** Compromised livestock assessment **

***Submit assessments to your nearest Veterinarian or PIRSA Animal Health Officer (see page 3)***

|  |
| --- |
| **Property of origin** |

PIC Click or tap here to enter text. Person responsible for movement and phone number Click or tap here to enter text.

Physical location Click or tap here to enter text.

|  |
| --- |
| **Animal details** |

Number of animals: Click or tap here to enter text. Age of animals: Click or tap here to enter text.

Class of livestock: Click or tap here to enter text.

Body condition score of worst animals in consignment Choose an item.

Physical description of animals Click or tap here to enter text.

***Take photographs of a representative sample of the consignment poorest to best condition.***

|  |
| --- |
| **Pre-transport information** |

Weather conditions: Click or tap here to enter text.

Stressors (husbandry/yarding/shearing mustering treatment):

Nutrition and supplementation Click or tap here to enter text.

Curfew (feed/water): Click or tap here to enter text.

Weather forecast for transport period: Click or tap here to enter text.

Carrier (name/phone number): Click or tap here to enter text.

Proposed date and timing of movement: Click or tap here to enter text.

|  |
| --- |
| **Destination property** |

PIC Click or tap here to enter text.

Physical location Click or tap here to enter text.

Name and phone number Click or tap here to enter text.

Responsible person who will be present at unloading Click or tap here to enter text.

Estimated time of total travel Click or tap here to enter text.

Details of travel route to be used (incl any spelling) Click or tap here to enter text.

Situation post arrival at destination (supplementary feed/shelter/forecast weather) Click or tap here to enter text.

Veterinary surgeon Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Movement Choose an item.approved / not approved

Subject to the following conditions: Click or tap here to enter text.

Signed:……………………………………….. Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

**Compromised livestock assessment**

**Guidelines on the use of this assessment**

***Animal Details***

Age and class of livestock: Stock should be loaded like with like in terms of age, BCS, species, type wool length and pregnancy status with specific consideration given to loading densities.

Body condition score: Refer to the attached guide for condition scoring sheep / cattle. Group animals of the lowest BCS and record their score as well as an estimation of the percentage of that consignment in that condition.

Physical description on animals: Use the “Guidelines for animals in poor condition” (attached) and describe the physical appearance of the consignment using the “general description” categories to rate the poorest animals. **Take photographs of a representative sample of the consignment poorest to best condition.**

***Pre-transport information***

Weather conditions: Record details of the weather conditions at the property of origin as well as the destination. Light (recently shorn) livestock from drier, warmer areas may be further compromised at their destination if the weather is cold, wet and or windy. Consideration needs to be given to appropriate shelter / coverage and supplementary feeding at destination.

Stressors: Livestock that have been recently mustered, shorn, weaned or worked in yards may need a period of spelling, preferable on supplementary feed in order to recover some condition prior to transport.

Sometimes yards or holding paddocks that have not been used for a while contain undesirable weeds that may be toxic and attractive to hungry livestock. Avoid placing hungry stock in yards with weeds like sour sob, marsh mellow, castor oil plant or black bush, which if consumed in quantity can cause illness and deaths.

Nutrition and Supplementation: It is entirely acceptable to allow access to dry cereal hay (where available) right up until loading on transport, provided appropriate water restrictions are observed immediately prior to movement. The use of other feeds such as grain or higher protein hay should be introduced gradually if these rations constitute a significant ration change, to avoid issues such as acidosis and enterotoxaemia.

Curfew (feed and water): Depending on the class of livestock water restrictions of up to 48 hours form arrival at the destination are acceptable to minimized staining, contamination and wind chill / hypothermia during transport. Animals in compromised condition, young lambs and calves or females in advanced pregnancy or lactating should not be restricted form water for more than 24 hours total (including time on transport). Cereal hay may be fed right up until loading as this not only assists with energy demand during transit but also assist in drying up the rumen contents to reduce contamination of the decks and slippage.

Weather forecast during transport period: If wet, windy or excessively hot weather is forecast for the transport period, consideration should be given to either post pone the movement or only load stock in compromised conditions on lower decks where there is more protection from the elements.

***Destination property***

Appropriate feed water and shelter must be available for stock immediately upon reaching their destination. Responsible person at destination properties and the carrier must assess stock thoroughly upon unloading and treat / euthanise any stock that have succumb to welfare problems during transport. Responsible person must ensure they are present at unloading and have necessary equipment and expertise to perform humane destruction.

Cereal hay must be made available immediately and access to water monitored to prevent rushing at the trough and animals taking in too much water in a short time.

Sale yards should be avoided unless arrangements have been made to feed, water and monitor stock for at least 3 days prior to any auction, longer if necessary. It may be preferable to arrange for a short period of agistment close to sale yards prior to marketing, to allow stock time to recover condition prior to sale.

