

Transport Conditions

Code of Animal Welfare

One of the most frequently asked questions we receive is: "Can my cow/calf be transported in this condition?".

While this always depends on the specific case, as well as the transport distance and the time involved, there are a few general rules that apply while selecting animals for transport.

Most commonly, all dairy cattle, including calves, should be in a health condition that will allow them to withstand the transport without suffering and without unnecessary pain or distress.

In more detail that means:

Calves:

- Calves must be at least 4 full days (96 hours) of age
- Any unweaned calf to be transported from the farm must have been fed at least half the daily ration of colostrum or milk, no more than 2 hours before transport
- Calves have to be fit enough to rise from a lying position, move freely and stand and bear weight evenly on all 4 limbs
- The total duration of their transport cannot exceed 12 hours

Horn issues:

- If an ingrown horn causes piercing or inflaming of any part of the animal's body, including a skin abrasion, it should not be transported
- Animals with a bleeding, discharging, or broken and unhealed velvet antler, horn, or pedicle must not be transported
- Exceptions apply to yearling deer (not older than 12 months/first set of antlers) if the first velvet antlers of a yearling have been removed with the aid of rubber rings for pain relief and if these are still attached to the deer.

In this case, the deer has to arrive within 72 hours at the slaughter house, after removal of the velvet antlers

Lame animals:

- An animal is considered lame if it is not weight bearing on 1 or more limbs or if it clearly limps
- In case of a sheep or goat the animal is also considered lame if it has difficulty walking and keeps its head almost continuously below the line of its back
- In the event of lameness, an animal may generally not be transported
- An animal is not considered lame if the cause of the limp is a non-painful condition (e.g. an adjustment error, a gait abnormality or a healed injury) and the animal is able to bear weight

FACT SHEET

Injured or diseased udders:

Any cow, sheep or goat with a necrotic udder, an udder that has a discharge other than milk, an udder that shows inflammation (red, hot, swollen) or an udder with an injury that is bleeding or discharging must not be transported

Eye cancer:

Any animal with a bleeding or emerging eye cancer that is either not visibly confined to the tissues of the eye or the eyelid, or causing the eye to leak, or is more than 2 cm in diameter, shall not be transported

It is generally allowed, however, to transport animals with horn (antler) issues, lame animals and animals with eye cancer within your property or to another property (not being slaughter premises), if it is less than 20 km away.

Animals in late pregnancy:

- Any cow, sheep, pig, or goat that is in late pregnancy must not be transported
- A pregnant deer in late pregnancy or within 21 days before the estimated due date must not be transported

Veterinary Certificate:

In certain cases, a veterinary certificate can be issued, which is valid for 7 days and cannot be predated.

Any animal that is accompanied by a Veterinary Certificate that either states that the animal is fit for transport or that sets out the conditions to be met to manage the animal welfare risks associated with the transport (the owner or responsible person must comply with all relevant conditions) can be transported.

For more detailed information on transport please also refer to the Code of Animal Welfare:

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1415-dairy-cattle-animal-welfare-code-of-welfare>