Transport of Livestock

Policy
The New Zealand Veterinary Association believes that animals should only be transported when their welfare can be appropriately managed. Transport should not be the cause of an animal's welfare deteriorating.

Background

1. Legislation
The Animal Welfare Act 1999 requires that animals must not be transported in a manner which causes 'unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.' Under Section 23 of the Animal Welfare Act, it is an offence if the person in charge or the owner, transports an animal in a condition or of health that renders it unfit for such transport.

The Transport within New Zealand, Code of Welfare 2016 (the Code), provides greater detail and information on the matters which should be taken into account when selecting animals for transport.

Further to this, the Code states ‘animals must not be transported if they display any injuries, signs of disease, abnormal behaviour or physical abnormalities that could compromise their welfare during the journey, unless a veterinary declaration of fitness for transport has been completed.’

A veterinarian should be consulted where there is any question over whether or not an animal is fit for transport. Following thorough examination and obtaining a history, the veterinarian may certify in writing that he/she considers the animal is fit for transport to the destination without suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Veterinary certification of the fitness of animals for transport is a key component in protecting the welfare of animals with various conditions and abnormalities. This is of importance for the animals being certified, for the integrity of the veterinary profession, and for ensuring international confidence in New Zealand’s animal welfare system.

Fitness for Transport Veterinary Certificate pads can be ordered from the New Zealand Veterinary Association.

2. Regulation
In addition to the Code, the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018 (hereafter, “the Regulations”) specify conditions affecting animals which constitute infringement offences when those animals are transported. Veterinarians and farmers need to be aware of these conditions, and
veterinarians need to be able to provide appropriate advice to their clients regarding an animal’s fitness for transport. Where appropriate, veterinary certification may be provided.

The Regulations 2018 are effective from October 1\textsuperscript{st} 2018. The owner, or person in charge of animals with any of the conditions listed below, may not transport those animals unless it is accompanied by a veterinary certificate that specifies transport conditions that manage the welfare risks associated with transport.

- Ingrown horns (Regulation 38)
- Bleeding horns or antlers (Regulation 39)
- Lameness (Regulation 40) (relates to cattle, deer, pigs, sheep, and goats)
- Late term pregnancy (Regulation 41)
- Injured or diseased udders (Regulation 42)
- Eye cancer (Regulation 43)

Infringement notices arising from non-compliance with these regulations may be issued to the supplier (farmer) who chooses to transport an animal without a veterinary certificate. If deemed fit for transport by a veterinarian according to the law and recognised guidelines and accompanied by a valid veterinary certificate, the transporter and the supplier are afforded indemnity (notwithstanding Reg. 45) for transporting an animal captured by the Regulations.

Regulations 30, 31 and 32 relate to injury during transport – when offences occur relating to these regulations, the transporter may be liable and possibly infringed:

- Transport injuries (Regulation 30)
- Animals with horns or antlers (Regulation 31; also supplier)
- Transport abrasions (back-rub) (Regulation 32)

Non-compliance with any transport conditions stipulated on a veterinary certificate constitutes an offence (Regulation 45), and the transporter may be liable.
Guidelines for Veterinary Certification of Animals for Transport

Introduction:

➢ Veterinary certification is always discretionary – that is, it is the individual veterinarian's decision whether or not to certify animal as fit for transport, having obtained enough information to facilitate that decision.
➢ Animal history, veterinary consultation, and clinical examination with written notes (including a differential/definitive diagnosis) are required in every instance prior to writing a fitness for transport certificate.
➢ Veterinary discretion and professional judgement is required in each instance.
➢ Gather evidence (photos and/or videos) and consult MPI VS where necessary.

In cases where there are issues or concerns about the appropriateness of veterinary certification, or the manner of completion of the certificate, there will be a response from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to that certifying veterinarian. In most instances feedback/education is likely sufficient to prevent repeat incidents. For serious incidents, or recurring veterinary certification issues, the matter may be referred to the Veterinary Council of New Zealand.

