

Truck West, April 2004

Enforcement View: A View From The CFIA

By Darren Malchow

My name is Darren Malchow and I have been a Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) health of animals inspector for 13 years, and was a federal meat inspector for 10 years previously. Among the many programs that I am required to work under in the district veterinarian's office is the Health of Animals Humane Transportation of Livestock Act and Regulations.

This program has a personal meaning to me because I truly care about livestock and that they be shipped the best way possible.

The first thing I would like to mention is that the huge number of loads of livestock on the roads every day in Canada is unbelievable, even after the U.S. border closure to live Canadian cattle. I feel that upwards of 95 per cent of these loads of livestock reach their destination safely and are in accordance with the CFIA's Humane Transportation Act and Regulations. I do not feel that enough recognition goes out for a job well done, yet the headlines are there on the front page when there's an incident.

However, one of the issues I do have is that knowing how to drive a truck does not mean you know how to haul livestock. I see a number of young drivers out there with licences - some with little or no livestock handling skills. I often wonder if these guys know how much responsibility they are pulling behind them.

I have personally gotten my Class 3 licence with air brake endorsement and I have a great admiration for any truck driver.

For instance, I have often observed a driver hauling hogs backing in and unloading his load so quietly you don't even know he's there. Very few pigs are making noise as they flow quietly off the trailer.

To me, that is impressive and I have never hauled a load of hogs in my life! Hog haulers I feel, must be very patient people - the ones that are not patient are going to become very frustrated, very quickly.

Please do not get me wrong, I can fully understand the frustrations of hog hauling and deadlines which often seem like they were two hours ago! It is also worth mentioning that the genetics of the hogs and the quality of the facilities play a huge role in the levels of frustration presented to a driver. To me, the unsung heroes of the hog industry are the truck drivers who get on their hands and knees and unload that middle deck.

That shows real dedication and tremendous patience. My hat goes off to those fellows who put up with long hours on good and bad roads, temperature changes and a very difficult species in general to transport - not to mention that odour!

A more general observation and practice of great concern is that drivers are sometimes asked to load livestock that is not fit to be transported.

Drivers have the right to refuse to load an animal that they feel is not compatible with the rest of the load, is not going to make the trip (will die in transit), or has an injury such as a broken leg which will cause the animal and the driver problems down the road. They also have the right to refuse to load more animals than their truck can hold.

I realize that we must all make a living and that sometimes drivers are put in a compromised situation. Yes, you can refuse to take a load or an animal, however, more often than not, the shipper will instruct you to unload because "Joe Blow Trucking" will haul these animals. I applaud the drivers and dispatchers who refuse the load or get the shipper to sign off on the manifest that the driver is not responsible for the transport of this animal or load. To me, the shipper is the one who caused this animal to be loaded.

Here are few points on humane transport that should be noted:

- No animal should be dragged onto a trailer;
- No animal should be dragged off a truck unless using a hog sled or the animal is dead;
- Livestock in transit longer than 12 hours should have adequate bedding;
- Cattle in transit longer than 48 hours that cannot reach their final destination in 52 hours must be off-loaded for feed and water for eight hours;
- Hogs and horses should not be hauled for any longer than 36 hours without feed and water.

Due to the closing of the U.S. border the numbers of cull cattle being transported across Canada has increased dramatically. Unfortunately a number of these livestock are not fit to make the cross-Canada journey. CFIA is reacting by increasing its inspections at offloading feeding and watering facilities.

As well, more investigations will be conducted on possible animal transport violations at federal slaughter establishments.

I would ask that the transporters of cross-Canada loads be more diligent when it comes to making sure livestock has adequate bedding, rest times, feed and water.

One last point of interest is the great opportunity I have in being able to sit in on the AMTA's Southern Alberta Livestock Transportation Committee meetings, organized by Mayne Root of Calgary. This is a great way to put faces to names and allows me to bring up relevant issues or changes from a regulatory standpoint to the dispatchers.

- Darren Malchow can be contacted at 403-382-3128 or 403-308-6462.

[Copyright © 2004 Business Information Group.](#)
A member of the [esourceNetwork](#)

[Business Information Group Privacy Policy](#)

[Table of Contents](#)