



Fact Sheet on animal welfare and transportation

Animal Welfare and Transportation

Canada's meat industry is committed to ensuring that animals slaughtered for human consumption are treated humanely during transport and slaughter, and that food from these animals is safe to eat.

Farmers, transporters and meat processors rely on the delivery of healthy well treated animals for their livelihoods. Treating animals humanely during all stages of their life is a main priority. Animals that are well housed, fed, watered and cared for produce a better quality, safer product for consumers.

The transport of animals after they leave the farms is an important step in the food chain and needs to be done humanely and in accordance with the law.

The ultimate goal for farmers, the food industry and consumers is for farm animals to be treated humanely, with no animals injured in transit. Farmers, industry and government partners have invested millions into research, educational resources and training programs to help achieve those goals.

Regulations

The Senate and House of Commons of Canada enacted the Health of Animals Act which gives permission to the Government to make regulations for the purpose of protecting human and animal health and:

- (i) for the humane treatment of animals and generally (i) governing the care, handling and disposition of animals,
- (ii) governing the manner in which animals are transported within, into or out of Canada, and
- (iii) providing for the treatment or disposal of animals that are not cared for, handled or transported in a humane manner;

The Health of Animals Regulations, current to April 28, 2010, Part XII specifically regulates the Transportation of Animals entering or leaving Canada or within Canada. The Regulations prohibit the transportation of animals that are unfit for travel as well as anyone from directly or indirectly causing animals to suffer as a result of transportation.

The Regulations prohibit overcrowding of animals during transport. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) conducts inspections at multiple strategic locations to make sure rules are followed, and takes enforcement action in response to non-compliance.

The CFIA is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Health of Animals Act. CFIA veterinarians are present in federally registered meat establishments at all times during slaughter. In fact, operations are not allowed unless they are present. Canada's livestock and meat industry has been working with the Government of Canada in its pre-consultations in updating the Health of Animal Regulations pertaining to animal transportation.

The Canadian Meat Council fully supports the CFIA in its efforts to investigate allegations of violations to the *Health of Animals Regulations* and the prosecution of all offenders.

On-Farm Programs and Codes of Practice

Many Canadian farmers now follow a strict on-farm food safety and animal care programs. For example, the Chicken Farmers of Canada has started implementing an auditable animal care program designed to demonstrate the high level and standards of the Canadian chicken industry's on-farm animal care. The program's implementation has been supported by many organizations, including the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council, the Further Poultry Processors Association of Canada and the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers.

In addition, farmers follow national on-farm food safety programs that emphasize health, cleanliness and safety throughout each step of the production cycle, and follow strict bio-security measures to protect animal health.

Canadian producers follow Codes of Practice developed for the care and handling of farm animals. There are species-specific Codes of Practices available, in addition to a general code for the transportation of farm animals. All codes are available through the National Farm Animal Care Council, a multi-stakeholder group that will be leading the update to the codes of practice previously coordinated by the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council.

In addition, there are several producer-driven on-farm programs designed for the care of the animals and for food safety. In the red meat industry, the Canadian Pork Council has developed the CQA (Canadian Quality Assurance) program for on farm food safety and the ACA (Animal Care Assessment) program to track the welfare of animals. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association leads the VBP (Verified Beef Production) program for on farm food safety.

National Farm Animal Care Council

<http://www.nfacc.ca/code.aspx>

Canadian Quality Assurance

http://www.cqa-aqc.ca/home_e.cfm

Animal Care Assessment

http://www.cqa-aqc.ca/aca/index_e.html

Verified Beef Production

<http://www.verifiedbeef.org/>

Farm Animal Care Associations

Canada has several Councils dedicated to the promotion of farm animal care:

- National Farm Animal Care Council
- BC Farm Animal Care Council
- Alberta Farm Animal Care Association
- Farm Animal Care Council of Saskatchewan
- Manitoba Farm Animal Care Council
- Ontario Farm Animal Care Council

Drivers and handlers Training

Canada's Farm Animal Councils have developed the Certified Livestock Transporter training program for livestock transporters. The Certified Livestock Transport program is a comprehensive training course and support service for livestock truckers, shippers and receivers. It focuses on the humane and safe relocation of livestock and the regulatory requirements for Canada and the US. The Certified Livestock Transport Training Program offers core content for all species and breakout modules for cattle, hogs, horses, sheep and poultry.

Certified Livestock Transport offers species-specific customized training on livestock handling, loading and biosecurity. It includes recognizing and dealing with livestock not fit to be transported and emergency accident response. Many of Canada's livestock transporters are now certified by the Certified Livestock Transport (CLT) which addresses Canadian laws, trucking and weather conditions, specific meat plant needs and compromised (unfit) animal policies for Canada and/or the American program Transport Quality Assurance (TQA).

Helpful links:

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca>