



## Animal Welfare In Stock Transport

### It's *Everybody's* Responsibility

The Australian livestock transport industry is under heavy scrutiny. The reputation of your industry is on the line. It's a professional industry, but to safeguard it, we all have a role to play. Working together with the best techniques helps us all to do that. ***Your efforts in preparing stock well for transport will increase the quality of the animals at the other end and reduce bruising, downers, deaths and stress levels.***

#### **Your Responsibilities When Presenting Stock to the Carrier**

**Is it fit to load? If not, draft it out!** If any of your stock are sick, diseased or lame, they shouldn't be travelling. They are likely to go down on the journey and drag fit stock down with them. You have a responsibility to draft out such stock before the carrier begins loading.

**Don't conduct high-stress activities before loading** - *Never* crutch, eartag or dehorn the stock directly prior to loading. These activities are stressful for stock. Such stock will load with higher stress levels and won't travel as well as calmer stock.

**Never run stock straight out of the paddock to the trucks.** Stock mustered straight to the trucks will be more stressed when they are loaded, leading to a higher risk of bad outcomes during the journey. Stock should be yarded well before the loading starts.

#### **Carry Them Better: A Guide to Good Preparation Pre-Transport**

**Drain the stock** - Stock that are full of water and green feed never travel as well as drained stock that have had some access to dry feed (ie dry hay/grower pellets). 'Full' stock will empty out quicker during transport and can then become stressed, weak and unsteady. Urine can stain skins, reducing hide value and causing slipping, which leads to downers and deaths. Take your stock off feed and water altogether in the 12 hours before the journey, *if the overall time off water maximum for the intended journey allows* (see Table 1 below).

**Yard Pre-Loading** Bring stock into yards at least 12 hours prior to transport if possible, but preferably the night before. Yarded stock settle well and are less stressed on the journey.

**Drought Stock and Long Trips – Take Special Care** - When stock are already weakened through drought, stress levels and the risk of downers and deaths increase. Follow good practices and have the right stock properly prepared well in advance for these trips.

## How Animal Stress Occurs in Stock Transport – And How You Can Reduce It

Transporting livestock causes stress, but using professional stock carriers who work with the latest equipment and who operate to animal welfare regulations will minimise that stress. But there are also things you can do even before the truck arrives to ensure a humane transport outcome – one that will also increase the value of your stock at the other end.

**Livestock stress in transport is cumulative.** The trucking process will always be tougher on stock if they are *already stressed*. You have a role to play in reducing this stress.

**Time Off Water Rules – Stick By Them!**

**Different species/classes of stock are permitted different time periods without water.** This is the most important aspect of animal welfare in livestock transport and you must know the rules. From 2009, these rules will become law in all States and territories and all parties will be responsible for living by them. Your carrier has to do this as well!

**Table 1. Time Off Water Maximums for Sheep and Cattle – A Quick Guide**

Species/Class	Max Time off Water	Extensions Available?	Notes
<b>Cattle (over 6 months)</b>	36 hours	Further 12 hours (ie 48 hours total)	Extension only allowed where stock are assessed as travelling well and can complete the journey in good condition and driving conditions are favourable. Such stock must then be spelled and provided with food and water for min. 24 hrs post- transport recovery.
<b>Young Cattle (Under 6 months)</b>	24 hours	No extensions	
<b>Sheep (over 6 months)</b>	36 hours	Further 12 hours (ie 48 hours total)	Extension only allowed where stock are assessed as travelling well and can complete the journey in good condition and driving conditions are favourable. Such stock must then be spelled and provided with food and water for min. 24 hrs post- transport recovery.
<b>Lambs (Sheep Under 6 months)</b>	24 hours	No extensions	
<b>Sheep (over 6 months) being delivered to live export facility in WA</b>	36 hours	No extensions	

### **What does the time off water maximum means for you?**

**Talk to your carrier.** Satisfy yourself that your stock will be within these outer limits and build the time that you lock your stock off water (pre-loading) around this.

### **What about when sending stock to saleyards?**

**Saleyards should always provide watered pens for all stock**, so that carriers taking stock from yards always knows that the stock have had access to water. Carriers taking stock from saleyards do not always know when they last had a drink. Watered yards take away the risks.

### **Putting Too Many Livestock on Crates – Know the Facts**

Putting too many stock on the crate to save a few dollars can have very bad outcomes for welfare and eating quality. Overloaded stock crates create a higher risk of downers and deaths and cause greater stress and bruising.

**There are clear guidelines on stock crate penning levels.** Visit the Australian Livestock Transporters Association website [www.alta.org.au](http://www.alta.org.au) to find out the best penning levels for all major species and classes of livestock.

### **Your Livestock Carrier: What You Need to Tell Them**

- When booking a truck, give your carrier an accurate idea of numbers and average weights of the stock. This will avoid pressure to overload or leave stock behind.
- Tell your carrier when the stock last had access to water
- Tell your carrier if there are pregnant stock involved. Stock in the last two weeks of pregnancy should never be transported for sale or slaughter. *If in doubt, draft it out.*

### **Your Livestock Carrier: Things To Expect From Them**

**Unprofessional stock carriers are a great risk to the industry.** Carriers with poor equipment, poor loading and unloading techniques and a general lack of care cause unnecessary downers and deaths. The Australian Livestock Transporters Association wants these carriers out of the industry in the interests of our reputation here and overseas.

So talk with your carrier. Ask them about their practices. The TruckCare accreditation system is an audited quality assurance program for stock carriers that meets or exceeds all of the rules and regulations for stock carrying - it is backed by the RSPCA, Governments and the meat and livestock industry.

Ask your carrier about them becoming TruckCare accredited. For more information on TruckCare and to see a list of TruckCare accredited operators visit [www.alta.org.au](http://www.alta.org.au)