

BVA policy position on the welfare of livestock during transport

Executive summary

Movement of animals is an intrinsic part of livestock¹ keeping, production and distribution of genetics to provide the stock necessary to feed the rest of the world.² The scale will vary widely from local area movements, to pastures, markets, new premises to those of greater distance such as regional, national and long-distance international moves.

Any movement of animals will have a potential impact on their health and welfare. Whatever the type and scale of movement, the welfare of animals must be prioritised with the aim of reducing the impact of the movement as far as is reasonably possible.

In order to achieve this, all those involved with moving animals must understand what is required of them in law, receive certified training and be encouraged to follow sector-specific good practice guidelines.

Wherever possible, and paying due regard to scientific evidence regarding the relationship between journey times and welfare outcomes, animals to be slaughtered for food should be slaughtered as close to the point of production as possible.³⁴⁵⁶ No animal should be knowingly exported to a destination with unknown welfare standards or exported then raised in systems banned in this country due to welfare considerations. Neither should animal product from such animals be re-imported.

BVA supports current legal requirements (European Community Regulation 1/2005 and the UK Welfare of Animals (Transport) Orders⁷⁸ and Regulations⁹¹⁰) that are in force to protect the health and welfare of livestock during transport.¹¹ It is essential that there are a well-defined set of animal health

¹ For the purposes of this position statement the term 'livestock' is understood to include food producing animals and equidae.

² In the poultry sector live chicks are exported, then reared and slaughtered in other countries. Whilst it is paramount that high welfare destination conditions are ensured for these chicks, it is also important to recognise that the exporting of these chicks is an important practice to ensure that countries can trade excess and deficit stock numbers to manage oversupply and ultimately avoid the destruction of chicks from breeding lines that have no market in this country.

In addition, in the poultry sector day-old chicks are able to survive on their yolk sac reserves to support them during the first 72 hours of life.² Therefore, they may be more amenable to transport with the provision of appropriate environmental controls as opposed to adult animals where transport can be a more significant risk to stress, health and welfare.

Further, the UK is a centre of excellence in respect of poultry genetics and pedigree stock, ensuring the provision of genetics to feed the world – valuable both in terms of production and in terms of human and animal health.

³ Defra: Transcontinental road transport of breeder pigs - effects of hot climates

⁴ Defra: Epidemiological study to identify acceptable maximum journey lengths for pigs whilst maintaining welfare

⁵ Defra: Review to appraise the evidence for acceptable temperature envelopes for horses, sheep, pigs, cattle and goats during transport

⁶ Mitchell, M.A. & Kettlewell, P.J. (2008) Engineering and design of vehicles for long distance road transport of livestock (ruminants, pigs and poultry). *Veterinaria Italiana*, 44 (1), 197:209

⁷ The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006

⁸ The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007

⁹ The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Scotland) Regulations 2006

¹⁰ The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

¹¹ As set out in Welfare of Animals During Transport: Guidance on implementation in the United Kingdom : *The EU Regulation does not apply to the transport of animals when this is not in connection with an economic activity or to the transport of non-vertebrate animals. Non-vertebrates are animals such as insects, worms, crustaceans (e.g. crab, lobster), cephalopods (e.g. octopus, squid) and molluscs (e.g. shellfish, snails). However, a general duty of care provision protecting non-vertebrates and animals involved in non-commercial movements from injury or unnecessary suffering is included in domestic legislation (Article 4 of WATEO 2006 and parallel*

welfare standards that must be met for the **entirety** of the journey of animals being transported in this country and abroad. These minimum standards should be the same for all animals no matter the purpose of the export (for example if it is for breeding or fattening), in line with current legislation.

BVA welcomes legislative improvements to safeguard the welfare of animals during transport. Any improvements should be evidence-based and informed by a welfare outcomes approach. However, it is important to emphasise, that any legislative improvements are only beneficial if they are effectively enforced.

To build on existing legal requirements, our specific recommendations to improve the health and welfare of livestock during transport are set out below:

Recommendation 1: In order to improve welfare outcomes before, during and after transport, the implementation of current legal requirements (European Community Regulation 1/2005 and the UK Welfare of Animals (Transport) Orders¹²¹³ and Regulations¹⁴¹⁵) should be improved to ensure that requirements relating to appropriate transport conditions and fitness to travel of animals are adequately enforced.

Recommendation 2: Any legislative improvements to safeguard the welfare of animals during transport must be evidence-based and informed by a welfare outcomes approach.

Recommendation 3: Any proposals to improve welfare during transport should consider all forms of transport and address the issue of welfare before, during and after journeys.

Recommendation 4: Any proposals to improve welfare during transport must give due consideration to how improvements would work for all of the UK administrations and the impact of unintended consequences on animal welfare and industry across the UK.

Recommendation 5: The welfare of 'registered' horses who are not 'high performance' horses, and therefore may not be afforded an adequate level of care, should be protected.

Recommendation 6: When considering legislative improvements to safeguard the welfare of animals during transport, consideration should be given as to how to address all determinants of potential welfare compromise. These may be complex and potentially conflicting.

Recommendation 7: Consideration should be given to the complex species-specific requirements for transport design, vehicle condition and hygiene, as well as stocking density to achieve optimal health and welfare outcomes. We strongly support the implementation of recommendations regarding improvements to the quality of transport vehicles as set out in the [2011 EFSA Scientific Opinion concerning the welfare of animals during transport](#).

Recommendation 8: All drivers and farmers intending to transport livestock in connection with an economic activity must receive certified training (as is already required of hauliers), with sound knowledge of how aspects of driving can directly impact on the welfare of animals being transported. This may be linked to a future system of public money for public goods.

Recommendation 9: Attendants at rest points should have similar responsibility for the animals under their care as hauliers and should have received appropriate certified training in animal handling.

Recommendation 10: Appropriate veterinary care must be available at rest points in order to recognise and assess any potential welfare issues, manage any negative welfare outcomes and ensure the provision of emergency slaughter if needed.

legislation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Anyone transporting animals must ensure that they are transported in conditions suitable for the species concerned.

¹² [The Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) \(England\) Order 2006](#)

¹³ [The Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) \(Wales\) Order 2007](#)

¹⁴ [The Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2006](#)

¹⁵ [The Welfare of Animals \(Transport\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2006](#)

Recommendation 11: All drivers and farmers intending to transport livestock in connection with an economic activity must receive certified training on the factors that make an animal fit or unfit for transport. This may be linked to a future system of public money for public goods.

Recommendation 12: The welfare of animals pre-, during and post-transportation should be monitored under the direction of a veterinary surgeon in order to manage any potential negative welfare outcomes. Further consideration should be given to implementing outcomes-based approaches to measure animal welfare during transport eg. sensors to measure temperature, exact timings and animal welfare indicators.

Recommendation 13: Animals should not be exported to countries for non-stun slaughter. BVA is clear in its [view that all animals should be stunned before slaughter to render them insensible to pain.](#)

Recommendation 14: Wherever possible, and paying due regard to scientific evidence regarding the relationship between journey times and welfare outcomes, animals to be slaughtered for food should be slaughtered as close to the point of production as possible.

Recommendation 15: No animal should be exported to a destination with unknown welfare standards or exported, then raised in systems banned in this country due to welfare considerations. Neither should animal product from such animals be re-imported.

Recommendation 16: Consideration should be given to providing more opportunities for farm animal slaughter as close to the point of production as possible with appropriate animal health and welfare safeguards.