***These guidelines are general in nature only, more detailed information can be obtained from the AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDSAND GUIDELINES for the LAND TRANSPORT OF LIVESTOCK at-***

[***http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/land-transport/***](http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/land-transport/)

***and the***

***ANIMAL WELFARE GUIDELINES FOR ANIMALS IN POOR CONDITION (attached)***

***or***

***Fit to Load Guidelines-***

[***https://www.mla.com.au***](https://www.mla.com.au)

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Animal welfare guidelines for animals in poor condition

Animals may be in poor condition because of drought, poor season, neglect or other reasons. Drought or poor seasonal conditions will usually affect many properties whereas neglect or mismanagement will usually involve only one property at a time. When feed supplies are not limiting, individual animals may be in poor condition for various reasons. Although the following guidelines apply primarily to drought or poor seasonal conditions, they can also be applied to other circumstances such as mismanagement or neglect that result in animals being in poor condition.

**Agency response**

In the event of a widespread or prolonged dry season, the State or Territory agency responsible for agriculture, together with industry representatives, needs to mount a targeted extension campaign to meet the information needs of livestock producers. This should include as a minimum; management options, feed and water requirements, animal welfare information and sources of further information including counselling services. Planning and early action are key issues

**Animal welfare**

* It is the responsibility of property managers to ensure the welfare of their livestock as seasonal conditions deteriorate.
* It is essential that plans are in place to adequately manage the welfare of livestock in deteriorating seasonal conditions.
* Transport of livestock should be undertaken before animals’ body condition deteriorates to a stage where their welfare would be endangered during the transport.
* Where feed and water requirements for livestock are not being met due to a poor season, owners must (i) supply supplementary feed, and/or (ii) agist or sell stock that are fit to travel, and (iii) humanely destroy stock that are unfit to travel and cannot be treated.

***Allowing animals to lose condition to the point where their strength is significantly impaired could constitute an offence under animal welfare legislation.***

***It is not acceptable to allow animals to starve to death.***

**Criteria for destruction on property**

Where other reasonable management options have been carefully considered, some animals may require humane destruction on property. It is strongly recommended that animals are humanely destroyed if they are in high risk categories as described in tables 1 and 2, and they meet any of the following conditions:

* They fall down or are knocked over easily;
* They are unable to stand without assistance;
* They have an unsteady gait;
* Adequate good quality feed cannot be provided;
* Adequate good quality water cannot be provided;
* The animals cannot be closely monitored;
* It is uneconomical or not possible to transport, sell or feed due to circumstances.

**Only load fit animals**

Livestock should be transported before their condition deteriorates to the extent that transport may compromise their welfare. When deciding to agist or sell stock, first assess whether or not they are fit to transport. Do not transport livestock if they are not fit for the intended journey. Owners or transporters who load unfit animals could face prosecution for cruelty under animal welfare legislation.

Managers must plan the journey carefully and make suitable allowances for drought affected stock. Managers must adequately prepare stock prior to transport. For stock in poor condition this may involve time on good quality feed to bring their strength and vigour to a suitable level. Truck drivers may have to load at lower densities to suit the condition of the stock.

Before loading any animal for transport, ensure that it:

* can bear weight on all legs
* is not severely emaciated
* is not visibly dehydrated

**√** is free from visible signs of severe injury or distress

**√** is free from conditions that are likely to cause increased pain or distress during transport

**√** can see out of at least one eye

**√** is not known to be, or visually assessed to be within 2 weeks of parturition
unless the water deprivation time and journey is less than 4 hours duration

If you are not sure whether the animals are fit or not, do not load them. If animals are assessed as being unfit for transport, owners must either feed on site until they are stronger or humanely destroy them.

The pocket guide, *Is it fit to load?,* outlines some of the conditions that make an animal unfit to load.
This guide is available free from [www.mla.com.au](http://www.mla.com.au) . The Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Welfare of Animals: Land Transport of Livestock is at [www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/](http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/)

