



Large Animal Transportation

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Patience and knowledge of animal behavior are essential if one is to work with livestock. Understanding animal psychology will help; you can use this knowledge to your advantage, thus helping to prevent injury to both animals and humans.

Farm animals have the ability to see almost 360 degrees without moving their heads. Shadows, sudden movements and bright objects will spook an animal or cause them to suddenly stop.

Night loading and unloading require adequate lighting because animals will move more easily from a dark to lighted area rather than light to dark. Moderate lighting softens and reduces shadows.

Spreading bedding or manure on ramps and alleyways will help to prevent animals from balking. Familiar odors will encourage animals to move in unfamiliar areas.

When moving animals, never kick, hit, pull wool, or rush them, as this may cause bruises or injuries. Beef, sheep and swine being transported for meat purposes are often bruised by improper handling or by sharp objects in the trailer, such as nails or unpadding corners.

When trucking livestock, never make sudden starts or stops because animals will frequently be thrown against each other or knocked down and trampled. Make sure all truck or trailer movements

are gentle. Strive for slow, smooth starts and long, gentle smooth stops. Beware of taking corners too quickly, as the animals can shift their weight and possibly cause a rollover. When loading, tie back gates so they fit closely against the fence when open. Put gate latches at the top of the gate to prevent bruising. Have hog gates no more than four inches off the floor.

Overcrowding, combined with hot or humid weather, may cause death or heat exhaustion. Adequate ventilation in trucks or trailers will keep animals cool and comfortable. Pipe truck exhausts away from animals.

Temperature extremes can kill livestock during transport. Whenever possible, haul livestock during cooler times of the day or night. The proper type and amount of bedding is very important when trucking animals.

Wet sand will improve animal footing. Show animals may have their hair or wool coats ruined unless sand is covered by several inches of straw. Never use straw or hay for hogs when the weather is hot. Instead use wet sand to prevent overheating.

Health Certificates

In transporting animals to fairs, shows or even club outings, it is essential to have the animals vaccinated for diseases prevalent in the area. Nothing is

worse than losing an animal to a disease that could easily have been prevented.

In addition to general preventative vaccinations and care, many farm animals must have a health certificate or be tested for certain diseases before they can be taken to some fairs, shows or driven out of state. Be sure to check with your veterinarian for required tests and vaccinations. A few dollars spent on preventative care could save the life of your animal.

For a complete list of requirements or recommendations for moving your animals, call the State Veterinarian at the Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food or contact your local 4-H County Extension Educator.

Transporting Cattle

Always handle cattle gently and slowly before and during transportation. Cattle that aren't used to being transported are often stressed, which can lead to lower production and growth, and a higher chance of the animals becoming sick. Before transporting young animals, get them accustomed to being loaded and spending time in a trailer or truck.

During hot weather, avoid overcrowding or exposure to direct sun, especially in vehicles with little ventilation. If you plan to haul animals of different sizes together, either tie or separate them to prevent injuries. Take special precautions with animals with horns or animals known to fight. There is no way to escape in a closed trailer, so it is safer to tie all animals than risk injuries caused by horned animals.

Cattle generally require a truck or trailer with sides at least 6 to 7 feet high, preferably with a solid roof or cover that prevents them from trying to jump out. The sides should be smooth, and if not

solid, the openings shouldn't be large enough to allow any of the animals to stick their legs or heads out of the trailer. The floor should be a solid, strong, non-slip surface, with adequate bedding or mats to reduce stress on their feet and legs.

All trucks or trailers higher than 1 to 1.5 feet from the ground should have a solid sided ramp that offers good traction and is wide enough so the animal feels safe when entering the vehicle. Permanent ramps should have no more than a 20 degree slope, and portable ramps a 25 degree slope.

Transporting Dairy Goats

Dairy goats can be transported in many different types of vehicles or trailers. The main requirements are that the animals can't jump out and that they have adequate ventilation and protection from inclement weather.

An enclosed truck cap with screened windows or numerous vents offers an effective mode of transportation for a large number of goats. Small trailers with a roof and windows or vents also work well. Be sure to pen goats of the same size together. If animals of different sizes must be hauled together, tie the larger or unruly goats, but make sure they can't choke or get tangled in the ropes. The rope should be long enough to allow them to get up if they fall, but not so long they can injure other animals.

