

Animal welfare

How to guide: Transport and sell livestock

Animal welfare is a shared responsibility between all people in the transport chain, including stock owners, transport operators, saleyard personnel, livestock agents and stockpersons. If you transport livestock it is important to plan ahead and consider a range of factors that will reduce the risk of animal welfare issues.

1. Prepare livestock

Animals should be prepared prior to loading. This includes spelling or resting livestock in yards following mustering and providing appropriate amounts of roughage and water.

The provision of water is a key requirement for livestock welfare. It is best practice to provide livestock unlimited access to clean drinking water prior to loading. If livestock are held off water, this time is included in the maximum time off water permitted, which varies according to species and class of animal. For information about the maximum time that livestock can be held off water refer to the NSW Land Transport Standards at: <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/regulations/2013-559.pdf>

2. Check identification, declaration and movement requirements

You must ensure livestock (including cattle, sheep, goats and pigs) are correctly identified with an NLIS tag or device before loading and transport. All movements must be recorded on the NLIS database. More information on NLIS requirements is available at: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nlis>

Horses don't need to be identified under any NSW legislation, and should be accompanied by a National Vendor Declaration for horses if they are moving to an abattoir or knacker. A Transported Stock Statement (TSS) may be required for horses travelling within NSW by vehicle (including those travelling into NSW). More information on the use of TSSs and movement of livestock is available at: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/stock-movements/documentation/tss-questions-answers>

3. Check that livestock are fit to load

You should conduct a welfare assessment of each animal prior to loading, and must select livestock for transport that are deemed 'fit to load' and 'fit for the intended journey'.

Livestock that are unfit for transport include animals that are:

- » unable to walk on their own by bearing weight on all legs
- » visibly dehydrated
- » showing visible signs of severe injury or distress
- » showing symptoms of a condition that is likely to cause increased pain or distress during a journey e.g. embedded horns, cancer eye
- » blind in both eyes
- » in late pregnancy or lactating

Livestock assessed as Welfare Score "High Risk 2" are not fit for transport.

For livestock that are Welfare Score "At Risk" consider:

- » shortening the journey by transporting directly to the destination
- » providing additional spells
- » protecting from extreme weather
- » avoid mixing with stronger livestock
- » avoid consigning to saleyards
- » keeping on roughage and water for at least three days prior to transport

More information on welfare scoring livestock is available at <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare/general/general-welfare-of-livestock/welfare-scoring>

More information on fit to load is available at mla.com.au/isitfittoload

If you are unsure about whether to transport livestock, seek advice from your Local Land Services or veterinary practitioner.

Loading considerations

You should plan ahead before loading:

- » load cattle according to Welfare Score
 - draft "Fat Score 1" from "High Risk 1" cattle
 - load "High Risk 1" cattle on bottom deck only
- » load horned cattle separately to polled/dehorned cattle
- » never load cows with calves at foot together in the same pens
- » segregate stallions, colts, dry, wet and pregnant mares. Horses should be habituated to transport by practising

At the time of booking stock owners should notify the transport operator of the Welfare Score of the animals to be transported so that appropriate stocking density can be determined.



4. Ensure the mode of transport is appropriate

If you transport livestock, you are responsible for the welfare of animals throughout the journey from loading to unloading. Vehicles must be adequately ventilated and not pose a risk of injury to livestock. Pens or stalls should allow for visual inspection of livestock.

Calves should be protected from wind, and provided with straw bedding to allow them to lay down. Rigid body vehicles are appropriate for transporting calves however the ribbed floor design of semi or B-Double trailers is not appropriate for transporting calves.

Horses must not be transported in multideck vehicles.

5. Transport and unload livestock safely

If you transport livestock, you must inspect livestock regularly. This includes before departure, within the first hour of the journey and then at least every three hours or at each driver rest stop, whichever comes first. This is particularly important when transporting “At Risk” or “High Risk” livestock. You must inspect livestock at unloading; and at each driver or vehicle change over stop. If an animal is found to be distressed or injured at inspection, you must provide assistance at the first reasonable opportunity.

For long journeys, livestock should be spelled. This is a mandatory requirement when maximum journey time or maximum time off water is reached, before starting a further journey.

More information on the timing and quality of spells is available at: <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/regulations/2013-559.pdf>.

Ensure that suitable unloading facilities exist at the final destination.

Saleyards

Saleyards managers and their staff, livestock agents, stockpersons, truck drivers and producers are all responsible for the care and management of livestock at saleyards including the handling, drafting, selection as ‘fit for sale’, penning, stocking density and the provision of feed and water whilst held at the facility. These people are also responsible for ensuring the appropriate care, treatment and humane emergency euthanasia of sick, injured or ‘downer’ animals.

More information on the welfare of animals at saleyards is available at: www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/saleyards-and-depots/

Livestock at processing establishments

Stock agents, transport operators, and personnel operating at depots, scales, saleyards and feedlots are involved in the handling and management of livestock at processing establishments. All have a responsibility to ensure the welfare of the livestock.



What must you do if stock are not fit to load?

Animals that are not fit to load or fit for the intended journey must not be transported. If livestock are deemed unfit, stock owners have the following options:

- » provide care and/or veterinary treatment
- » provide proper and sufficient food
- » humanely destroy

What legal obligations are there?

The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*, Regulation and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Land Transport of Livestock) Standards 2013 No2 set out the requirements that everyone involved in livestock transport must follow to protect the welfare of the animals in their care. You have a legal and moral obligation to get it right. Penalties can apply for people who do not provide for the welfare of their animals.

Do the right thing and make sure you are assessing animals correctly, making the right decisions and seeking advice when required.