General principles regarding veterinary certification of fitness for transport:

➢ Transport is inherently stressful for livestock.
➢ Distance and time affect welfare during transport and arrival condition:
  o Time and distance SHOULD be as short as possible;
  o The animal SHOULD go directly from the farm to the nearest appropriate slaughter premise;
  o When this is not possible, the veterinarian MUST contact the MPI VS veterinarian prior to transport;
  o The location of the slaughter premises MUST be stated.
➢ If the health of an animal is already compromised prior to transport, the process of transportation may exacerbate the condition. Steep ramps, travel fatigue and hard ground are a reality through to slaughter.
  The best the animal is likely to look is off pasture, in the yard, at the farm.
  Animals should arrive at their destination in a state similar to that when loaded.
➢ Consideration should be given to whether the animal received adequate and reasonable treatment and attention on that farm for the condition.
➢ When uncertain, or pressured to certify, seek a second opinion and/or more information from:
  o Another colleague
  o MPI VS at the slaughter plant (if transport is to slaughter)
    ▪ Include photos and videos
• Obtain clinical examination information, including history and treatment history where possible.
• Record in your own records or clinical notes any discussions made with MPI VS
  o NZVA Fitness for Transport Guidelines
  ➢ A veterinary certificate is valid for a maximum of 7 days, from the date of clinical examination.
    o A shorter or longer (to a maximum of 10 days) period of validity may be more appropriate to the condition.
  ➢ The condition of the animal should not significantly deteriorate before the animal is transported.
  ➢ The certifying veterinarian may specify additional transport conditions if these are appropriate.
  ➢ Veterinarians MUST comply with the Veterinary Council of New Zealand Code of Professional Conduct, which states ‘Veterinarians must maintain the integrity of certification.
If an animal is deemed to be unfit for transport, the veterinarian must ensure that the animal receives treatment* that alleviates any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the animal immediately or humanely slaughtered on that property as soon as practical.
*An appropriate treatment/management plan may include rest and time; this should be documented in the clinical notes made by the veterinarian.

Selecting animals for transport
The Transport within New Zealand – Animal Welfare Code of Welfare 2016 has minimum standards to guide appropriate selection of animals for transport:

(a) Proper care must be taken when deciding whether it is appropriate to transport young, old, pregnant or otherwise physiologically or behaviourally compromised animals.
(b) Animals must not be transported if they are likely to give birth during the journey or be affected by metabolic complications of late pregnancy as a result of the journey.
(c) Animals must not be transported unless they are fit enough to withstand the entire journey without suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.
(d) Animals to be transported must be able to stand and to bear weight on all limbs.
(da) Lame cattle, deer, pigs, sheep, and goats must not be transported, except as allowed by Regulation 40 of the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018.
(e) An animal with horns or antlers must not be transported in a manner that allows the animal to seriously injure itself or another animal.
(f) Animals with a bleeding, discharging, or broken (and unhealed) velvet antler, horn, or pedicle must not be transported, except as allowed by Regulation 39 of the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018.
(fa) Animals must not be transported within seven days of being castrated or having their tail docked.
(g) Animals must not be transported if they display any injuries, signs of disease, abnormal behaviour or physical abnormalities that could compromise their welfare during the journey, unless a veterinary declaration of fitness for transport has been completed.^

^this is discretionary, as per the Introduction, above.
Lameness

Refer to the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018 for full wording and definitions.

A lame cattle beast, deer or pig is one that is not weight-bearing on one or more limbs when moving or standing, or has a definite limp that is clearly identified to a limb or limbs.

A lame sheep or goat is one that is not weight bearing on one or more limbs when moving or when standing, or has difficulty walking and holds its head below its backline almost continually.

A person in charge of a lame cattle beast, sheep, deer, pig or goat commits an offence against the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018 if they permit the animal to be transported.

Except:
- If the animal is being transported to a place (within 20km) for treatment.
- If the animal is accompanied by a veterinary certificate stating that the animal is fit for transport or specifying the conditions under which it is acceptable to transport the animal.

