‘Working together to improve welfare during transport: guidelines for fitness of transport adult bovines’

Global Veterinary Seminar on Animal Welfare
WVC 18 September 2013, Prague, CZ
By Zeev Noga - WVA Veterinary Policy Advisor
World Veterinary Association (WVA)

In 1863, Dr John Gamgee convened a first International Veterinary Congress in Hamburg, Germany. An initiative that has grown to what the World Veterinary Association is today.

The WVA unites and represents the **global veterinary profession on all its wide aspects** and is an umbrella organisation for:

- National Veterinary Associations.
- International Associations of Veterinarians working in different areas of veterinary medicine.
During 2009 – 2010, several European Stakeholders involved in the transport operations of adult bovines prepared *a practical guidelines* for all operators involved in the transport operations of adult bovines.
where it all began?

- 16 February 2009: European Parliament – Agriculture Committee - Hearing on Ritual Slaughter

- Lively discussions between meat industry and AW NGOs representatives during the hearing

- Discussions continued in the EP corridors
where it all began?

- Yes, I agree with you. BUT......

- Animal Welfare..... We have more common positions than against each-other

- What can we do together in order to improve AW practice
The two organizations agreed on:

- **Principal**: first condition for good transport: good preparation and fit animals

- **General Aim**:
  - improving AW
  - avoiding distortion of competition

- **Means**: producing user-friendly guidelines, easy to understand by all operators involved in the transport operations of adult bovines

- **To involve**: the main EU Stakeholders involved in transport operations of adult bovines
The main difficulties in the beginning:

• Lack of confidence
• Focusing on defending general positions
• Pictures of severe injuries situations and the use of them
• Public dissemination of the guidelines

Common goal: improving AW in practice
Working Method and Timetable:

• Establishment of TORs (June 2009)

• Choice of a template (French “Guide de Non transportabilité des bovins à l’abattoir”)

• Set-up the secretariat (UECBV/EGA)

• 6 Working groups meetings - All decisions by consensus

• Drafts open to comments from Member Organizations and final one was consulted by FVO.

• Final draft endorsed officially in late 2010
Purpose of the Guidelines:

• Help all operators to decide on the suitability of an adult bovine animal for transport.

• Provide easy understanding of the EU legislation on Animal Welfare during transport.

• Provide a comprehensive list of situations that may occur and the conditions that may result in an animal being classed as unfit to transport

NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT
Not to be used to make a diagnosis (role of the vet)
Publication of the Guidelines:

• First publication on involved stakeholders websites on January 2012 in 6 languages (available soon in all EU official languages).

• Accessible only for professionals, not for the general public.

• Guidelines widely disseminated among:
  - EU MS & Third Countries CVOs
  - MS & TC governments (Minister of Agriculture, Public Health, ENVI etc.)
  - Food Safety Agencies
  - Farmers and farm vets
  - Universities
  - Official veterinarians: > 1,600 downloads on the FVE site (Members only).
A foretaste

Practical Guidelines to Assess Fitness for Transport of Adult Bovines

A personal copy can be obtained by sending a request to info@uecbv.eu
Contents

- Introduction: definitions, warnings, coding signs
- Part I: Summary of European legislation
- Part II: Animal conditions prohibiting transport
- Part III: Animal conditions where further assessment is needed before transport
- Annexes: Regulatory references, measures to take when animal unfit, example of generic contingency plan, example of specific contingency plan
Part I: European Legislation

Transport d'aniimaux malades, blessés ou affaiblis

« Les animaux blessés ou présentant des faiblesses physiologiques ou un état pathologique ne sont pas considérés comme aptes à être transportés; c'est le cas en particulier si:
- ils sont incapables de bouger par eux-mêmes sans souffrir ou de se déplacer sans assistance;
- ils présentent une blessure ouverte grave ou un prolapsus. »

Règlement (CE) N° 1/2005, Annexe 1, Chapitre 1, Paragraphes 2 (a & b)

Transport de vaches en fin de gestation ou venant de vêler

« Les animaux blessés ou présentant des faiblesses physiologiques ou un état pathologique ne sont pas considérés comme aptes à être transportés; c'est le cas en particulier si:
- il s'agit de femelles gravides qui ont passé au moins 90 % de la période de gestation prévue ou de femelles qui ont mis bas au cours de la semaine précédente. »

Règlement (CE) N° 1/2005, Annexe 1, Chapitre 1, Paragraphe 2(a)

Femelles en lactation

« Les femelles en lactation de l'espèce bovine (…), qui ne sont pas accompagnées de leur progéniture doivent être traitées à des intervalles ne dépassant pas douze heures. »

Règlement (CE) 1/2005, Annexe 1, Chapitre 1, Paragraphe 6

« Dans le cas de voyages de longue durée (…) d'animaux domestiques des espèces bovine, ovine (…), les transporteurs et les organisateurs se conforment aux dispositions relatives au compte de route qui figurent à l'annexe II. »

Règlement (CE) N° 1/2005, Article 5, Paragraphe 4
Part II: Animal conditions prohibiting transport

1) Incapacidad de moverse

Significa que un animal no es capaz de:
- Moverse sin dolor o
- Andar sin ayuda o
- Levantarse (Estos animales son llamados comúnmente "animales caídos") o
- Permanecer de pie o
- Andar o
- Probabilidad de que pierda su equilibrio durante el transporte

Ver definiciones en páginas 7 y 8
Part III: Animal conditions where further assessment is needed before transport

Huge phlegmon: sign of an important infection with a high risk of sudden aggravation of the general condition of the animal.

In the above examples: Single localized pathologies without impact on general condition of the animals. No risk of injury, no lameness.

When several joints are swollen, this is often sign of a general internal infection. If the animal is limping see Difficulty with movement (page 27).
Annexes

I: Major regulatory references

II: Recommendations: Measures to take when animals deemed unfit for transportation are found on farms, assembly centres, and control posts or during transport.

III: Example of a Generic contingency plan

IV: Example of a contingency plan for a specific journey
Follow up

Following the successful result and the fruitful collaboration between the different stakeholders involving in the bovine transport:

• Two further initiatives are on-going preparing guidelines to assess fitness for transport of horses and pigs.

• Close collaboration between stakeholders in order to resolve the AW situation at the EU/Turkish border

• Increased communication and information exchange between the different stakeholders on AW issues.
Based on my experiences...

In order to achieve improvement in AW in practice:

• Inter-sectorial collaboration is fundamental

• Build trust and respect different positions

• Focusing on common goals

• All decisions by consensus

• Keep open minded
Thank you very much for your attention

And a special Thank you to Michel Courat