* distress means there is distress that requires immediate intervention in order to alleviate suffering or to preserve life.

Destruction of an animal

- An Inspector or Agent of the Ontario SPCA may destroy an animal: with the consent of the owner, or if a veterinarian has examined the animal and has advised the Inspector or Agent in writing that, in his or her opinion, it is the most humane course of action.

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ACT ONTARIO REGULATION 105/09

Ontario's *Disposal of Deadstock Regulation (O.Reg 105/09)* requires that every person that has care of or control over a fallen animal has the obligation to promptly destroy the animal in a humane manner or make arrangements for it to be promptly and humanely destroyed.

The regulation also prohibits the movement of a fallen animal before it has been killed.

The regulation applies to horses, donkeys, ponies, pigs, alpaca, cattle, bison, deer, elk, goats, llamas, sheep, yaks, poultry, ratites and rabbits.

The regulation defines "fallen animal" as an animal that has been disabled by disease, emaciation or another condition that is likely to cause its death.

This regulation is enforced by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

LIVESTOCK COMMUNITY SALES ACT

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) have the responsibility for monitoring the health and welfare of livestock at auctions in Ontario under the authority of the Livestock Community Sales Act. Animals found that are diseased, injured, or otherwise compromised at an auction can be ordered by OMAFRA inspectors to be:

- Euthanized; or
- Sent directly for slaughter; or
- Marked and sold for slaughter only; or
- Sold with a ring announcement of condition; or
- Ordered returned to the consignor for treatment.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Health of Animals Act

Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII Transportation of Animals

It is a violation to:

- Transport a sick or injured animal where undue suffering will result, or when the animal is liable to give birth.
- Continue to transport an animal that is injured, becomes ill, or is otherwise unfit to travel.
- Load or unload animals in a way that would cause injury or undue suffering.
- Crowd animals to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering.
- Transport animals if injury or suffering is likely to be caused by inadequate construction of the vehicle, insecure fittings, and undue exposure to the weather or inadequate ventilation.
- Use ramps, gangplanks or chutes that are inadequately constructed or maintained and would be likely to cause injury or undue suffering to the animals.
- Confine monogastric animals, such as horses or pigs, in a motor vehicle for longer than 36 hours, unless the animals are fed, watered and rested on a vehicle that is suitably equipped for the purpose. Ruminants may not be confined in a transport vehicle without food, water or rest for more than 48 hours, unless final destination can be reached within 52 hours.
- Transport young calves (not on grain/hay diets) longer than 18 hours without suitable food and water.
- Load an animal for a trip of more than 24 hours without first providing food and water within 5 hours before loading.

You must:

- Segregate animals of different species, of substantially different weights and ages, or if incompatible by nature.
- Allow animals to stand in a natural position.
- Provide drainage and absorption of urine.
- Either spread sand or have the vehicle fitted with safe footholds in addition to adequate bedding.
- Ensure that animals unloaded for feed, water and rest remain at least 5 hours, and longer, if necessary, for all of the animals to have access to feed and water.

Criminal Code of Canada

The Criminal Code states that you are guilty of an offence if you:

- Fail to exercise reasonable care or supervision of an animal thereby causing it pain, suffering, damage or injury.
- Wilfully cause or allow unnecessary pain, suffering, or injury to an animal.
- By wilful neglect cause injury to animals while they are being transported.
- Abandon an animal or fail to provide it with enough suitable food, water, shelter and care.

It is an offence to fail to exercise reasonable care or supervision thereby causing an animal pain during transport.

DEFINITIONS

ANIMAL WELFARE:

Animals must be thriving and free from disease, injury and malnutrition. Welfare implies freedom from suffering in the sense of prolonged pain, fear, distress, discomfort, hunger, thirst and other negative experiences. Short-term negative states, such as short-term pain, hunger and anxiety, are virtually inevitable in an animal's life, and the difference between acceptable and unacceptable standards will remain a source of debate.

ANIMAL AT RISK OR COMPROMISED ANIMAL:

An animal with reduced capacity to withstand the stress of living or transportation due to injury, fatigue, infirmity, poor health, distress, very young or old age, impending birth or any other cause.

DISTRESS:

Distress may include: lack of food, water and shelter, lack of proper care of sick or injured animals, pain or suffering due to abuse or unnecessary hardship, deprivation or neglect.

EUTHANASIA:

A humane acceptable method of killing an animal with minimal fear or anxiety. The chosen method must be reliable, reproducible, irreversible, simple, safe and rapid. Refer to OMAFRA infosheet "*On-farm Euthanasia of Cattle and Calves*" for more details.

SALVAGEABLE ANIMAL:

Animal must be or exceed the following: be free of drugs, vaccines and chemical residues; have a body temperature not above 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit; have a body condition score of 2 or higher and be able to walk under its own power.

SUFFERING:

An unpleasant physical state associated with more-than-minimal pain or distress.

UNFIT:

An animal that is sick, injured, disabled or fatigued, is unfit and cannot be moved without avoidable suffering. This animal must not be loaded for transport.

CONTACTS

Ontario Farm Animal Council
(519) 837-1326
www.ofac.org
www.livestockwelfare.com

Ontario Society for the Prevention of
Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA)
1-888-668-7722
www.ontariospca.ca

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
1-800-442-2342
www.inspection.gc.ca

Ontario Veterinary Medical Association
1-800-670-1702
www.ovma.org

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and
Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
1-877-424-1300
www.omafr.gov.on.ca

The Ontario Farm Animal Council represents Ontario's 40,000 livestock and poultry farmers and associated businesses on issues in animal agriculture.



www.ofac.org