When considering whether to issue a certification of fitness for transport for any lame animal (regardless of species), veterinarians should refer to the DairyNZ lameness scoring system (DNZ LSS), which grades lameness on a scale of 0 to 3.

This scoring system can be applied over all animal species:
- Lameness grades 0 or 1 – these animals are able to be certified as fit for transport.
- Lameness grade 2 – these animals should only be certified as fit for transport when conditions are specified to prevent unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress during transport.
- Lameness grade 3 – these animals are not fit for transport, and should not be issued with a veterinary certificate.

Additionally, when certifying lame sheep and goats consider the following criteria:
- Lines of lame sheep (>10% of the mob lame) should have a discretionary veterinary transport certificate.
- The veterinarian must ensure that:
  - The sheep can bear weight adequately on all 4 legs (i.e. there are no three-legged lame sheep; no more than grade 2 on DNZ LSS)
  - There is no excessively over grown hooves (i.e. no snow-shoe type feet)
  - There is no bleeding or obvious discharge from feet
  - The sheep meet a minimum standard of body condition (i.e. not emaciated)

Inspection process from the certifying veterinarian involves walking the sheep passed, and giving enough time to assess the feet and weight bearing capabilities. It is not practical to get individual identification. An accurate tally and description of the mob to be transported is sufficient.

Footrot/scald will be differentiated from other causes of lameness (e.g. foot abscess, injury, fractures, dislocations). For individual animals where there is clear and significant pathology associated with the lameness, which is consistent with the regulation’s lameness definition, an immediate infringement notice is likely.
If veterinary advice is sought prior to transporting a lame animal for the purpose of further treatment (within 20km), the lame animal/s must be given adequate pain relief and/or immobilisation (physical and/or chemical). If this cannot be achieved sufficiently (e.g. fractures; dislocations, other severe injury) to prevent unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress, the animal should not be transported, and other options used to relieve welfare compromise.

There may be cases where an animal has an abnormal gait or imperfect mobility not involving pain or distress (e.g. an animal with a healed, amputated claw). Such cases may be eligible for transport providing the animal can bear weight and walk without pain, and is not likely to suffer pain or distress during transport or loading/unloading.

The lameness regulation also defines that animals are **NOT** lame if the condition is non-painful (i.e. conformational fault, gait abnormality, healed injury) AND the animal can bear weight on all four limbs. The regulations does not require that these animals are accompanied by a veterinary certificate, though farmers may still request a fitness for transport certificate, to ensure Section 23 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 is not breached (i.e. the animal must still be fit to transport, irrespective of the non-lame criteria).

**Other Considerations**

Veterinarians may be asked to provide a fitness for transport declaration for animals with healed injuries that knowingly did not receive treatment at the time of injury, and would have significantly compromised the animal's welfare at the time. This is unacceptable and contravenes the Animal Welfare Act 1999, if the owner/person in charge has not provided appropriate treatment for the animal to manage pain and distress.

Part of a fitness for transport examination should include the history of how the animal was managed at the time of the injury. A veterinary certificate should not be provided in cases where an animal did not receive appropriate treatment to manage pain and distress.

**References**

1. Animal Welfare Act 1999
2. Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018
3. Dairy NZ Lameness Scoring System
5. Sheep and Beef Cattle - Code of Welfare 2015 (BCS references)
7. Veterinary Council of New Zealand – Code of Professional Conduct
Appendix 1 - Conditions Affecting Fitness for Transport

Note: descriptive words (e.g. distended, enlarged, minor, significant etc.) are somewhat subjective, and hard to define; accordingly, photographic and video evidence and communication with MPI VS is recommended where any doubt exists about fitness for transport.

