

## LOADING & TRANSPORTING CATTLE

### 1. PURPOSE

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- To ensure that animals are fit to be loaded, transported and unloaded.
- To ensure that the cow(s) are clear of all medications, chemical residues or broken needles.

### 2. RESPONSIBILITY

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- 2.1 Trained and qualified personnel
- 2.2 Herd Manager
- 2.3 Veterinarian

### 3. MATERIALS

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- 3.1 Halter
- 3.2 Sale barn "Encan" receipt book
- 3.3 Registration paper
- 3.4 Treatment Logbook
- 3.5 Feeding Chart
- 3.6 Grit
- 3.7 Treatment records and DSA software

### 4. GENERAL

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- 4.1 All those involved with the activities of loading, unloading and transporting, either directly or indirectly, have the responsibility to assess animals for fitness, then select, prepare and load only animals that are fit for the intended journey and must be familiar with – and abide by - [Canada's transport of animals regulations](#) and the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) [Code of Practice for Dairy Cattle](#).
- 4.2 Only animals that are fit to handle transport may be loaded. If you are not sure, refer to the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) [Code of Practice for Dairy Cattle](#) or seek the advice of a veterinarian before deciding to load an animal.
  - 4.2.1 Fit animals do not show signs of illness or poor health.
  - 4.2.2 UNFIT animals MUST NOT be transported except to receive veterinary care on the advice of a veterinarian.
  - 4.2.3 COMPROMISED animals should be transported only with special provisions.
  - 4.2.4 Refer to Appendix [DC-A-2A: The decision tree for Transporting Cattle](#).
- 4.3 Animal handling should be quiet, patient, efficient, safe, low stress and with little or no use of aversive tools such as; whips, goads, prods or similar devices.
- 4.4 The farm has limited space for cattle; therefore, some are eliminated from the herd.

- 4.4.1 Bull calves and crossbred or beef heifer calves are sent to the market and will be raised for veal.
- 4.4.2 Cows and heifers can either be sold to other dairy producers or be sent to an abattoir. The decision to cull is based on production, fertility, health and conformation. The Farm Manager decides on the marketing stream of the cows and heifers.
- 4.4.3 Document the decision/ reason to ship the animal in the logbook/ DSA.

## 5. PROCEDURES

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### 5.1 ASSESSMENT:

5.1.1 Assess if cattle are fit to travel.

5.1.1.1 Refer to:

- Appendix [DC-A-2A: The decision tree for Transporting Cattle](#).
- SOP [DC-301: Body Condition Scoring](#)
- SOP [DC-302: Lameness Scoring Guide](#)

#### \* NOTE

If you assess an animal and find that it is showing 2 conditions, where one is on the list of "unfit" conditions list, and the other is on the list defined as "compromised", the more severe condition takes precedence and the animal is to be classified as unfit.

5.1.1.2 If the health of an animal is questionable, consult with the veterinarian.

5.1.1.3 Unfit animals may NOT be loaded, confined or transported except on the advice of a veterinarian, and then only if:

- a. it is individually loaded and unloaded without having to negotiate any ramps inside the conveyance.
- b. it is isolated during confinement and transport.
- c. measures are taken to prevent the animal's unnecessary suffering, injury or death during loading, confinement, transport and unloading; and
- d. a veterinarian recommends that the animal be transported to receive veterinary care.
- e. Refer to Section 139 (1) of [Canada's Health of Animals Act](#).

5.1.1.4 Compromised animals may NOT be loaded, confined, transported or unloaded unless:

- a. it is isolated.
- b. it is individually loaded and unloaded without having to negotiate any ramps inside the conveyance.
- c. measures are taken that are necessary to prevent the animal's suffering, injury or death during loading, confinement, transport and unloading; and
- d. it is transported directly to the nearest place, other than an assembly centre, where it can receive care or be humanely killed.
- e. The maximum time a compromised animal can be without feed, safe water and rest is 12 hours.
- f. Refer to Section 140 (1) of [Canada's Health of Animals Act](#).

5.1.2 Ensure all drug withdrawals for milk and meat have been attained by checking the animal's treatment records.

5.1.3 Any broken needle should be recorded & should include the location of the injection site. If the veterinarian is unable to remove the needle:

- 5.1.3.1 Complete record 11 for ProAction
- 5.1.3.2 Keep one copy in the ProAction binder and attach a second copy to the animal's registration paper.
- 5.1.3.3 Provide a copy of this form to the transporter when the animal is shipped.

## 5.2 **Arrange for transport at least 1 week prior to the shipping date:**

- 5.2.1 Arrangements for transportation are made only upon instruction by a farm technician.
- 5.2.2 Call the transporter to arrange for the transport, providing the following information:
  - 5.2.2.1 Number of cattle to be shipped.
  - 5.2.2.2 Type of cattle
  - 5.2.2.3 Time and point of loading.
  - 5.2.2.4 Destination
- 5.2.3 New transporters:
  - 5.2.3.1 Request and contact references to confirm that the transporter is familiar with cattle behavior and quiet handling techniques.
  - 5.2.3.2 Request for the assessment of the transport vehicle and trailer.
- 5.2.4 Discuss and reach agreement with the transporter on the preparation and loading arrangements. Refer to Sections 5.3 and 5.4.

## 5.3 **Prepare cattle for transport:**

- 5.3.1 All staff will be made aware of the date and time of pick-up.
- 5.3.2 Ensure that cattle have access to feed and water prior to loading. Refer to age-specific sections below for additional information.

