

“Cull” animals suffer during long-distance transport in Canada

"Cull" livestock are typically breeding animals past their prime breeding and producing years. They include sows – mother breeding pigs; boars - male breeding pigs; and "dairy" cows - female cows kept continually pregnant to supply milk for human consumption.

Most of these animals spend their entire adult lives confined - either tethered (in the case of "dairy" cows) or in a barren, metal crate measuring just slightly larger than themselves (boars and sows).

This intensive, prolonged confinement often leads to crippling arthritis, which fuses the bones in their legs together causing extreme pain and lameness. These animals suffer weakened bones and fractures. This is especially debilitating in cows as they are forced to produce up to ten times the milk they would naturally, causing a negative-calcium balance in their bones, resulting in osteoporosis. Many sows and cows develop mastitis in one or more teats - a painful bacterial infection that causes inflammation and tenderness. Due to selective breeding of pigs, their bodies grow too quickly for their hearts so they are prone to severe respiratory distress and heart attacks. Cows have hoof problems because they have been forced to stand and lie in their own waste their entire adult lives.

These animals' severely health-compromised state puts them at a disadvantage when they are loaded and transported to slaughter. Many are crippled, have fractures, are weakened or are liming and cannot keep up with the other animals. These compromised animals are at high risk for abuse through excessive electric prodding (including in the vagina, anus or face), kicking or beating.

In the case of pigs, this day is also often their first exposure to fresh air. Unfortunately, the pigs have not been conditioned to outside elements and will go from a temperature-controlled production unit to temperatures ranging from -30°C to +30°C. In their health-compromised state, heat exhaustion or hypothermia can easily set in. In Canada, sows and boars are routinely mixed on transport trailers, though it is illegal. To ready boars for transport, their two bottom tusks, containing sensitive nerves, are broken off with bolt-cutters. In some parts of Canada, the boar will also have his nose broken with a baseball bat or crowbar in a practice industry calls: "boar bashing". The purpose is to cause such severe pain the boar can be loaded illegally with other boars, but not fight.

Yet the suffering of these animals is just beginning. In Canada, federal transport regulations allow these health-compromised sows and boars to be transported up to 36 hours with no food, water or rest.

The vast majority of Canadian cull sow and boars are exported to the United States for slaughter. Once they cross the Canada/US border the transport clock goes back to zero. In the US, federal transport regulations allow an additional 28 hours of transport with no food, water or a break for these suffering pigs.

The situation is even worse for cull dairy cows. Ruminants, such as cattle are allowed to be transported up to 57 hours without food, water or a break and again, an additional 28 hours once the cows cross the Canada/US border.

Long-distance haulers in Canada are not required to have "enriched" trailers, such as on-board watering systems and forced ventilation and heat. The vast majority of transported animals are fully exposed to the elements. During the summer it is problematic if the trailer must be stopped for any length of time, such as border crossings. There are no 'livestock-only' lanes at border crossings, which can mean hours of stationary standing, with the animals on board receiving little to no air circulation.



*Canadians for
Ethical Treatment of Food Animals*

“Cull” animals should **not** be transported long distances in their compromised condition. Consumers have a key role in affecting how animals used for food are treated. Make your voice heard.

What you can do

Write the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6, asking that regulations affecting animal transportation to be changed, to include:

1. Reduced transportation times for all animals, including “cull” animals;
2. Outlaw electric prods for *all* animals being transported;
3. Require enriched vehicles, including on-board watering and forced air ventilation and heating, whenever “cull” animals are transported;
4. Ensure strict enforcement of transportation regulations by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency



* http://www.radio-canada.ca/actualite/v2/enquete/archive209_200802.shtml#



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