



# Transporting Animals

**You should always check on the animals that you are transporting and the trailer hitch at every stop. If you are careful and observant, you will ensure that both you and your animals are safe no matter how far you have to travel.**

## **Websites on Transporting Animals:**

USDA – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
[www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov)

Transport Form:  
[www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/downloads/forms/aph7020.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/forms/aph7020.pdf)

Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources.  
[www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr)

Mass. Farm Bureau,  
[www.mfbf.net](http://www.mfbf.net)

## **Introduction:**

Transporting animals (livestock, equine or poultry) by truck requires planning, coordination and sometimes the use of professional help. Poor transportation can have serious effects on the welfare of animals. It can lead to a significant loss of quality and production.

If you're shipping within the 48 contiguous states, regulations for livestock transport may differ. While some states may not require certain vaccinations others may. You will need to check with your State Department of Animal Health and the state that you are shipping the animal into to locate the Animal Health Requirements. Requirements may differ depending upon if the animal is destined for shows, sales or slaughter. Although you can get vaccinations and appropriate paperwork handled quickly, testing sometimes has a longer turnaround time. Also, if you need a veterinarian to make a farm call, you may be looking at considerable lead time.

No matter where you're shipping, the agency that regulates livestock movement in the United States is the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the USDA. You'll need an AHIS Transport Form with your load. You may also need a state or federal health certificate from your veterinarian.

## **BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:**

Consider the following details of your load to determine how you'll start planning:

1. Number and type of animals to be moved.
2. Show, re-sale or slaughter is the purpose of the transport.
3. Season in which animals will be transported and weather conditions.
4. Distance from origin to destination.
5. Medical history and general health of all animals to be shipped.

To reduce transportation stress: provide good footing (sand or bedding on the trailer floor), avoid rough roads, travel early in the morning or later at night on hot days to reduce heat stress, provide a blanket (horse) or side boards if excessively cold or ventilation if hot, and avoid heavy traffic when possible.

Make sure the trailer is in good working condition and good repair (check brakes, lights and turn signals). Make sure the trailer has adequate suspension and stabilizer bars, and use good driving techniques (slow starts and stops, easy corners). Train horses to load, ride and unload well in advance of the trip. Transport animals with a familiar companion to reduce stress. Livestock are gregarious and want to be with other animals. Provide hay and water at regular rest stops on long trips and don't feed grains. Make all efforts to reduce physical and mental stress to the transported animal.



Species	Number per Compartment/Cage	Water	Precautions
Cattle	If using a gooseneck trailer, make sure to put calves in one compartment with similar sized calves. If going a short distance, animals may be tied. For longer distances, better to leave them untied. Leave enough space so cattle can lie down.	Yes, every 6-8 hours	When lactating cows are transported they should be milked on their regular schedule.  Mature bulls should be kept in a separate compartment away from cows and other bulls.
Goats/Sheep	Every goat or sheep should be able to lie down comfortably in the same compartment at the same time.	Yes, every 5-6 hours	Rams or bucks can be aggressive during mating season and caution should be used when transporting.
Swine	18x8 foot trailer capacity is 30 with 200 lb pigs.	Do not feed market hogs prior to transporting unless trip is going to exceed 24 hours.	Keep intact males (boars) away from females (sows) and other boars.
Equine	Horses are often tied during transport. Some trailers will have dividers while some are straight without partitions. Remember to tie horses next to other horses that they are familiar with to avoid biting and/or kicking.	Yes, every 4 - 6 hours Supply quality hay during the trip.	Use leg wraps or bandages to reduce ligament and tendon fatigue.  Head should not be tied up high in the trailer.
Poultry	Cages: 1 ½ ft/bird– bantams 1 sq ft/bird – large chickens and pheasants 2-3 sq ft/bird – ducks, geese and turkeys	Yes, every 4 hours	Avoid wire floor cages, since toes can be caught between wires.  Do not use cages that allow the birds to stick their heads through. Neck can be broken by accident if cage shifts during transport.  If transporting males, do not place them in the same cage or next to each other.

Cattle, sheep and pigs in the last 10% of their gestation are not fit for transport. If the exact date of service is not known from farm records, a best guess should be made. For example, the gestation period of a sheep averages 150 days; the last 10% is 15 days. A transporter should also take into account other signs that the animal is about to give birth, like bagging up, milk seepage, relaxation of the pelvic ligaments, and birth canal discharges. Cattle, sheep, goats and pigs that have just given birth must not be transported until 7 days after the birth.

Young stock must not be moved until the navel has healed completely. At the very least, the external

cord should be dry and shriveled, and the skin underneath completely healed.

For more information visit [www.umass.edu/cdl](http://www.umass.edu/cdl)

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