

Transportation

The movement of cattle to and from farms, ranches, feedlots, and marketing facilities is an important aspect of beef and dairy cattle production. When transporting cattle, avoid undue stress caused by overcrowding, excess time in



transit, or improper handling during loading and unloading. In addition to promoting safety and animal welfare, proper handling while sorting, loading, and transporting also contributes to beef quality and producer profitability by reducing defects from bruising, injury, or stress.

Transportation Quality Assurance Guidelines

Cattle will perform better and yield higher quality beef when their exposure to stress is limited by careful handling and transportation.

Cattle transporters have many factors to think about before making a haul, including sanitation protocols. Preparation of the vehicle and the cattle being transported are important considerations. Pre-transit planning will help drivers provide quality service that benefits

both consumers and the cattle being hauled. Planning on the behalf of producers will help them have healthier cattle delivered to the destination point.

Anyone transporting cattle should observe the following practices.

Driver Attitude and Professionalism

- Act responsibly, showing concern for animal welfare.
- Use proper tone of voice and controlled emotions.

Animal Handling Procedures

- Make safety a primary concern.
- Move animals in small groups and separate them by size or gender prior to shipping. If possible, load different groups into separate compartments of the truck or trailer.
- Use proper sorting tools to move animals, such as brooms or paddles. Use electric shockers only under extreme conditions. • Eliminate aggressive handling. Move cattle as quietly and patiently as possible to prevent stress or injury during loading and unloading.
- Work with the natural instincts of cattle—understanding of flight zone and point of balance (See Chapter 6).



Transit Precautions and Animal Evaluation

- Take precautions for extreme weather conditions—provide appropriate ventilation and/or protection.
- Schedule loading and unloading times to minimize the amount of time animals spend in the trailer.
- During long-haul transit, stop occasionally to ensure cattle are well dispersed and still standing, and observe

appropriate guidelines and regulations for long-haul transit.

- Evaluate animals for illness and severe lameness prior to loading and during long-haul transit.
- Do not load animals that should not be transported (i.e., borderline non-ambulatory/downer animals).
- Check for signs of stress and adjust stocking density to accommodate tired or stressed animals.
- Plan delivery schedules to minimize the number of stops made, and follow the schedule closely.
- To prevent livestock from falling, avoid sudden starts/stops and sharp turns.
- Have an emergency response plan of action for events (i.e., truck/trailer rollover, plant shutdowns).

Average Weight (lb)	Head per Running Foot of Truck (77-in width)
200	2.2
300	1.6
400	1.2
600	0.9
800	0.7
1,000	0.6
1,200	0.5
1,400	0.4

Equipment Condition

- Be sure equipment is in good running order.
- Use properly designed ramps/chutes.
- Consider stocking density and space requirements to avoid overcrowding
- Use trailer dividers to limit animals to each section. (Tables 7-1 and 7-2 show proper loading densities for cattle trailers.)
- Avoid slippery conditions by keeping floors clean and slip resistant.
- Ensure no sharp edges on loading chutes or trailer, and avoid shiny objects in the chute path/trailer, which may scare cattle from moving onto the trailer.
- Adhere to both federal and state weight limits and guidelines.
- Make sure drop gate is securely latched after trailer is loaded.

Recommended maximum number of head for trailers of different lengths [*]								
Trailer size	Cattle weight, Lbs							
	400	600	800	1000	1200	1400	1600	
	Number of head							
16 ft x 6 ft	18	12	9	7	6	5	4	< 7115
18 ft x 6 ft	20	13	10	8	7	6	5	< 8000
20 ft x 6 ft	22	15	11	9	7	6	5	< 8889
20 ft x 7 ft	26	17	13	10	9	7	6	< 10370
24 ft x 6 ft	27	18	13	11	9	8	7	< 10667
24 ft x 7 ft	31	21	16	12	10	9	8	< 12445
32 ft x 7 ft	41	28	21	17	14	12	10	< 16593

* The number of head loaded during hot conditions should be reduced
 **The maximum weight of cattle for each trailer size with these calculations. Do not exceed the Gross Vehicle Rating for your truck and stock trailer.

Courtesy of Dr. Jim Turner, North Carolina State University

Biosecurity Practices

- Thoroughly clean and wash truck/trailer with hot water after unloading and prior to loading again. (Hot water will remove 90 percent of pathogens.)
- Disinfect regularly.
- Have a written protocol for trailer sanitation.
- Use clean bedding on trailer and chute area.
- Utilize disposable coveralls, boots, and gloves to prevent possible disease cross-contamination.
- Deny entrance of animals exhibiting symptoms of disease onto trailer.



Additional Resources

- National Cattlemen's Beef Association Master Trucker Transporter Guide <www.tbqa.org>
- Kansas Transport Initiative <<http://www.beefstockerusa.org/transportationfact.htm>>
- Beef Stocker USA <<http://www.beefstockerusa.org>>
- National Institute of Animal Agriculture <<http://www.animalagriculture.com>>
- Temple Grandin <<http://www.grandin.com>>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service <<http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/livestock/products.htm>>



Trailers should provide proper footing for animals being transported.

