

PRESS ARTICLE

Title:	"Are all your animals fit to load?"
Issue:	Thursday, 2 August 2012
Publication:	The Land, Agriculture Today, page 8

SINCE the release of land transport standards, livestock owners have been encouraged to consider carefully which of their stock are fit to load for transport.

Requirements defined by the Australian Animal Welfare Standards for the Land Transport of Livestock will be compulsory by law.

Replacing the State and Territory Model Codes of Practice for the welfare of animals, the new standards will be mandatory in all States and will be implemented in NSW in October this year.

It will be an offence to load or transport an animal in a way that may or is likely to cause it unnecessary harm.

The responsibility to ensure animals are correctly prepared and able to cope with the journey from beginning to end rests with the person in charge of them at any point in the transport chain.

The comprehensive and recently revised publication from Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), *A national guide to the selection of animals fit to transport Revised edition 2012 – Is it fit to load?* provides guidance for anyone involved in the process.

Is it fit to load? is available from the MLA website listed below.

It is essential that producers observe their animals carefully

before transport for health and injury which may render them unfit for the journey.

Producers must then adopt measures set out in the standards to deal appropriately with these animals and minimise risks to their welfare.

It is the responsibility of any person in charge of an animal or animals not to cause unnecessary harm.

According to *Is it fit to load?* an animal is unfit for any type of land transport if it:

- is not strong enough to undertake the journey;
- cannot walk normally, bearing weight on all legs;
- is severely emaciated or visibly dehydrated;
- is suffering from severe visible distress or injury;
- is in a condition that could cause it increased pain or distress during transport;
- is blind in both eyes; or
- is in late pregnancy.

The publication also highlights the importance of preparing livestock for transport, including such factors as planning the journey, facilities, stockmanship skills, ensuring appropriate rest stops occur throughout the journey and that an emergency plan is available if required.

Correct preparation is important to minimise stress levels, potential



Under new legislated animal welfare standards, responsibility to ensure animals are correctly prepared and able to cope with a journey from beginning to end rests with the person in charge of them at any point in the transport chain.

for injury and other issues that may affect animal welfare.

A person responsible for animals that may be unfit to load has three options.

These include recovering the animal and transporting it when it is fit, euthanasing the animal humanely (using procedures set out in the standards), or consulting a veterinarian for their advice regarding recovery and transport.

Further advice and information is available from any State or Territory government department of primary industries, the federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

– JANE KELLY

■ Visit www.livestockwelfarestandards.net.au and search "Is it fit to load" on the MLA website at www.mla.com.au/Publications-tools-and-events.