

# Compromised Cattle Alert

Source: Dr. Ray Fenton, Consulting Veterinarian for AFAC

It has come to the attention of Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) and the Alberta SPCA that an unknown number of compromised or unfit cattle are making their way off the farm and into Alberta's cattle marketing network. These cattle have had their health compromised to some degree, such that it is considered inhumane to expose them to the additional stress of normal marketing routes for livestock. When exposed to the rigors of short or long haul transportation, public auctions, dealer transactions, feed yards, and/or unfamiliar exposure to the elements, holding facilities and feeding practices, these animals unnecessarily suffer.

The most common conditions observed are poor body condition, lameness of varying degrees and causes, visibly ill and unthrifty animals. With the onset of winter, lactating dairy cows with distended udders and slick cows from warm barns are at increased susceptibility to hypothermia and frostbite. Depending on the situation, these animals are considered unfit to transport or may be transported with special provisions. **For those compromised animals that can be transported humanely, they should be sent directly to the nearest suitable slaughter facility.** They should not be sent to auction markets or dealers at the farm.

Alberta's beef and dairy industries take animal welfare very seriously and have made animal care an industry priority. In conjunction with animal welfare enforcement agencies, they have

developed guidelines outlining standards for the humane handling and disposal of unfit livestock. These booklets are available from Alberta Milk, Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Sheep Producers, AFAC, Alberta SPCA, CFIA, veterinary practitioners and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Alberta SPCA constables and CFIA inspectors have been trained in humane livestock transportation and are familiar with these industry guidelines on proper care and handling of unfit livestock.

Please do your part in doing what is right for these animals and for your industry. If in doubt regarding the disposition of a particular unfit animal, err on the side of caution to ensure a humane decision is reached.

Producers with questions regarding their animals' status for transportation can contact Alberta Farm Animal Care at 1-800-506-2273 or their own veterinarian.



## upcoming events

### Nutcracker Ballet

Alberta Milk is sponsoring the Nutcracker Ballet in Edmonton and Calgary. We will be sampling hot chocolate milk at the matinee performances on Saturday Dec. 10 in Edmonton and Saturday Dec. 11 in Calgary.

## STRAY VOLTAGE

INVESTIGATION AND SOLUTIONS



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