



Producer Update: Amendments to Animal Transport Regulations

New Transport Regulations: An Overview

BC Dairy Staff

In February 2020, CFIA introduced updates to the Humane Transport Regulations (Health of Animals Regulations (HAR) - Part XII). These regulations were initiated with a two-year soft release, so that dairy producers across the country could slowly implement the changes over 24 months. **The 24-month "soft enforcement" period will end February 20, 2022, and CFIA will shift their engagement from education to enforcement.**

Compliance will be determined by outcome-based measures; animals should be arriving at their final destination in the same condition of health and vigour they left the farm in. As enforcement is outcome-based, there will be no review of records to determine compliance. Example: For young calves (under 8 days of age), the CFIA will not

look at producer's birth records to determine the age at which animals were shipped. Only the condition of the animals upon loading, during transport, and upon arrival will be used to determine compliance. This means that animals arriving in poor condition with unhealed or infected navels would indicate non-compliance with the regulations.

Transportation events are taxing on all animals. Nearly all animals lose some body condition during transport, so assessing the condition of cattle before loading is critical to managing risk factors for each animal.

Before loading, the following should be assessed:

- Health, vigour, and body condition score of the animal
- The animal's ability to stand, walk, and ultimately withstand the entire

transportation process

- The length of time the animal will be in transportation, including delays, such as border crossings
- The climate and temperatures animals will endure

If there is any question about the fitness of an animal prior to loading, producers should have a plan for obtaining a second opinion. For some with a highly trusted and trained transporter, this may be asking the transporter's opinion, as they know the route and the unloading conditions of past animals. Herd veterinarians may be able to review a photo of an animal in question, and this would serve as a record both of the animal's



physical condition upon leaving the farm, and as a record of having sought expert opinion. Even asking a colleague or neighbour what they would do given the animal's condition can help prevent making a decision that results in negative outcomes during transportation.

The primary changes to the regulations that will affect BC dairy producers are outlined in the table below, and pertain to:

- Calves under 8 days of age
- Unweaned calves 9 days and older
- Cull cows

What to Know About New Federal Cattle Transport Regulations

BC Dairy caught up with Nicole Sillett, on staff with DFC, and BC Dairy's representative on the DFC national board of directors, Dave Taylor, to ask some questions about what these changes mean for BC dairy producers.

Nicole Sillett – Dairy Farmers of Canada



Q: Can you give us a sense of your role in the transport regulations consultation?

It was my job to look at the draft regulations from a technical perspective, highlight any concerns and any areas of agreement, and help the DFC team formulate our response to the government.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about the process?

CFIA published the initial draft regulations in 2016, we did an internal review, and connected with partners like The Canadian Cattlemen's Association and provincial members like BC Dairy. Then we submitted our comments in February 2017. CFIA published the final regulations in the Canada Gazette Part II in February 2019 and the regulations came into effect February 2020.

The previous regulations were set in 1977, so it had been a long time. The original maximum travel times were based on how much time it took for cattle to travel on rail across the country. They did need to update those regulations and consider the rationale for the maximum time.

Q: Where are we at now?

We are supportive of improving animal welfare in transportation and wanted to make sure we transmitted the message that we are in strong support of improvements; however, there were many things to consider. There has been a lot of

animal welfare research done in the last 20 years, so we have a better understanding of the animal welfare needs, and what we can do to improve.

But, animal welfare issues are complex and the solutions are not necessarily simple. For example, we have a lot less slaughter processing capacity than we used to. The reduction in the number of those plants means animals potentially have to travel longer as there are fewer opportunities close by.

Now, we are trying to figure out how to work within the current regulations, as an industry. Since the regulations came into effect, CFIA is supporting a transition period until February 2022 as a result of industry feedback. During this transition period, CFIA developed several working groups. DFC is participating in two CFIA-led Working Groups: one focused on calves and the other focused on dairy cattle. These working groups work directly with CFIA staff to find solutions to any lingering questions.

Q: What are the areas within the new regulations that producers should be most mindful of?

Number one is calves. If they are 8 days of age or less they have to reach their final destination within 12 hours. They are not allowed to be unloaded or go through an auction. If possible, know where your cattle are going and how long they will be on that truck so you can do an accurate assessment of fitness for transport.

Farmers may want to consider holding bull calves longer and they should always make sure calves are strong and healthy before putting them on a truck.

The other one is lactating cattle. This one is new. You can ship a lactating cow as long as it is going to be milked along the way to prevent the engorgement of the udder. That plan needs to be in place.

Also definitions for compromised and unfit cattle have changed. They are more detailed and clearer now, so farmers need to be aware of what those are. You cannot ship an unfit animal unless it is going to a place to get veterinary care. Compromised animals are at a 12-hour max and have to go directly to their final destination.

We are still working with the CFIA and other groups to identify some of the challenges and see if we can find helpful solutions. The work is going well, and is still in process. It is a matter of finding what is achievable for farmers and best for the cows.

Q: Any final recommendations for farmers as they prepare for the new regulations to take effect?

We produced a series of fact sheets on cull cows, with a summary of new regs and a shipping checklist and recommendations for farmers shipping cows that are lactating. Those are all on our proAction website. Producers can also contact BC Dairy for a copy.

Dave Taylor – board member with BC Dairy and DFC



Q: Can you tell us a little bit about your role (at DFC) and your work on behalf of producers with respect to transport regulations?