**Table 1: Welfare decisions for sheep**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| At risk  | **High risk 1** | **High risk 2** |
| General description  | Lean but strong and healthy, with limited muscle wastage. Reduced reproductive performance likely.  | Significant muscle wastage. Unlikely to conceive. At risk of death from cold, wet weather or other stress. Recovery is dependent on high quality care.  | Weak with extremely low body reserves. Animal is recumbent. At point of death.  |
| Backbone  | Visible.  | Spines of backbone identifiable. | Spines of backbone easily identifiable.  |
| Short ribs  | Slightly visible individually, more so in Merino sheep.  | Prominent and very sharp to touch.  | Very prominent and easy to see individually.  |
| Inside pin bones  | Slightly sunken.  | Sunken.  | Deeply sunken to the bone.  |
| Muscle wastage  | Rump muscle concave.  | Rump muscle concave. Muscle wastage in loin and leg muscle evident.  | Obvious over whole body. Rump and leg muscles deeply concave.  |
| Stifle joint  | Stifle joint not identifiable.  | Stifle joint not identifiable.  | Stifle joint identifiable.  |
| Tail bones  | Individual bones not identifiable. | Individual bones just able to be felt.  | Individual bones easily felt.  |
| Appearance  | Bright, alert.  | Able to stand but listless, dull.  | Lacking energy, dull and listless, recumbent, may not be able to raise head off the ground.  |
| Mobility  | Normal gait.  | Mobile, able to lie down and rise but may have some difficulty | Unsteady gait, may drag feet or ‘teeter’. Difficult to lie down and rise |
| Critical issues  |
| Lambing requirements & risks associated with lambing  | Some assistance required, high possibility of losing lamb during birth or on first day after birth. High possibility of pregnancy toxaemia and/or hypocalcaemia. Separate pregnant animals within this condition score range and care for and feed a high energy supplement separately. Necessary to seek advice on adequate feeding from a professional (e.g. veterinarian, Development Officer).  | Will need a lot of assistance – ewe and lamb may not survive. Very high possibility of pregnancy toxaemia.  | Extremely unlikely that lamb and ewe will survive lambing.  |
| Transport, sale  | Suitable for transport and sale but with minimum time off feed.  | Unsuitable for sale through saleyards or transport over long distances.  | Cannot travel.  |
| Action required  | 1. Must be fed adequately to prevent further weight loss.
2. Suitable for transport to agistment.
3. Suitable for sale but must not be kept off feed or water for extended periods.
4. Supervise and be ready to assist during lambing – supervise lamb after birth.
 | Must be fed adequately immediately to prevent weight loss. Not suitable for transport over long distances.  | 1. Destroy on-farm or seek veterinary assistance to do so.
 |

Acknowledgement: derived from Primefact 1003 (March 2010) Welfare decisions for sheep, Industry and Investment, Government of NSW

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/sheep/health/other/welfare-decisions>

**Table 2: Welfare decisions for beef cows**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cow condition** | **At risk** | **High risk 1** | **High risk 2** |
|  Cattle condition-at risk Cattle condition-high risk Cattle condition-extreme risk |
| **Description**  | Lean but strong and healthy and with noticeable muscle wastage. Reduced reproductive performance likely. | Healthy but with significant muscle wastage. Unlikely to conceive. Able to recover in time if adequately fed.  | Weak, with very low body reserves. At risk of death from cold, wet weather or other stress. Recovery dependent on high quality care and will be slow. |
| Backbone | Easily seen. | Spines of backbone individually identifiable. | Spines of backbone individually identifiable. |
| Short ribs | Visible. Fairly sharp to touch | Prominent and very sharp to touch | Very prominent and easy to see individually. |
| Inside pin bones | Slightly sunken  | Sunken | Deeply sunken to the bone |
| Muscle wastage | Rump muscle concave (between hooks and pins). | Rump muscle concave. Muscle wastage in loin and leg muscle evident.  | Muscle wastage obvious over whole body. Rump and leg muscles deeply concave.  |
| Stifle joint |  | Stifle joint not identifiable | Stifle joint identifiable |
| Tail bones | Individual bones not identifiable. | Individual bones just able to be felt. | Individual bones easily felt. |
| Skin | Pliable. | Less pliable. | Tight. |
| Appearance | Bright, alert. | Healthy. | Lacking energy or dull. |
| Mobility | Normal gait. | Mobile, able to lie down/rise  | Unsteady gait, may drag hind feet or plait hind legs. Difficulty lying down/standing up. |
| Ability to calve | Some assistance required. | Moderate assistance required. | High level of assistance required. |
| **Transport, sale** | Suitable for transport and sale but with minimum time off feed | Unsuitable for sale through saleyards or transport over long distances | Not fit to travel |
| **Actions required** | Must be fed adequately to prevent further weight loss.Suitable for transport to agistment.Suitable for sale but must not be kept off feed for extended periods.Supervise and be ready to assist during calving. | Must be fed adequately to prevent weight loss.Suitable for transport direct to agistment.Suitable for sale only direct to farm or abattoir with appropriate management.Supervise closely and be ready to assist during calving. | Do not transport.Must be given high-quality feed, water and care; **OR**Destroy on farm.Supervise closely and be ready to assist during calving. |

Acknowledgement: derived from Primefact 619 (May 2007) Welfare decisions for beef cows, Industry and Investment, Government of NSW