

Best Practices of Handling TRANSPORT



Mateus J. R. Paranhos da Costa - Murilo Henrique Quintiliano - Stavros Platon Tseimazides

Cattle transportation is an important activity in the beef production chain. Hundred thousands of cattle are transported everyday world wide, and the slaughterhouses are their main destination. Due to geographic and infrastructure conditions, the road transport is the most used in Brazil. Even when transported under good conditions and on short journeys, the animals show signs of stress, which get worse in adverse situations. Stressed animals suffer and thus, it is more likely to downgrade carcass and meat quality, and in extreme situations it may cause the death of animals. During transport the stress intensity is variable depending on the way the animals are handled, the conditions under which they are transported, the duration of the journey, the road conditions, and the weather, among others.



Best practices of transport - step-by-step

1. Truck drivers should have travel and emergency plans at hand.
2. The vehicle must be clean and in good condition.
3. The floor of the load compartments must have non-slip structures.
4. The access roads to the farms must be in good conditions and when they are not, the farmers should give support to the drivers.
5. Provide conditions to meet the needs of drivers before boarding the animals.
6. Make sure all documents are in order.
7. Park the truck properly; don't leave a gap between the truck trailer and the loading ramp.
8. Load the right number of animals per loading compartment. Avoid loading tired, injured or sick animals.
9. Do not start the journey immediately after boarding, check if everything is in order. If necessary, raise the animals which are lying down, and in case of a very aggressive animal, tie it up (do it by the horns or use a halter; never tie it by the neck).
10. Drive carefully, avoid jerking movements and rattling. During long journeys, stop the vehicle for inspections, making sure all animals are standing. If there are fallen or lying animals, raise them.
11. Encourage the animal to stand up by talking or clapping. Do not shout or scare the animals. After two or three attempts, use the electric prod.
12. Never use the electric prods repeatedly on the same animal, and do not use it on cattle's face, anus, genitals or udder. Never hold the electric prod on the cattle body for more than one second.
13. If an animal does not get up, make sure that it is not injured or exhausted and that there is enough space to stand up. If everything is in order, try standing it up them once or twice at most.
14. Impaired animals should be unloaded and, in most serious cases, emergency slaughter must be carried out. If it is not possible, pursue with the journey and carry out emergency slaughter immediately when you reach the destination.
15. Emergency slaughtering must be done by a trained person and with appropriate equipment.
16. Always drive carefully, respecting driving rules and road signs.
17. The total journey time must not exceed 12 hours; when this occurs, the animals must be unloaded, and have free access to food and fresh water. Avoid long distance transportation.
18. Avoid long stops, especially during the hottest hours of the day, and always park the vehicle under a shade.
19. When there are problems during the journey, consider alternative routes, request another vehicle and transship the animals, or unload them in a suitable place.
20. When this is not possible, park the vehicle in a safe and shady place. Offer water to the animals regularly.
21. Calves transport requires more care. Never mix them with adult animals, even if they are with their mothers. Offer water to the calves on journeys every 6 hours.
22. The unloading must be done immediately upon arrival at the destination. Park the vehicle on the loading ramp; be sure that there is no gap between the vehicle and the ramp.
23. Before opening the cargo compartment doors, make sure that there are no laying animals; if there is any animal in this condition, lift it up.
24. Open the door nearest to the loading ramp. If the animals do not leave, stimulate them by clapping and making movements at the side of the vehicle. Do not shout and do not use the electric prod to do it; be calm.
25. If an animal is not able to stand up, unload the others from the same load compartment, do it calmly. Then, carry out an emergency slaughter, stunning the animal inside the vehicle, for later dragging it out.
26. Never drag conscious animals! The unloading of animals from other load compartments shall be made after the removal of the stunned animal.
27. Clean and disinfect the vehicle immediately after unloading. Make sure everything is in order and repair or replace whatever is broken.