Conditions in any animal

Infringement Offences

The following list of conditions comprises those for which infringement notices or fines may be imposed by a court under the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018.

i. An animal with horns and antlers that allows the animal to seriously injure itself or another animal. Seriously injure means to cause external bleeding or excessive internal bruising, or bleeding or broken horns, velvet antlers or pedicles (Regulation 31).

ii. An animal that has an in-growing horn that is piercing or inflaming any part of the animal's body or causing a skin abrasion (Regulation 38).

iii. An animal with a bleeding, discharging, or broken (and unsealed) velvet antler, horn or pedicle (Regulation 39).

iv. A lame animal. For cattle, deer or pigs, lame means unable to bear weight on one or more limbs when moving or standing, or has a definite limp that is clearly identified to a limb or limbs; or for sheep and goats, not weight bearing on one or more limbs when moving or when standing, or has difficulty walking and holds its head below its backline almost continually (Regulation 40).

v. An animal in late pregnancy – an animal that gives birth to viable young during transport or within 24 hours after transport to a sale yard or slaughter premises (Regulation 41; note variation for deer).

vi. An animal with an injured or diseased udder. This includes necrotic udders, an udder that has a discharge other than milk, an udder that shows signs of inflammation (red, hot, swollen), an udder with a lesion that is bleeding or discharging (Regulation 42).

vii. An animal with eye cancer, unless accompanied by a veterinary certificate. This applies to an eye cancer that is not confined to the eye/eyelid, bleeding or discharging, or that is causing the eye to discharge, or an eye cancer that is more than 2 cm diameter (Regulation 43).

Veterinary consultation and discretionary veterinary certification is required to legally transport animals with any of the conditions above. See the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018.

Conditions making an animal unacceptable for transport

Because welfare of the animals in question is compromised by the following conditions, NZVA does not support their certification as fit for transport, as transport is likely to cause unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

i. Acute systemic infection (e.g. is sick or showing evidence of an acute infectious disease).

ii. Acute or chronic skin infections (including photosensitisation) which are extensive, infected or raw.
iii. Any purulent discharge.
iv. Injuries that cause and/or exacerbate welfare compromise during transport:
   a. Acute injury or wound.
   b. Chronic injury or wound, not substantially healed
   c. Injuries that are multiple, extensive or infected, at any depth (e.g. dog bite, shearing injuries).
v. An animal which is recumbent and unable to stand, or likely to become recumbent.
vi. Abdominal conditions that are likely to be associated with unnecessary or unreasonable pain and or distress (e.g. abdominal hernia, intussusception, intestinal torsion/volvulus, uterine torsion).
vii. Penile/preputial conditions where there is haemorrhage, swelling, abscessation, or significant discharge.
viii. Blindness in one or both eyes such that distress and/or injury is likely as a result of blindness.
ix. Retained foetal membranes.
x. Prolapsed uterus, vagina, or rectum (e.g. rectal prolapse in grower pigs).
xi. Pathologies that preclude urination and defecation (e.g. rectal strictures in pigs).
xii. Fly strike.
xiii. Excess coat (i.e. wool/hair/fibre) length that could lead to heat stress during transport.
xiv. Grossly enlarged or distend udders.
xv. Conditions that would have responded to veterinary treatment but where wilful neglect has caused suffering of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.
xvi. Any condition not listed where there is obvious unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

Conditions where transport needs discretionary veterinary certification*

*discretionary (i.e. optional, non-compulsory, voluntary) veterinary certification is discretionary and based on history, clinical examination and consideration of the journey requirements, and should only be issued if risks of transport can be managed appropriately.

In some instances, an animal with the following conditions may be transported provided a valid and considered veterinary certificate is provided. Animals arriving with a veterinary certificate will generally be accepted at a slaughter premises based on the judgement of the certifying veterinarian, providing the directions on the veterinary certificate having been complied with by the owner/person in charge and the transporter.

i. Body condition score below those defined as acceptable in the relevant Code of Welfare for that species. Refer to MPI Codes of Welfare.
   a. Refer to species specific BCS requirements, including MPI VS’s expectations in Appendix 2
ii. Lame animals (covered above in detail).

iii. Acute pinkeye with serous or mucopurulent discharge.

iv. Minor penile/preputial conditions provided the animal is able to urinate, and the penis is unlikely to sustain further injury during transport.

