**SOP #6 - Shipping Cattle**

*(Question FS40 (AC), July 2023 Reference Manual pages 9-2 to 9-4. All shaded areas are required elements of your SOP. You may use your own words to communicate the same intent.)*

Purpose: Prevent antibiotic residues from entering the human food supply. Withdrawal times must be followed to ensure residues are not found in meat. All farm personnel responsible for shipping cattle must be able to identify what animals are able to be loaded for transport and the procedures to follow to minimize stress and ensure welfare.

* On this farm we will ship cattle for the purpose of veterinary treatment, purchase or sale of replacement and breeding dairy animals or for slaughter via local abattoir, auction market or private consignor.
* The person who identifies and authorizes the shipment of an animal is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and/or other persons as delegated from time to time by either the owner or herdsperson.
* Ensure all cattle intended for shipping are identified with dairy approved (DairyTrace) dual tags or single white button tags.
  + Calves born on a dairy farm outside Quebec and destined for purposes other than dairy production may be identified with an approved DairyTrace single white button tag.
* Ensure animal birth or tag activation information is reported to the national traceability database before animals leave the farm (particularly for bull calves).
* Check the Livestock Treatment Record (Record 10) to make sure animals have met their withdrawal times for milk and meat before shipping them.
  + Treatments must include medicines, pesticides and medicated feeds.
* If animals are going directly to slaughter withdrawal times must be met before shipping.
  + If animals have a withdrawal time when they are shipped for reasons other than slaughter, the information must be passed on to the next buyer with a written letter (shipping declaration).
* Check the Broken Needles record (Record 11) to make sure animals do not have broken needles in them.
  + If an animal has a broken needle, mark area, and forward the information to the next buyer.
* Alternatively, if an animal has been treated and the milk and meat withdrawal times have not been met, keep the animal until after the withdrawals and then ship.
* Display ‘Should this Animal be Loaded?’ poster in loading area.
* We will assess every animal prior to loading.
  + Factors such as: time of year (weather), market conditions (duration of travel) and body condition score, hair coat, lactation status and soundness will be taken into account.
* We will not transport:
  + Non-ambulatory animals.
  + Animals with a body condition score indicating emaciation or weakness.
  + Animals with severe lameness or animals that cannot bear weight on all four legs except to a veterinary clinic for veterinary treatment or diagnosis.
  + Animals that are likely to give birth during the intended journey.
  + Cattle that require hobbling in order to walk.
* We will ensure:
  + Newborn calves are fed at least 4L (for a 100 lb calf) of colostrum prior to shipping.
    - Calves are healthy and vigorous. Preferably seven days or more old.
  + Dairy cattle (young stock, cows and bulls) are fed and watered within 5 hours of loading, if the expected duration of the animals’ confinement is longer than 24 hours from the time of loading.
  + Lactating cows have been dried off.
  + Only experienced and trained handlers should load cattle. All persons handling and shipping cattle will be trained in the safe, humane and effective handling of cattle.
  + Avoid the use of electric prods unless necessary when animal or human safety is at risk.
  + Ensure cattle that are incompatible by nature are segregated.
* We may consult with our veterinarian or use the following documents as a reference in assessing fitness for transport:
  + Humane Handling Guidelines for Dairy Cattle
  + Code of Practice for Dairy Cattle
  + Code of Practice for Transport
* Check that loading facilities are compatible with type of trailer being used for transport.
* Verify that there is no unprotected gap between the vehicle and the ramp. Design ramps to prevent slipping and falling.
* Check that ramps and chutes have sufficient strength and height to prevent animals from falling off.
* Design chutes with solid sides.
* Check that ramps and alleys for cattle are free of protrusions or sharp objects.
* Walk through the loading route prior to the introduction of the animals to check for details that may ‘scare’ cows such as clanging chains, clothing hung on a fence, objects on the floor, pieces of moving plastic, etc.
* Transport of cattle to the veterinarian or for sale will be completed using the farm’s own truck and trailer.
  + Should circumstance arise that another individual or commercial transporter is required we will ensure they are familiar with loading and hauling cattle.
* Provide shavings, straw or other material in the trailer for traction, or comfort in the case of calves.