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Care before transport and sale

Make sure sale calves arrive healthy



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- All sale calves must be fit for transport
- Make sure calves receive a liquid feed within 6 hours of transport
- Provide shelter and shade prior to pick up—keep calves dry and draught free
- All sale calves must be antibiotic free
- Sale calves must be identified with an NLIS tag



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Care before transport and sale

Calves that are well cared for prior to sale cope better with transportation. Other benefits include:

- Calves are ‘fit for purpose’ on arrival
- High animal welfare standards are maintained
- The reputation of the Australian dairy industry is not damaged

Prepare calves for transport & sale.

New national standards

A series of new national standards relating to animal welfare have been developed via a broad consultation process involving industry, scientists and community members.

The new Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines—Land Transport of Livestock will apply in all jurisdictions. They will provide a basis for developing and implementing consistent legislation and enforcement across Australia.

Note that if future legislation requires a higher standard than outlined in these new standards, the higher standard will apply. Also, where there is a conflict with another standard, the welfare of livestock must be the first consideration unless there is an occupational health and safety requirement.

- The standards are mandatory for all people involved in the preparation for and transport of livestock
- They are based on current scientific knowledge, recommended industry practice and community expectations

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines website. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Home', 'About Us', 'Land transport', 'Sea transport', 'Air transport', 'Management', 'Consultative Process', 'Submissions and T's', 'Implementation Issues', 'Audit, Certification and Standard', 'Breed Councils and Trade Federations', 'Submission', 'About Us', 'Contact Us', and 'Search'. The main content area features a large image of various animals (cattle, sheep, goats, horses, pigs) and text about the Land transport standards. It states that the standards cover the transport of livestock by road and rail and in aircraft, ships, and other transport vehicles. The standards are based on current requirements from the Primary Industries Ministerial Committee. The page also mentions the 'Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Land Transport of Livestock' and provides a link to the full document.

*For further information see
www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au*

Calves less than 5 days old

Calves less than 5 days old must not be sold in a saleyard or consigned to an abattoir.

Calves less than 5 days old travelling without their dam are only allowed to be transported directly to a calf rearing facility.

These calves must be:

- Provided with thick bedding and room to lie down
- Protected from cold and heat
- Not transported for longer than 6 hours
- Not consigned through saleyards

Calves between 5 and 30 days

Select calves for sale with the following characteristics:

- minimum liveweight of 23 kg
- hooves are firm and worn, not soft and bulbous
- dry and withered navel cord

Calves of this age travelling without their dams can be sold in a sale yard or calf sale or consigned to an abattoir under the following care conditions:

Conditions	Requirement for each calf ...
'Fit' for transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Must be in good health, alert and able to rise from a lying position
Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Must be protected from cold and heat– Vehicles like trailers must provide protection from wind
Liquid feed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Must have been fed milk or milk replacer on the farm within 6 hours of transport unless the journey is between rearing properties and is less than 6 hours' duration
Transport time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Must not spend more than 12 hours on transports
Arrival at sale yards, abattoir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Must be delivered in less than 18 hours from last feed
Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Must have an auditable and accessible record system– Records must identify:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) the age of the calf and(ii) when the calf was last fed—i.e within 6 hours of transport

If there is any doubt on the suitability of a calf then it should not be transported. It is always best to err on the side of caution and hang on to the calf until it meets the standards. Any health issues should receive the necessary attention.

Calves must be free of chemical residues, identified with an NLIS tag and accompanied by a vendor declaration.

Managing sale calf care

Arrangements for selling calves vary on farms. The following quotes from farmers give you an idea of how standards are met on these farms.

“Calf buyer comes regularly at certain time. Feed bull calves with other calves and picked up shortly after.”

“Calf buyer is pretty consistent with time of pick up—If he is running late he gives us a ring and we hold off feeding the calves.”

“We like to time our feeding of bull calves so we are just finishing as the truck comes up the driveway.”

“Our daily routine is clearly documented in staff procedures—Cows are milked, breakfast is had, calves are fed, bull calves fed last, truck arrives shortly after.”

For example

On this farm, a trailer has been converted into a portable sale calf shelter—it is covered on three sides with tarp.

Fresh straw is added and water is provided in a bucket.

Sale calves are loaded and the trailer is towed to front gate.

Note the plastic pocket at the back—this keeps the paperwork dry.

The farmer got the idea from the little ‘houses’ seen at the front of farms in Holland!



Care prior to pick up—liquid feed and shelter

Calves need to be fed no more than 6 hours prior to pick up so feed calves as near as possible to the time of start of travel. Your records need to provide evidence that this has occurred.

This is easily achieved where calves are delivered direct from farm to sale yards by farm staff but if third party transport is used, try to determine an approximate time of pick up.

Whilst awaiting collection, calves should be provided with appropriate shelter to maximise health and welfare.

- Separate facilities should be used to aid identification and loading of calves for transport by third party transporters
- These facilities should be constructed and maintained to provide appropriate shelter and comfort for the calves being held
- Calves should be dry and draught free—position calves away from prevailing winds and rain
- Clean, deep and dry bedding is essential to keep the calf warm and comfortable

Don't forget—sale calves must be free of antibiotic residues, need NLIS tags and completed vendor declarations.

Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines—Land Transport of Livestock

“Livestock transport begins at the loading of livestock into a container or on to a vehicle and concludes on unloading of livestock at the final destination.

There is a **chain of responsibility** for the welfare of livestock that begins with the owner or their agent and extends to the final receiver of the livestock.

The standards and guidelines are relevant to all those involved in the care and management of livestock that are transported, including:

- owners
- agents
- drivers, transport companies
- livestock handlers at farming enterprises, depots, saleyards, feedlots and livestock processing plants.”

<http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au>

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Summary of recommendations

Make sure you comply with the new standards.

1. Make sure all calves from your farm that are to be transported are 'fit for purpose'.
2. Ensure calves receive a liquid feed within 6 hours of transport.
3. Provide shelter prior to pick up—keep calves dry and draught free. If it is hot, shade may be required.
4. Remember, any calves you sell must be antibiotic free and not subject to any withholding period.
5. Sale calves must be identified with an NLIS tag and be accompanied by a vendor declaration.