

Transport of calves



Transport of young calves

Calves – especially around weaning – are **very vulnerable** to diseases (such as respiratory and gastro-intestinal diseases). Transport can easily stress them. In addition, young calves are hard to handle as a group - herding instinct is not yet developed. **Good handling** practices prevent undesirable consequences and will benefit other aspects of the animal production (e.g. better body weight gain or less diseases).



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- Calves with **unhealed navel**: all transport prohibited
- **Calves under 10 days**: transport allowed for max. 100 km, under specific circumstances
- **Calves under 14 days**: long journeys prohibited
- **Even better!** Transport weaned calves after 8 weeks
- If a calf stays lying at stops, **contact a veterinarian**

- Provide **appropriate bedding** (e.g. straw) which guarantees comfort appropriate to the number of animals, the journey time, the weather and the absorption of urine and faeces
- Use **side protection** on the deck, in order to avoid the calves' legs getting trapped between the deck and side walls
- When calves are handled in a **group**, limit the group size to **10 – 15 calves**
- If a ramp is used, the slope should be reduced as much as possible (max. angle of 20°, 36%)
- Load **calves** with **individual help** to guide them on the ramp
- In case of **long journeys**; call the farm or the control post to arrange immediate watering and feeding at arrival, and proper climate conditions for calves (e.g. pre-warming of building)
- It is **not allowed to muzzle** calves!



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Feeding and watering



Unweaned calves

The provision of liquid feed to calves in transit is considered to be impractical with most truck design. Therefore **calves might need to be unloaded** to be given liquid feed during the stops.



Weaned calves

Provide feeder calves a grain-based concentrate feed at rest stops. However, **only if calves are accustomed to eating the diet**. Sudden changes can cause them to become sick.

Good liquid feeding: 2 L / 12 hours

- **Feed calves individually** and give **resting period of at least 1 hour**, before re-starting the journey
- Make sure that **the drinking system** is clean, well-maintained and functioning
- Make sure calves are **familiar with the drinking system** to supply milk, milk replacer or electrolyte solutions of the right temperature (e.g. use rubber teats)
- If calves don't know how to use the drinker, maintain a little drip at the drinker to **initiate drinking behaviour** or use your finger to guide them.
- **Monitor the calves closely** to ensure the adequate intake. If a calf fails to drink from the drinking system, offer milk/water manually

Temperature

Optimum temperature: 5°C to 25°C. Maintain a stable temperature, as calves are sensitive to temperature changes



- Provide **more floor space**
- Additional **fans** for ventilation
- When necessary, **sprinkle water**
- During delays, **water the calves manually**
- Do **not transport when over 30 °C**



- **Pre-warm vehicles** prior to loading
- Provide **additional bedding**
- When necessary, apply **additional heating**