**Species Specific Conditions Affecting Fitness for Transport**

**Bovine**

**Infringement Offences**

i. As for any animal. (see above)

ii. A calf that is not four days old (Regulation 33)

iii. A calf that is diseased, injured, disabled or impaired (Regulation 33)

iv. A calf with hooves that are bulbous and with soft unworn tissue (Regulation 33)

v. A calf with a red-coloured, raw or fleshy navel (Regulation 33)

**Conditions where transport needs discretionary veterinary certification***

*discretionary (i.e. optional, non-compulsory, voluntary) veterinary certification is discretionary and based on history, clinical examination and consideration of the journey requirements, and should only be issued if risks of transport can be managed appropriately.

i. Woody tongue and lumpy jaw (BCS must be adequate).

ii. Lactating cows at risk of developing acute metabolic problems

   a. Where recommended measures have not been taken, or industry standards not met which minimise this risk, veterinary certificates should not be provided.

   b. See NZVA policy on Transport of Lactating Cows

iii. Cows in late pregnancy

   a. Cows in last 4 weeks of gestation (use Planned Start of Calving) should not be transported for longer than 2 hours.

      i. In some instances, it may be necessary for cows to be transported for longer than 2 hours (i.e. form run-off to home farm)

      ii. Before certifying late gestation cows as fit for transport, veterinarians must be confident that the welfare of the cows can be ensured (per section 23 of the Animal Welfare Act) AND that the destination is appropriate for cows in late gestation (i.e. facilities and environment)

   b. During the last 3 months of pregnancy, veterinary certification should require:

      i. Maximum journey time of 8 hrs

      ii. Rest periods of 12 hrs between every 8 hours of travel

      iii. Reduced stocking density on the truck

      iv. Transport on bottom deck, top deck only suitable if ramp slope is less than 20° (1:3)
Ovine & Caprine
Infringement Offences
i. As for any animal (see above)

Cervine
Infringement Offences
i. As for any animal (see above, note Regulation 41 (late pregnancy))
ii. Recently velvetted stags/bleeding antler stubs/broken velvet antler.
   Stags should not be sent for slaughter within seven days of velveting.
   Spikers velvetted with NaturO rings in accordance with the mechanical block system must be
   transported to slaughter within 72 hours of velveting and the rings must remain intact
   (Regulation 39).

Conditions making an animal unacceptable for transport
i. Velvet or hard antler exceeding 110mm measured from the centre of the skull between the
   pedicles.
ii. Overly aggressive deer that may cause injury to themselves, other deer or their handlers.
iii. Deer (dams or fawns) that have been weaned for less than 10 days.

Porcine animals
Infringement Offences
i. As for any animal. (see above)

Conditions where transport needs discretionary veterinary certification*
*discretionary veterinary certification is based on history, clinical examination and consideration of the journey requirements
i. Aural haematomas that are of sufficient size that damage or rupture is likely during transport.
Species Specific Body Condition Scores

For all species, discretionary veterinary certification for transport may be requested to facilitate urgent remedial action; if this involves transport to a slaughter premise, contact MPI VS before certifying.

BOVINE:
  i. Animals with a body condition score (BCS) at or below the level requiring ‘urgent remedial action’ as per the relevant Code of Welfare for that species
     a. Do not certify at BCS 1 for beef cattle (0-5 scale)
     b. Do not certify below BCS 3 for dairy cattle (1-10 scale)

OVINE and CAPRINE:
  i. Animals with Body Condition Score (BCS) at or below the level requiring ‘urgent remedial action’ as per the relevant Code of Welfare for that species:
     a. Do not certify at BCS 1 for sheep (0-5 scale)
     b. Do not certify below BCS 1 for goats (0-5 scale)

CERVINE:
  i. Animals with Body Condition Score (BCS) at or below the level requiring ‘urgent remedial action’ as per the relevant Code of Welfare for that species:
     a. Do not certify below BSC 2 for deer (0-5 scale)

PORCINE:
  i. Animals with Body Condition Score (BCS) at or below the level requiring ‘urgent remedial action’ as per the relevant Code of Welfare for that species:
     a. Do not certify below BCS 2 for pigs (1-5 scale)