



Fitness for Transport to Auction Barns or Processing Plants

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(Adapted from Beef Quality Assurance Transportation, www.BQA.org.)

Given that there may be a rush to get cull cows to market, there are some key factors to animal well-being that need to be taken into consideration. This is especially true if cows will have to be transported longer distances to get to a processing facility.

There are 3 main factors to determine fitness for transport. They are:

1. the health of the animal,
2. the mobility of the animal,
3. and the body condition of the animal.

One of the most important decisions in transporting cattle is to determine if an animal is:

1. fit to be transported,
2. If transportation should be direct to a small processor, especially those that do emergency slaughter,
3. if transport should be postponed to allow for treatment,
4. or if proper euthanasia methods should be carried out.

The chart below provides a checklist to use when making the transport decision.

Cattle Marketing and Transport Decisions Checklist		
Condition	Transport with special care	DO NOT TRANSPORT ¹
Non-ambulatory		√
Exhausted or dehydrated		√
Unknown or beyond withdrawal times		√
BCS ≤2.0 (dairy and beef)		√
Imminent calving		√

Cattle requiring mechanical assistance to rise or walk		√
Bone fractures of the limbs or injuries to the spine		√
Body temp >103°F		√
Conditions that will not pass pre-slaughter inspection ²		√
Locomotion score 5	√	
Recent fracture unrelated to mobility (i.e. ambulatory)	√	
Protruding prolapse ³	√	

¹ Make the decision to treat, to cull, or to euthanize cattle promptly.

² Cancer eye, blindness in both eyes, distended udders causing ambulatory issues, staggering, turning in circles, foaming at the mouth.

³Protruding prolapses and/or obvious surgery may reduce the price and will most likely result in testing for antibiotics.

Additional resources on COVID-19 can be found at: <http://blogs.cornell.edu/beefcattle/covid-19/>.

NYS Market Prices can be found at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/feeder-and-replacement-cattle-auctions#NewYork>.

[NMPF FARM Program Resource Library](#) – resources for health management, fitness to transport, and euthanasia

[Cornell Waste Management Institute Composting Animal Mortalities](#)