



# Sorting, Loading and Transporting

Cattle sorting, loading, unloading and transportation is a necessary part of the cattle industry.

- Cattle sorting and holding pens should allow handling without undue stress, be located near the loading/unloading facility and be suitable for herd size.
- Provide properly designed and maintained loading facilities for easy and safe animal movement. Proper design of loading chutes as well as personnel that are knowledgeable of their proper use can assure the safety of both cattle and cattlemen. Ramps and chutes should be strong and solid, provide non-slip footing, and have sides high enough to keep cattle from falling or jumping off. Studies indicate limiting the ramp angle to 25 degrees or less will improve cattle movement.
- All vehicles used to transport cattle should provide for the safety of personnel and cattle during loading, transporting and unloading.
- All vehicles used to transport cattle should have properly maintained flooring, gates, and latches and adequate ventilation.
- Strictly adhere to safe load levels with regard to animal weight and space allocation.
- Producers hauling cattle in farm and ranch trailers must ensure that adequate space is provided so that cattle have sufficient room to stand with little risk of being forced down because of overcrowding.
- Transport crews should have a proper understanding on the basics of transportation and handling cattle. Crews should be aware of basic animal-handling techniques.
- Cattle that are unable to withstand the rigors of transportation should not be shipped.
- When the vehicle is not full, safely partition cattle into smaller areas to provide stability for the cattle and the vehicle.
- Cattle haulers should start, drive and stop their vehicles as smoothly as possible. They should practice defensive driving by ensuring that adequate space is available to stop should an emergency require an unexpected stop. In addition, they should negotiate turns in a smooth manner. Abrupt sharp turns should be avoided.
- Knowingly inflicting physical injury or unnecessary pain on cattle when loading, unloading or transporting animals is not acceptable.
- Use internal or external ramps to unload trucks.
- No gap which would allow injury to an animal should exist between the ramp, its sides, and the vehicle.
- Vehicle doors and internal gates should be sufficiently wide to permit cattle to pass through easily without bruising or injury.
- Cattle should be loaded, unloaded, and moved through facilities with patience and as quietly as possible to reduce stress and injury.

## Cattle Care – Training and Education

Many skills are necessary to operate a successful farm, ranch or feedlot. On many farms and ranches, animal care principles have been passed from generation to generation. Most skills come naturally and/or are learned on the job.

On farm training and “how to” training is effective. The amount of training varies depending on experience of caretakers, turnover among employees and type of cattle operation. Producers and employees are encouraged to take advantage of educational programs, meetings and interaction with production management specialists.

Training for those who have supervisory roles should be prioritized because they become trainers of new employees. All employees who work with livestock should have a basic understanding of livestock handling techniques.

Training of those who handle cattle should include:

- An understanding of the animal’s point of balance and flight-zone
- Avoiding sudden movement, loud noises or other actions that may frighten cattle
- Proper handling of aggressive/easily excited cattle to ensure the welfare of the cattle and people
- Proper use of handling and restraining devices
- Recognizing early signs of distress and disease
- How to properly diagnose common illnesses and provide proper care
- Administration of animal health products and how to perform routine animal health procedures
- Recognizing signs associated with extreme weather stress and how to respond with appropriate actions
- Basic feeding/nutritional management of beef cattle

*Source: Beef Quality Assurance, The Cattle Industry’s Guidelines for the Care and Handling of Cattle*