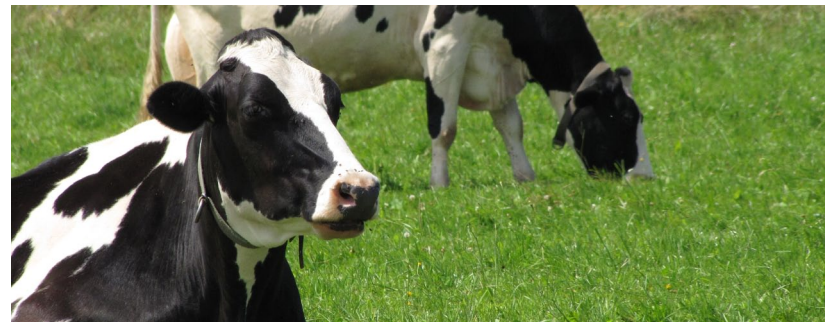
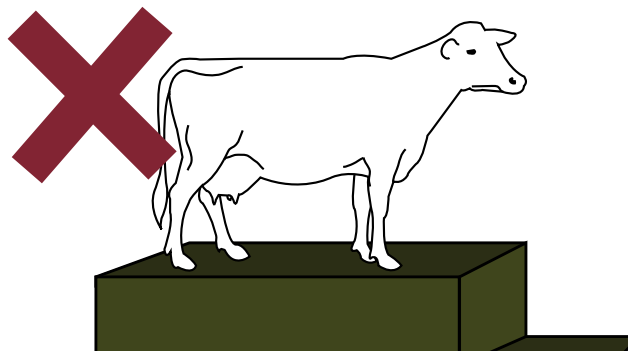


Get off on the *right* foot

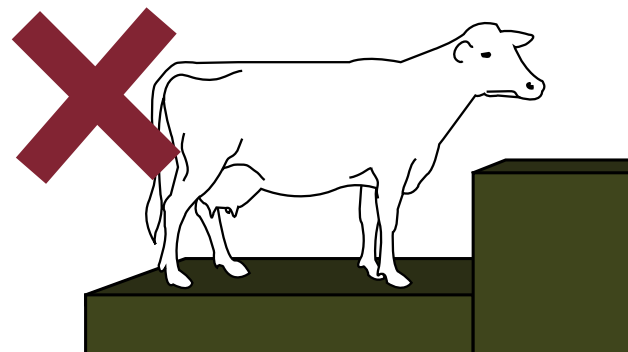
Pick the right ramp



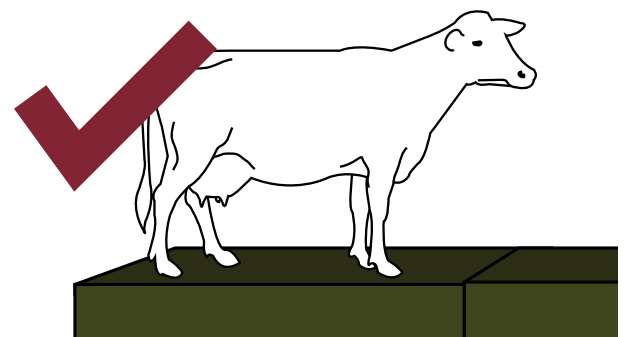
Loading and unloading of cattle should be done safely to avoid costly injuries. A dramatic step-up or step-down can lead to an injured animal that cannot complete the journey.



- Transportation is stressful for cattle. The noise and strange environment at the abattoir, sale or new farm will make most cattle reluctant to leave the safety of the trailer.
- Weak animals will be less able to cope with a step up or down, especially if the footing is slippery.
- Cattle are most comfortable stepping down 3 to 7 inches (7-17 cm).



- Forcing cattle to step-up to the dock is one reason why cattle will balk during unloading.
- Stepping up from the trailer to the dock results in less headroom through the door of the trailer that doesn't happen when animals step down. This can result in scraping along the spine.
- Cattle are most comfortable stepping up 3 to 7 inches (7-17 cm).



- When unloading, the best dock surface is as close to level with the vehicle floor as possible.
- There should be ramps available that will accommodate your truck or trailer.
- It is your responsibility to pick the ramp which fits your truck or trailer best.

Improving Cattle Comfort during Loading Transport & Unloading

- Properly designed loading facilities on-farm will start the journey off on the right foot. Cattle move more easily through curved chutes. Floors should be non-slip. Remove distractions to reduce balking.
- Start with a clean truck/trailer in good repair, with a ventilation system that can be adjusted to keep animals comfortable and free from drafts.
- Supply appropriate amounts of bedding. Consider weather and wind chill (see below). Sand or other appropriate material should be used in trucks where animals slip and fall.
- Mind the gap - There should be no gap between the truck/trailer and loading/unloading facility.
- Load cattle quietly and calmly and limit the use of electric prods.
- Load only the number of animals that can be comfortably loaded – consider size of cattle (smaller animals should be segregated) and amount of floor space available. See stocking density guidelines in the Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals, Transportation.
- Only load healthy cattle fit to withstand the journey. Follow the guidelines in the “Should this animal be loaded?” decision chart for transporting cattle.
- Cattle are affected by temperature and wind chill – cold wind passing over an animal draws heat away from it much more quickly than still air at the same temperature. During transit, cattle may not be able to move on a trailer to escape drafts.
- Wind chill effects for cattle are shown below. These figures assume a dry, clean hair coat. If the animal is wet, consider the data to be an underestimation of the wind effect.
- Wind Chill Effects for Cattle with Winter Coats (source: OMAFRA Factsheet – Cold Stress in Cows)

Wind speed (kph)	Air temperature (degrees Celsius)									
0	-18	-15	-12	-9	-7	-4	-1	2	4	
8	-21	-18	-16	-13	-11	-8	-5	-2	1	
16	-24	-21	-18	-16	-13	-11	-8	-5	-2	
24	-26	-23	-21	-18	-16	-13	-10	-7	-4	
32	-29	-26	-23	-21	-18	-16	-13	-10	-7	

Developed by the Ontario Humane Transport Working Groups. Special thanks for Gerrit Reitveld and Penny Lawlis. With thanks for partial funding from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

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