Preparation of vehicle, driver and loading for poultry

For full guides and more information: www.animaltransportguides.eu

What are the responsibilities of the driver / operator?

1. Planning of the transport, subject to weather conditions
2. Ensuring all birds on the vehicle are fit for transport
3. Bird welfare: from loading to unloading of the truck
4. Gentle and correct loading of the birds onto the truck
5. Knowing how to handle emergency procedures

What is necessary to prepare my vehicle for the birds?

- Ensure that the vehicle is suitable and clean for the transport
- Ensure sufficient lighting and equipment to inspect the birds during unscheduled stops
- Make sure to adjust the micro climate (temperature and humidity in the vehicle) to weather conditions, especially for day old chicks
- Give birds access to drinking water (in case of transport more than 12 hours)
- Use side covers to protect birds from cold and wet weather. Air circulation should not be impeded!

Crates: ‘How to use?’

- Solid, safe, not broken, clean, and anti-slip = good crates! Access doors on the side - even better!
- Use crates or containers, that allow easy loading of the birds, to minimise injury

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Loading crates on the vehicle

1. Coordinate with the farmer to optimise the position of the vehicle
2. Make sure all equipment is safe, clean and undamaged
3. Loading area should be protected from rain, snow, heavy winds or bright sun
4. Avoid loading wet birds in the coldest part of the vehicle. Some parts are colder than others. It is the responsibility of the driver to load animals in the vehicle properly
5. Leave some crates / containers empty to stimulate air flow on warm days
6. Load crates and containers properly
   - Bring crates and containers as close as possible to the birds – trolleys can be used for crates
   - Avoid tilting of crates or containers, keep them in balance
   - Prevent crates from falling down (in case crates fall down; check for injuries, remove and humanely euthanize these)
   - Secure all crates and containers in the vehicle
   - Make sure the stack of crates / containers is not too high, as it is difficult to lift birds carefully above shoulder height

During transport: ‘How to drive?’

- Drive smoothly
  - Change gears gently
  - Take curves with care
  - Maintain constant speed
- Avoid sudden braking
- Use highways wherever possible
- Choose the quickest route
- Check birds at every stop for signs of abnormal behaviour (e.g. panting / shivering)
- If the weather changes, stop and use side covers
- In hot weather conditions: park the vehicle on a shady area at resting to avoid heat stress

Emergencies: ‘What to do?’

1. Carry your contingency plan on the vehicle, so you know how to act in case of emergency (this may include: contact details of the key resource people, protocol to check fitness of the birds)
2. In case of delay or accident: contact organizer to decide on the best plan to protect birds and minimize suffering
3. Always carry an emergency generator in an air-conditioned vehicle. In case of engine failure, you need to maintain a constant temperature for the birds

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