



Sheep on long journeys



ANIMAL TRANSPORT GUIDES

Page 1

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



Rest, water and feed intervals

Journey planning and preparation

1. Bring rests for animals and drivers together where possible, to **minimize transit time**
2. Sheep need **longer resting periods** when they are transported for long journeys, or for more vulnerable sheep
3. **Timing and quality of resting of sheep** on multiple, consecutive journeys should be carefully considered

Keep in mind, when planning the journey:

- Predicted climatic conditions or proximate thirst (heat, cold (frozen tank))
- Class and fitness of the sheep (e.g. weak, pregnant, lactating, immature)
- Duration of intended journey

Journey time (including (un)loading)

Adults: max. 14 hours + min. 1 hour rest + max. 14 hours
Unweaned lambs: max. 9 hrs + min. 1 hour rest + max. 9 hours
Followed by rest of min. 24 hours (unloaded, and provided with water and feed)



Travelling

1. Before starting the journey or leaving a stop, **make sure that all sheep can access the facilities.** Check water + food quality and quantity. Use food (such as hay and fibre if they are lactating) that the animals are accustomed to eating.
2. **Check** animals at **regular** rest stops (also after difficult road or weather conditions). Each sheep should be visible (e.g. design of vehicles, distribution of animals, space allowance).
3. Switch on the water system and show the animals that **water is available.** Provide them with water and food at **ground level** and make sure all sheep have access. Encourage water intake (showing animals how the drinkers work, providing water manually or feed first). In case of hot weather (especially during delays), water the animals manually to guarantee that all animals receive enough water. Is there a general problem with drinking? Check the quality of the water.
4. **Monitor the animals** during resting (see 'Page 2'). Where there is doubt about the fitness of an animal; extend resting period and seek veterinary advice. If journey can continue by solving the problem, make additional checks afterwards.
5. Take special care for **unweaned lambs!** These animals are young and need specific care. They need hands-on assistance of each individual animal (no metal nipples or troughs) and the liquid feeding should have the correct temperature and solution strength, to avoid digestive problems.
6. At place **of destination:** provide **feed** and **water** to animals (essential for sheep more than three months pregnant, special requirements for unweaned lambs).
7. **Records** should be kept and made available to the competent authority

Inspection of sheep

Adverse effect	Clinical/observational indicators	Adverse effect	Clinical / observational indicators
Hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weight loss (in long journeys) 	Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incoordination Posture Limping Teeth gnashing/grinding/bruxism Incapacity to walk Head tilt gait Eye and nasal discharge Difficulty breathing Respiratory sounds Coughing Lethargy Apathy Abnormal faeces
Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skin-pinch test Extreme thirst 		
Lack of comfort around resting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tired animals Lack of space to lie down all at the same time Lying down behaviour Lack of space above the top of the head Dead animals due to asphyxia 		
Heat stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panting Respiration rate (low heat stress: 40-60 breaths/min, medium heat stress: 60-80 breaths/min, high heat stress: 80-200 breaths/min, severe heat stress: over 200 breaths/min (Silanikove, 2000)) Drooling Position of animals (isolated individuals or group clumped or dispersed) Increased body temperature Mortality Extreme thirst, high drive to drink 		
Cold stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shivering Stand in physical contact with one another Reduced body temperature 	Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of pain on palpation of "injured" area Increased heart rate Teeth grinding Panting
Exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General lethargy Apathy Lack of reaction Inability/reluctance to rise 	Locomotion problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slipping and falling events Stiff in gait Slower walking speed Shorter strides Lameness
Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible signs of injury (bite marks, wounds, bruises, scratches, abrasions) 	Fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in heart rate Increase in respiratory rate Head alert Stand still Escape behaviour Turning away Freezing behaviour Reluctance to move Moving backwards Urination and defecation Teeth grinding
		Isolation distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolation Vocalisation Teeth grinding