

Changing Policies

In 2003 CFIA conducted a national consultation on non-ambulatory livestock transportation. Stakeholder comments indicated, “the small potential salvage value does not justify the animal’s suffering, human health hazards, reduced meat quality, and negative impact on the image of the Canadian livestock industry that are associated with the loading of non-ambulatory livestock.”

Following the national consultation, CFIA has initiated:

1. Regulations to amend the Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII, to specifically prohibit the loading and transportation of non-ambulatory animals;
2. An update to CFIA’s internal compromised animal policy, outlining the steps CFIA inspection staff will take when a non-ambulatory animal is delivered to federally inspected plants.

The updated policy is expected to be available to inspection staff by February 1, 2005. Martin Appelt, CFIA Humane Transportation Specialist notes, “There will be a two month ‘phase-in’ period during which CFIA staff has the opportunity to educate regulated parties in case changes to existing practices need to be made.”

The parallel change in regulations is being proposed to clarify that non-ambulatory animals are unfit for transport. Appelt says, “It is hard to argue that non-ambulatory animals are not included in the group of animals that cannot be transported by reason of ‘infirmity, illness, fatigue or any other cause.’ However, ‘non-ambulatory’ should be named as a condition to make it clear.”

It is proposed that Section 2 of the Health of Animals Regs will define a non-ambulatory animal as, “an animal of the bovine, caprine, cervid, camelid, equine, ovine, porcine or ratite species that is unable to stand without assistance or to move without being dragged or carried.”

Section 138 will stipulate that non-ambulatory animals cannot be transported, except if “transported for veterinary treatment or diagnosis on the advice of a veterinarian or to the nearest suitable place at which it can receive proper care and attention.”

The livestock industry acknowledges that non-ambulatory animals provide challenges with regard to humane handling, slaughter and disposal. However, questions have been raised regarding:

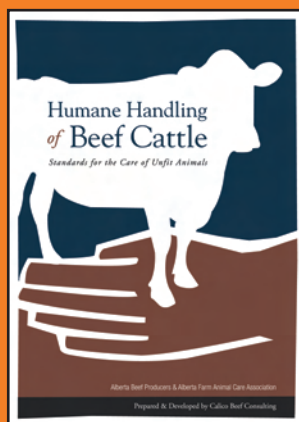
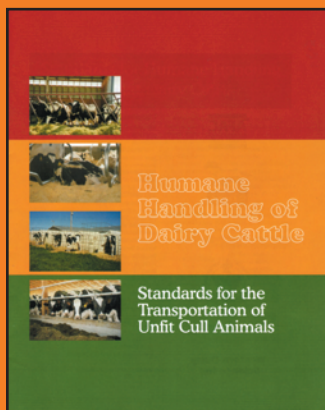
- Enforcement and compliance – how do inspectors know when and where an animal went ‘down’ (on farm, in transit, at auction)? Where will the burden of proof lie and what disincentive will exist to overcome the costs of deadstock disposal?
- Communication and Education – ensuring that animals at risk are identified early and handled appropriately, with instruction on humane euthanasia techniques and options.

Some provinces will face additional challenges. For example, Ontario producers have no options for on-farm slaughter, unless the farmer can kill, bleed and process the animals for themselves. While on-farm slaughter and deadstock options are being examined under a recent Meat Inspection Review in Ontario, implementation will take considerable time.

“A regulation change on its own will not eliminate the movement of non-ambulatory animals. The entire industry will need a concentrated effort of working together to bring about changes around how these animals are treated,” commented Crystal Mackay, Ontario Farm Animal Council Executive Director. ■

CFIA’s Compromised Animal Policy

- www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/transport/polie.shtml



HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT REVISIONS

A comprehensive revision of **Part XII, Animal Transportation, of the Health of Animals Regulations** is underway. Public consultations are planned for the fall of 2005. Proposed changes to the Regulations will also be published in the Canada Gazette, followed by a 60-day comment period. To be included in the distribution list, when the request for comments is issued, contact: Chantel Souliere, CFIA Ottawa at (613) 225-2342 ext. 4639 or soulierec@inspection.gc.ca