Transporting Swine

Animal safety and comfort should be a top priority when preparing to truck swine. Always use bedding material that provides good footing and keeps them warm in the winter or cool in the sum-

mer. Hogs require more room in a truck during hot weather. Hogs weighing 200 pounds will need a minimum of 3.5 square feet per animal. With high humidity this space requirement may increase. Load and unload quickly as heat builds up in a trailer which isn't moving.

Loading ramps should be slatted for better footing when loading and unloading. All hogs should be separated by age, weight, sex and social groups (pens or farms). Once the vehicle is loaded, the driver should always start and stop smoothly to prevent animals from being piled up or thrown off their feet. The driver should travel without any lengthy stops to prevent the pigs from becoming overheated.

In extreme cold weather, watch out for wind chill— it can kill hogs.

Transporting Sheep

During hot weather sheep should be trucked during the cool hours of the day. Allow sufficient room on the truck for animals to move about, but not excessive space. If sheep have too much space, use a crowding panel to restrict movement.

Always separate sheep by age, sex and weight. Separate rams from ewes. Observe the same truck driving rules for sheep as for swine. Cold weather trucking of sheep requires adequate wind chill protection in the form of solid panels, wind-break and/or blankets. Sheep can become chilled and sick without proper protection from the environment.

Transporting Horses

When working with horses, handlers should always wear appropriate footwear and gloves. Remain calm if a horse won't load and use your common sense. It is al-

ways a good idea to have a helper along—one of you can load the horse, while the other shuts the ramp or door.

Horses may balk at entering a trailer if they are unfamiliar with being trucked, so spend the time to get them used to it before they have to go anywhere. It will be easier to load a reluctant animal with the escape door open, as the trailer will let in more light for visibility and you will have a place to go should the horse(s) move in quickly.

Truck the heavier of two or a single animal on the left side of a two-horse trailer because the road is crowned (slopes down toward the shoulder). This will make the trailer ride easier and the trailer less likely to sway.

Use leather halters or nylon halters with breakaway leather crown pieces that will break if a horse gets into trouble. Properly fitted and adjusted halters should have the noseband located halfway between the nose and the projecting cheekbone with no more than three adult finger spaces between the nose and the cheekbone.

Horses' legs should have bandages or shipping boots. Make sure to protect the tendons, bulbs of the heels and the coronary band. Poll guards are useful for horses that raise their heads too high and bump themselves. Tail bandages will protect the tail hair from rubbing off during shipping.

Under no circumstances should you tie a horse onto or load a horse into an unhitched trailer. If you are being driven to a show and the driver needs to leave, make arrangements to stable the horse on the grounds or tie it in a suitable place. While loading, the trailer should be stable with the parking brake engaged, preferably on level ground.

Cotton lead ropes are the easiest to tie and the best for your hands because they tend not to cause rope burns.

If you are trying to get a reluctant horse into the trailer remain on its left side. Don't get in front of it and attempt to pull it into the trailer. The horse should be tied with a safety release knot or a trailer tie fitted with a panic snap. The length should allow the horse to be able to balance itself while the trailer is moving but not be so long the horse can turn around to face backward or reach the horse next to it.

Once the horse is in the trailer, fasten the butt bar, then its head. If you do the opposite, a horse could be badly frightened if he starts to back up then realizes his head is still tied. Do not load a tacked-up horse on the trailer; it may spook the animal or damage your equipment.

For problem horses, try loading a companion first. Use grain or carrots or create a "chute" for the horse to travel through by clipping longe lines to the trailer, one on each side. Often the horse will think the only option is to go forward through the longe line chute into the trailer. If your horse still won't load, seek the help of a more experienced person.

Activities

1. Practice loading and unloading your truck or trailer. Observe how both you and your animals respond to the situation.
2. Learn how to halter and properly lead an animal
3. Practice tying a quick-release safety knot and bowline knot
4. Ask your local veterinarian to conduct a clinic for everyone in your club so you will all know what tests or health papers your animals will need before going to the first show.
5. Prepare a list of necessary items to take with you for a horse show or fair. Compare your list with others in the club.

References

- Harris, Susan. "Trailer Towing Without Fear", *Practical Horseman*, February, 1982, pp. 18-24.
- United States Pony Clubs, Inc., Instruction Council. Travel Safety, 1980, West Chester, PA.

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