

Caring for cows in transit

Transport can be stressful for livestock. How can farmers and others along the way make sure cows are comfortable during transport and at their destination?

With good preparation on-farm, and everyone in the supply chain playing their part, we can ensure cattle arrive at their destination fit and healthy. We've put together some tips on key steps and talked to the people who handle each stage of the journey. You can also get further useful information at dairynz.co.nz/transport

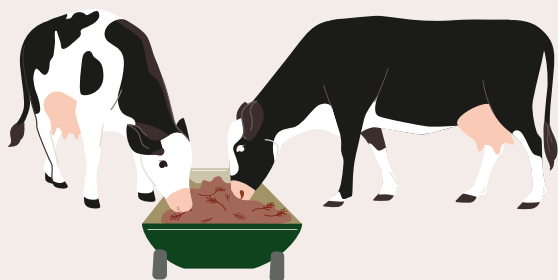
2-7
days before
transport

Select cull cows

Ask your vet about how best to prepare your animals, based on your herd's health and productivity. Check if you need a transport certificate for any cows you have concerns about.

"Ask to send your cows to a nearby meat processor to minimise transport distance. If space is tight, and the distance is longer than normal, keep older or lighter cows back."

– Kylie, veterinarian at MVP Vets



24
hours before
transport

Prepare cows for transport

Lactating cows have a higher risk of metabolic issues during transport. They need roughage, extra calcium, and constant access to water until the time of loading. Take them off lush pasture for 4-6 hours before the trip to reduce effluent. Always double-check their destination on the day.

"The cows that are leaving are kept in a small, grazed out paddock with ad-lib hay, so they can lie down and rest. Shortly before the truck arrives, I put them on the yard with a cutdown 200L drum. It's easy to fill with the pressure hose and the cows have access to water until they are loaded."

– Ann, Waikato farmer

On the truck

Transporters look after cows by loading them calmly into certified crates and driving to the conditions. Farmers need to maintain the loading facilities so they're safe for both people and animals to use, and they should also clearly mark and yard special animals separately.

"Let our dispatch team know if there will be tall animals or cows with vet certificates, so the driver knows to keep the larger pen free or to plan a short route for the certified cow."

– Bruce, Operations Manager at Road Transport Logistics

up to
12
hours

up to
12
hours



At the meat processing plant

Once your cows arrive at the processing plant, they'll be held in the yards until needed. The wait time can vary, so prepare your cows for waiting beyond the truck journey. Farmers/transporters need to let processors know if a vulnerable animal is coming in. This way, they can adjust the schedule to minimise the cow's wait time in the yards.

