Livestock transport

The need to transport food animals occurs essentially in commercial agriculture and to a lesser extent in the rural or subsistence sector. These animals need to be moved for a number of reasons including marketing, slaughter, re-stocking, from drought areas to better grazing and change of ownership. Historically, livestock has been moved on hoof but with increasing urbanisation of the population and commercialisation of animal production, livestock transport by road and rail vehicles has surpassed this.

Regulations

Transport of livestock is undoubtedly the most stressful and injurious stage in the chain of operations between farm and slaughterhouse and contributes significantly to poor animal welfare and loss of production. For this reason the European Union has regulated transport of live vertebrate animals with the aim to prevent injury or undue suffering to animals and to ensure that they have appropriate conditions that meet their needs.
The Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005 introduces stricter rules on journeys exceeding eight hours and provides that transport vehicles must be fitted with equipment of the highest quality, including a temperature monitoring system and permanent access to drinking water. Well-ventilated vehicles are necessary as poor ventilation may cause undue stress and even suffocation, particularly if the weather is hot, or accumulation of exhaust fumes in road vehicles with subsequent poisoning. Pigs are particularly susceptible to excessive heat, poor air circulation, high humidity and respiratory stress. Furthermore, any vehicle used for the transport of slaughter livestock should have a non-slip floor – to reduce the risk of animals falling – with proper drainage and protection from the sun and rain, particularly for pigs. The surfaces of the sides should be smooth and there should be no protrusions or sharp edges. Additional balance for animals can be provided by partitioning the interior of the vehicle with either wood or metal poles or solid boards.

The regulation prohibits transport of very young animals: calves of less than 10 days, pigs of less than three weeks and lambs of less than a week, except where the journey does not exceed 100 km. Also females in the last stages of gestation and during the first week after giving birth are not allowed to be transported.
Space allowances for animals and journey times are very important. Overloading may result in injuries or even death of livestock. The way of calculation of the spaces depends on the animal type: for cattle and sheep, it is recommended that space allowances should be calculated according to an allometric equation relating size to body weight; for horses on long journeys, it is obligatory to use individual stalls. In a few words it is necessary to allow each type of livestock sufficient floor space so that they can stand comfortably without being overcrowded.
In terms of journey times, the regulation provides for different times depending on the type of animal: unweaned animals, i.e. animals still drinking milk (nine hours of travel, followed by one hour's rest to enable the animals to drink, followed by a further nine hours of travel), pigs (24 hours of travel, provided there is continuous access to water), horses (24 hours of travel, with access to water every eight hours), cattle, sheep and goats (14 hours of travel, followed by one hour's rest to enable the animals to drink, followed by a further 14 hours of travel).



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1 For each of the words below decide which meaning best applies to the context of the passage above.

1. occurs: si *verifica/occorre*
2. injurious: *ingiurioso/dannoso*
3. poor: *scarso/povero*
4. prevent: *prevenire/proibire*
5. meet: *incontrare/soddisfare*
6. undue: *non necessario/non richiesto*
7. susceptible: *impressionabile/sensibile*
8. smooth: *levigato/armonioso*
9. stall: *stalla/cabina*
10. journey: *percorso/giornata*

2 Are the following sentences true or false? Correct the false ones.

	T	F
a. Livestock are transported only for slaughtering.	☐	☐
b. Re-stocking means moving animals to better grazing areas.	☐	☐
c. Transporting animals by road and rail is less common than transport on hoof.	☐	☐
d. The EU regulated the transport of animals in order to improve animal welfare.	☐	☐
e. Transport vehicles must be totally enclosed to prevent animal escaping.	☐	☐
f. High temperature and humidity do not generally affect pigs.	☐	☐
g. Very young animals are not allowed to be transported for more than 100 km.	☐	☐
h. Animals subject to long distance travels without proper watering may die.	☐	☐

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