## 5.4 **Loading:**

- 5.4.1 Truck driver must follow the biosecurity Guidelines of the farm (SOP: [DC-101 Biosecurity Cattle Complex](#))
- 5.4.2 The driver must don protective footwear upon entering the barn.
- 5.4.3 Ensure loading route is safe and free of any objects that could distract, injure, or startle the animal.
- 5.4.4 Use loading and unloading ramps and equipment that can bear the weight of the animals, equipped with adequate side rails.
- 5.4.5 Sprinkle grit on the floor leading to the trailer to prevent cow from slipping, falling and injury. and cover metal gutter grates with rubber mats.
- 5.4.6 Avoid the use of electric prods (only use in extreme situations when animal or human safety is at risk)
- 5.4.7 CALVES

### **\* NOTE**

Calves must be at least 9 days old and have a dry umbilical cord.

- 5.4.7.1 Always confirm the sex (look for presence of testicles) and breed to avoid shipping a female dairy calf by mistake!
- 5.4.7.2 Calves shipped in winter should have coats removed several days prior to shipping date to habituate calves to a cooler climate.
- 5.4.7.3 Feed unweaned calves according to SOP [DC-505 Calf Care: Feeding](#) prior to loading,.
- 5.4.7.4 Guide the calf to walk to the door closest to the truck trailer. Calves do not require a halter. Refer to SOP [DC-212: Handling and Moving Cattle](#).
- 5.4.7.5 Fill out the sale barn receipt book with farm name and address, date, and calf tag number. A copy is kept for our records. Other copies are for transporter and for sale barn.
- 5.4.7.6 Update the feeding chart in the necropsy room by removing the calf name/ID. Readjust the quantity of milk to prepare.

**\* NOTE**

Calves must be at least 9 days old and healthy before shipping. \*\* Calves under 9 days of age must only be transported with special provisions and directly to their final destination (not through an auction or assembly yard)

5.4.8 HEIFERS

- 5.4.8.1 Locate the animal to be shipped. If in the heifer barn, lock head locks to ensure all the pen-mates are restrained.
  - 5.4.8.2 Using the transporter's halter, halter heifer.
  - 5.4.8.3 Unlock her head and lead her out of the pen.
  - 5.4.8.4 Walk heifer to door closest to trailer.
  - 5.4.8.5 Hand over the halter to the transporter who will lead her into the trailer. It may be necessary to assist by pushing from behind.
  - 5.4.8.6 Fill out the sale barn receipt book with farm name and address, date and heifer tag number. A copy is kept for farm records. Other copies are for transporter and for sale barn.
  - 5.4.8.7 Return to heifer barn and unlock pen-mates.
- 5.4.9 Remove registration paper from "Heifer" binder. The Herd Manager will note the reason for her departure on the top and file the registration paper in the cull binder. In the case of sale to another farm, a copy of will be made and kept in our records and the original will be sent to the breed association.

**\* NOTE**

Lactating animals that cannot be milked to prevent engorgement must reach a destination where they can be milked or slaughtered before becoming engorged.

Animals with mammary engorgement will be considered unfit. Refer to SOP DC-350 High Lactation Cows for Auction

#### 5.4.10 COWS

- 5.4.10.1 Locate the cow in the barn.
- 5.4.10.2 Using the transporter's halter, Halter the cow, detach the tail tie, and remove any leg bands and the collar.
- 5.4.10.3 Lead the cow to the trailer. Refer to SOP DC-202: Handling and Moving Cattle.
- 5.4.10.4 Hand over the halter to the transporter who will lead her into the trailer. It may be necessary to assist by pushing from behind.
- 5.4.10.5 Fill out the sale barn receipt book with the farm name and address, date, and heifer tag number. A copy is kept for farm records. Other copies are for the transporter and for the sale barn.
- 5.4.10.6 Remove registration paper from the "Cow" binder. The Dairy Manager will note the reason for her departure on the top and file the registration paper in the cull binder. In the case of sale to another farm, a copy will be made and kept in our records and the original will be sent to the breed association.
- 5.4.10.7 Remove the name card from the stall and hang the collar in the electric room across the milk house.

#### 5.5 Post loading:

- 5.5.1 Fill out the "Eliminations/Achats" (date, identification number and reason for shipping) section of the logbook in the dairy office.
- 5.5.2 Calves/ cows being shipped for meat: place their registration papers in the "Reforme" binder.
- 5.5.3 Calves/ Cows being sold at auction or to a buyer: Make photocopies of the Registration papers. The new owner takes the original and the copies are placed in the "Reforme" folder along with all other papers from her sleeve e.g. breeding slips, production records, etc.
- 5.5.4 Remit individual computer cow file as well as broken needle forms to trucker along with registration papers.
- 5.5.5 Ensure that all animals to be transported must be registered with the ATQ (Agri-Traçabilité Québec)

## 6. REFERENCES

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Government of Canada. Transporting unfit or compromised animals. Retrieved from: <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/humane-transport/transporting-unfit-or-compromised-animals/eng/1582045810428/1582045810850>

National Farm Animal Care Council. Code of Practice: Dairy Cattle. 2023. <https://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle>

Regulations Amending the Health of Animals Regulations: SOR/2019-38. Canada Gazette, Part II, Volume 153, Number 4. HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT P.C. 2019-59 January 31, 2019. <https://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2019/2019-02-20/html/sor-dors38-eng.html>

## Document Status and Revision History

DATE	STATUS
3-Aug-2023	Version 01: MacDonald Campus FACC approved