I'm the representative from BC on the Board of Directors of DFC. In regard to the transport regulations, a lot of the work was done prior to me becoming a board member at DFC. It was a multi-step process to change the regulations. Part of this was consulting with industry, although many others took part, including academia, animal welfare groups, regulators, veterinary organizations, and the general public. As part of the public consultation there were more than 11,000 respondents and over 50,000 comments.

Q: From your perspective, what are some of the regional considerations (within BC) for adjusting to the new transport rules?

The farthest regions from the final destination have the most risk of issues occurring in transport. For Vancouver Island, most calves over eight days of age are now transported to the Mainland where they receive food, water and rest before

continuing to a final destination – most of them Alberta. For farmers in the Lower Mainland, the challenge will be to transport within the 12 hours. For those producers that can raise calves until at least 9 days or older it is recommended they do so.

For the Okanagan, calves can reach their final destination within 12 hours, so there is less impact. For farmers in the north, most breeders are raising animals as feeder stock and so shipping of young calves is not routine from this area.

For cull cows, the Fraser Valley has the advantage as they would be closest to processing markets. Assessment is key once again and if animals are fit for transport, they should reach their final destination within hours allowed. For farmers on Vancouver Island, the extra length of a trip off the Island carries additional risk. For the north, cull cows are most likely destined for Alberta, and producers should be well within the length of time allowed if cows are fit for travel. Producers from all areas need to assess transport-related risks that could delay timelines in pre-planning.

Q: What can producers do to prepare themselves and their animals?

I think it is important that we assume there will be more than one stopover before the final destination. If we believe an animal is at risk of not successfully making the trip, then keep them at home until that risk is reduced. If animals have a reduced capacity to withstand transport, they are considered compromised and the regulation is clear that these must be transported differently.

We also need to be communicating any pre-existing conditions with the transporter and be aware as much as possible of the details of the trip. We do share a responsibility with the transporter in successful outcomes. We do not hand over all responsibility the minute an animal is loaded - HAR (Health of Animal Regulation) applies to anyone who loads or causes an animal to be loaded. Producers who are unsure whether an animal is fit for transport should consult their veterinarian.

Q: Any final comments that may be valuable for dairy farmers to consider when integrating these changes?

We all want successful outcomes. As producers let's do our part to ensure our animals are in good condition and fit for the anticipated transport.

	Condition of animal	Requirement if shipped	Outcome-based enforcement	Recommended alternatives and solutions
Calves				
Considered COMPROMISED	Calves under 8 days of age.	Transported only once before 8 days of age and for a maximum of 12-hrs, no stops (unloading) are allowed.	Animals with wet navels should be transported directly to their final destination, no auction/sales yards unless future transportation will occur after 8 days of age.	Keep bull calves and beef cross calves on your farm until they are over 8 days of age if the transport time is nearing the 12 hour limit.
Considered COMPROMISED	Unweaned calves 9 days of age and older.	Transported up to 12 hrs consecutively before a minimum hour rest stop with feed and water is provided.	Animals should arrive at their destination bright, alert, and responsive, with ears up, mobile, and with an adequate body condition score.	Verify the destination and route with your hauler to ensure the trip is less than 12 hrs or a rest stop is planned at least every 12 hrs.
Cull cows				
FIT	Completely sound condition (dry or low lactation, good BCS, not lame, not within last 10% of gestation, no injuries or illness).	Transported for a maximum of 36 hrs.	Animals should arrive at their destination bright, alert, and responsive, mobile, and with an adequate body condition score.	
COMPROMISED	Mildly lame, minor injury or incompletely healed wound, cancer eye, bloat with no signs of discomfort, blind.	Transport must be directly to the nearest location for humane slaughter. Maximum 12 hrs in transport before a minimum 8-hr rest stop with milking, feed, water and rest. Cannot go through auction.	Animals should arrive at their destination bright, alert, and responsive, mobile, and with an adequate body condition score.	Special provisions and evidence of animal assessment and contingency planning are essential. Special provisions may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travel in a small compartment either individually or with one quiet animal • load in rear compartment • provide extra bedding
	High lactation animals.	Transport must be directly to the nearest location for humane slaughter. Maximum 12 hrs in transport before a minimum 8-hr rest stop with milking, feed, water and rest. Cannot go through auction, EXCEPT if they are milked regularly (to avoid udder engorgement).	Animals in mid-high lactation must arrive at their destination before udder engorgement. Signs of mammary engorgement include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal is uncomfortable; • Udder is hard to the touch; • Udder is warm to the touch; and • Udder has undergone a pink or red colour change. 	Ensure animals can be milked if need be, at auction or elsewhere in order to continue and finish transport without becoming engorged. Have a written process which is set up/referenced in order to manage/monitor these animals when needed.
UNFIT	Severe lameness or injury, or illness, BCS less than 2, fever, laboured breathing, in last 10% of gestation or calved within last 48 hours, bloat with signs of discomfort.	Do not transport. Euthanize on-farm if necessary. Unfit animals can be transported to receive veterinary treatment upon veterinary recommendation and with specifications outlined in the HAR.		If there is any question of the fitness of an animal to endure any length of transportation, seek additional advice from your herd veterinarian, colleagues, or transporters.

For assistance and support

The BC Dairy proAction team is here for you. If you have questions about the federal transport guidelines, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at proAction@bcdairy.ca or 604 294 3775.