

\*\*Text in blue represents content required to be considered sufficient by some animal welfare audits

# Fitness for Travel SOP

**Work with your veterinarian to develop a standard operating procedure to determine an animal's ability to be transported.**

**Review this procedure annually with your veterinarian and the responsible caregivers.**

**Objectives:** (1) To ensure the animal's welfare and a safe food supply by helping caregivers determine whether an animal is suitable for transport. (2) Identify conditions that automatically disqualify an animal for transport.

**Principles:** It is not good for the welfare of the cow, the business of the farm or the food supply to ship animals not fit for transport.

**Farm:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Herd Veterinarian:** \_\_\_\_\_

- The following individual(s) will be responsible for determining an animal's fitness for transport:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Cattle NOT Fit for Transport:

- The responsible individual(s) will evaluate the animal to verify that none of the following conditions are present:
  1. *Advanced Cancer eye in either eye or complete blindness (blind in both eyes)*
  2. *Fever greater than 103°F*
  3. *Non-ambulatory/down animals*
  4. *Severe lameness (not able to bear full weight on any limb, 3-legged lameness or obvious fracture or dislocation of leg or hip)*
  5. *Uterine prolapse*
  6. *Active calving or likely to calve during transport*
  7. *Distended or dropped udders that affect mobility*
  8. *Open wounds, active bleeding*
  9. *Central nervous system/neurologic symptoms*
  10. *Emaciated (saw toothed spine, hooks and pins are sharp, individual short ribs are easily seen >1/2 to the spine)*

**If any of the above conditions are present the animal will not be transported and will either be treated appropriately or euthanized according to farm protocols.**

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## Cattle that require Special Consideration

- Conditions that may disqualify an animal for transport and require thorough assessment include, but are not limited to:
  1. **NEWBORN CALVES**
  2. Surgical wounds
  3. Skin problems
  4. Abnormal discharge
  5. Abnormal swelling
  6. Difficulty breathing
  7. Diarrhea
  8. Dangerous/fractious animals
- Animals with any of the above conditions must be evaluated thoroughly to ensure that the animal will not suffer unnecessarily, become injured, or present a threat to other animals or humans during transport.
- ✓ Once an animal has been cleared physically for transport the medical records will be checked to ensure that no milk or meat withholds are present. If a withhold is found or suspected the animal is not to be transported.
- ✓ Once cleared for transport the animal will be given food and water up until the time it leaves the premises. Additionally, lactating cows will be milked within 2 hours of leaving the premises.
- ✓ The loading areas and ramps, including the slope of the ramp, SHOULD be designed to minimize stress and injuries for the animals and ensure the safety of the animal handlers.
- ✓ Trailers should provide protection from sun and excessive heat and cold.
- ✓ Trailers should be designed and maintained to ensure that cattle arrive at their destination with no injury. There should not be any sharp projections that may cause harm to the cattle.

### NEWBORN CALVES – including bull calves

1. Calves must have a dry hair coat and navel cord and be able to stand squarely on all 4 legs, without assistance before transport.
2. Calves must have been fed at least 1 gallon of adequate quality colostrum before transport and if older than 12 hours, must be fed within 4 hours of transport.
3. The floor of the trailer/transport vehicle must be covered with bedding; this will help absorb urine, reduce slippage by animals, and provide a more comfortable surface for the calf to lie down (e.g., straw, or dry wood shavings).
4. A single flat deck livestock trailer is the preferred equipment to use when hauling a sizable number of calves together. The size and design of the transport vehicle should be compatible with the size and number of calves being transported. Double deck trailers should be used as a last resort and with care to load calves by lifting and placing them down gently into compartments that are harder to reach and/or walk in without standing upright.
5. Calves should be transported by the shortest route possible. Distances or transport times longer than 8 hours are not recommended.
6. Calves should be allowed enough space such that all calves to lie down comfortably during transport.
7. The front of the trailer should be solid to protect calves from the wind.

Veterinarian of Record Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_