

Canadian Food System INSIGHTS

LIVESTOCK TRANSPORTATION

We all want to make safe and informed decisions about the food we eat, but what information is credible? This report uses academic, government and industry research to provide a breakdown of complex information, as well as resources, if you wish to dive into additional research. It's Good, Canada's goal is to enable Canadians to make their own choices and feel confident about the food on their plates.

IMPORTANT FACTS:

1. There are several authorities that regulate and ensure safe transportation of livestock into, within and out of Canada, the Health of Animals Act, the Health of Animals Regulation, the Safe Food for Canadians Act, the Safe for Food Canadians Regulations enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as well as specific regulations in each province.
2. There are space requirements for animals when on a transportation vehicle that are specific to their breed, and size and allow for sufficient movement while being transported.
3. There are maximum time limits implemented for an animal to go without water, feed or rest to ensure the safety of the animal.
4. Animals arriving at processing plants are inspected and any concerns are thoroughly investigated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.



Let's Talk Transportation

Why do animals need to be transported in Canada?

To have a safe and effective food system in Canada, livestock animals need to be transported. Animals can be transferred between facilities at different stages of their life to ensure they are housed in proper conditions for their age, and to the abattoir.

Who regulates livestock transportation?

There are several authorities that regulate and ensure safe transportation of livestock into, within and out of Canada. The Health of Animals Act (HAA) provides the authority to make regulations for the humane treatment of animals. The Health of Animals Regulation (HAR) - Part X11 (Transport of Animals) outlines the protocols for livestock transportation specifically.

In addition, there is the Safe Food for Canadians Act (SFCA) which is put into action through the Safe for Food Canadians Regulations that govern the humane treatment of food animals. The SFCA is enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in federally licensed plants.

There are specific regulations in place for each province which are enforced in provincially licensed plants. Although these two acts may have different regulations on specific matters (e.g. hours without water), for every case - the stricter regulation must be followed. ¹

Training & Knowledge

Over the past few years, both the equipment and practices for safe animal transport have been improved with a focus on animal welfare. In addition to the regulations in place, the transport sector has voluntarily developed training programs for drivers to ensure proper handling and transportation. Examples of these programs are the Beef Quality Assurance Transportation Program, the Poultry Handling and Transportation Manual, the Transport Quality Assurance Certification for pork, and the Canadian Livestock Transport Certification Program.

The various Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farm animals also have industry guidelines for handling animals during loading and unloading. <https://www.nfacc.ca/>

What are the protocols in place to ensure animal welfare during transportation?

To ensure proper animal welfare, regulations are in place that are appropriate for each animal's species, age, condition and whether they are fit to transport. Animals arriving at processing plants are inspected and any concerns are thoroughly explored by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Feed, Water & Rest

The chart below explains the maximum amount of time that each animal can go without water, feed or rest required by Health of Animals regulations. When water is given to an animal, it must be clean, not frozen and in a format that is familiar to the animal (e.g. chickens cannot be presented with a cattle trough). ¹

Porcine	28 hours
Equine	28 hours
Broiler Chickens, Laying Hens & Rabbits	24 hours - water 28 hours - feed
Day-Old Chickens	72 hours, not repeated
All Other Animals	36 hours
Bovine (and any other ruminant that can be exclusively fed hay and grain)	36 hours
Young Ruminants (too young to be fed exclusively hay and grain)	12 hours
Livestock, cervids and camelids that are 8 days of age or less	12 hours - not repeated
Compromised animals of any species, size, age, sex or breed	12 hours

Space Requirements

There are space requirements for animals when on a transportation vehicle that are specific to their breed, and size which is outlined in the chart below. The use of containers to confine certain types of animals is to decrease the risk of injury and each container is designed for that animal's requirements. If an animal is incompatible with the group and may cause injury to the other animals, they will be separated during transport. ¹

Livestock, Cervids, Camelids, Ratites, Equine	Has the ability to stand at all times with all four feet on the floor, with head elevated, with sufficient space to permit a full range of head movement and without any part of its body coming into contact with a deck, roof or top of the conveyance or cover of the container.
Poultry (in a container)	Has the ability to maintain a squatting or sitting position with sufficient space to permit a full range of head movement without coming into contact with the cover of the container.
All Other Animals (and poultry not confined in a container)	Has the ability to maintain its preferred position with sufficient space to permit a full range of head movement

Weather Conditions

With the goal being to minimize stress and harm to the animal, protocols are in place to deal with extreme weather conditions, and ventilation. Transportation requirements ensure that each animal is provided with adequate shelter and resources to keep their body within a normal temperature range. Each animal has specific requirements, for example, at a cooler temperature, a large cow could be warm enough in the same temperature that a laying hen would not tolerate. Conveyances must have the ability to dissipate heat from environmental factors, and adaptable ventilation depending on the weather conditions that is appropriate for the entire journey. In extreme situations, practices such as transporting at night, installing fans and using sprinklers, etc. can be utilized to keep the animal comfortable. ¹

References:

1. Food, C. & Agency, I. Health of Animals Regulations: Part XII: Transport of Animals- Regulatory Amendment Interpretive Guidance for Regulated Parties On this page. 1, (2021).