



A national guide to the selection of animals fit to transport

Is it fit to load?



The WA guide from which this national guide is derived was developed in collaboration with:

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA)

RSPCA

WA Department of Agriculture

WA Department of Local Government and Regional Development (DLGRD)

WA Livestock Transporters Association

Pastoralists and Graziers Association

WA Farmers Federation

Elders

WA Meat Industry Authority

This national guide was developed with the endorsement of the above organisations and in collaboration with:

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association

Australian Livestock Exporters' Council

Australian Livestock Transporters Association

Australian Meat Industry Council

Cattle Council of Australia

Goat Industry Council of Australia

LiveCorp

Sheepmeat Council of Australia

State and Territory Departments of Primary Industry/Agriculture

Care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. However MLA cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information or opinions contained in the publication. You should make your own enquiries before making decisions concerning your interests.



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Animal welfare legislation in Australia

Each state and territory has its own animal welfare Act and accompanying regulations that affect people who own or work with animals including farmers, livestock transporters, livestock exporters, saleyard personnel and processors.

Under these Acts it is an offence to transport, confine, restrain or catch an animal in a way that causes, or is likely to cause, it unnecessary harm.

The regulations include reference to **codes of practice (codes)** that define what is generally regarded as acceptable welfare practices for livestock husbandry and transport. For more information on regulations and codes for the transport of animals, contact the relevant authority in your state or territory (see the last page of this booklet for contact details).

Compliance with the codes can be used as a defence against a charge of cruelty.

NOTE: any person involved in the export of livestock, from farm to vessel, must comply with the new 'Australian Standards for Export of Livestock'. The Standards can be obtained by phoning the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 02 6272 3933, or website www.daff.gov.au/livestockexportstandards

About this guide

This guide has been developed in consultation with the livestock industry to help you decide if an animal is fit to be loaded for transport to saleyards, abattoirs, or any other destination.

An animal is **fit to travel** if it:

- is strong enough to undertake the journey;
- can walk normally, bearing weight on all four legs;
- is not suffering from any visible disease or injury that could cause it harm during transport;
- can keep up with the mob both at loading and unloading;
- is suitable for transport according to the relevant code*[†]; and
- is NOT in late pregnancy.

Good **preparation** of all livestock is essential to prevent suffering during transport. The relevant husbandry and transport **codes** recommend, and Export Standards[†] legislate, how livestock should be prepared for transport, including rest periods and feed and water withholding periods.

Some examples of animals that are unfit to transport are shown on pages 5–9.

*Refer to the codes for specific requirements, eg young animals, drought or bushfire affected animals etc.

[†]Requirements under Export Standards exceed those of transport codes in some areas.

Pre-transport preparation

Preparing stock for transport will help minimise stress before, during and after transit. It begins with good planning of the journey to use the most appropriate route, quiet handling, provision of feed, water and rest as required and selecting only stock that are fit to travel. The following checklist provides general information but relevant **codes** and Export Standards should always be referred to.

Before yarding:

- ensure your stockyards and loading ramp are adequate for the job;
- plan the journey, including inspections and rest stops;
- ensure vehicles are safe and of a design that will not cause harm to livestock;
- avoid weather extremes, where practicable.



Pre-transport preparation (cont)

At yarding:

- ensure your stockyard and loading ramp are adequate for the job;
- use low stress handling for mustering, yarding and loading;
- ensure animals are adequately rested prior to loading;
- provide or withhold food and water as required (see codes or Export Standards);
- segregate livestock appropriately (eg separate horned animals, mothers with young etc).



Lameness

One or more legs cannot bear weight



Injury



Arthritis



Deformity

Note – this is a guide only. The responsibility not to cause unnecessary harm still rests with the person in charge of the animal.

Visible disease or injury

A visible condition likely to cause further pain or suffering during transport



Cancer



Cancer



*Swollen
testicles*



Open wound

Note – this is a guide only. The responsibility not to cause unnecessary harm still rests with the person in charge of the animal.

Weakness

Inability to keep up with the mob both at loading and unloading

Deformity



Mastitis



*Emaciation/
malnutrition/
exhaustion*



*Emaciation/
malnutrition/
exhaustion*



Note – this is a guide only. The responsibility not to cause unnecessary harm still rests with the person in charge of the animal.

Complete blindness

Unable to see at all



Note – this is a guide only. The responsibility not to cause unnecessary harm still rests with the person in charge of the animal.

Late pregnancy

Ewes more than four months pregnant and cows more than eight months pregnant should not be transported



Note – this is a guide only. The responsibility not to cause unnecessary harm still rests with the person in charge of the animal.

If the animal is unfit to transport - do not load it

You can:

- treat the animal; or
- kill it humanely.



Humane euthanasia of cattle

- 'a' Position for temporal method (suitable for firearms only)
- 'b' Position for frontal method (firearm or captive bolt pistol)
- 'c' Position for poll method (firearms only)

Recommended methods for humane destruction of livestock can be found in the **codes**. When there is no other humane option, an animal that is not fit for transport may be taken **short** distances to a vet or for emergency slaughter (see **codes**).

Information about the **codes** or the Acts is available from the relevant authority in your state or territory. For more details, see the last page of this booklet.

Information about the Export Standards is available from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on 02 6272 3933 or viewed at: www.daff.gov.au/livestockexportstandards

A quick summary

Ask these questions before you load any animal for transport:

- has the animal been prepared according to the relevant husbandry and transport code and/or Export Standards, as applicable?
- can it walk normally and bear weight on all four legs?
- is it free from visible disease or injury?
- can it keep up with the mob at both loading and unloading?
- can it see out of at least one eye? (Export Standards stipulate that animals must be able to see from both eyes)
- is it in late pregnancy?
- is it a newborn or young animal that requires special consideration?

If in doubt, leave it out.

If you have any queries about an animal, please contact either your relevant state or territory department inspector or a general inspector from the RSPCA. If you have any general queries about this guide, please contact the RSPCA or your relevant state or territory authority on the last page of this booklet.

For information in your state or territory:

Western Australia: DLGRD, Animal Welfare Branch 08 9217 1500 or WA Department of Agriculture 08 9368 3627

South Australia: Department of Environment and Heritage 08 8124 4800

Victoria: Victorian Department of Primary Industries – Manager Animal Health Operations 03 5430 4509 or Bureau of Animal Welfare 03 9217 4200

New South Wales: NSW Department of Primary Industries 02 6391 3682

Queensland: Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries 13 25 23

ACT: Arts, Heritage and Environment 02 6207 2249

Tasmania: Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment 1300 368 550

Northern Territory: Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines 08 8999 2038

For information about Meat & Livestock Australia's animal health and welfare program, visit www.mla.com.au



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