

**LIVESTOCK WELFARE
COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

CODE OF PRACTICE

HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF LIVESTOCK

**Drawn up by the Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee
in furtherance of livestock welfare in South Africa**

Revised: February 2000

**CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE HANDLING
AND TRANSPORT OF LIVESTOCK**

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Throughout the context of this Code the term Livestock means cattle, sheep, pigs and goats.

This CODE is to be read in conjunction with the Animals Protection Act , 1962,
(Act 71 of 1962, as amended.)

FOREWORD

Poor publicity on animal cruelty in the livestock industry was experienced in the late seventies. The Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee was consequently established in 1978. Members of twenty-one animal welfare organisations and organisations in the livestock industry and State coordinate efforts in the interest of livestock welfare.

- < Livestock Improvement Institute < Livestock Animal Welfare Association
- < Red Meat Abattoir Association < SPCA National Council
- < Natal Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee < Animal Anti Cruelty League
- < Directorate Animal Public Health, NDA < SA Veterinary Association
- < Red Meat Producers= Organisation < SA Feedlot Association
- < Abakor < Meat Board < Animal Nutrition and Animal Products Institute
- < SAPD Stock Theft Unit < SA Pork Producers Organisation
- < Pig Veterinary Society < SA Pig Breeders Society
- < United Municipal Executive < SA Meat Industry Company
- < National Emerging Red Meat Producers Organisation
- < SA Federation of Livestock Auctioneers and Meat Brokers
- < SA Federation of Livestock agents and Meat Brokers

From an animal science point of view no conflict exists between the humane treatment of animals and good animal husbandry: Losses are prevented and production efficiencies enhanced. Humane handling of livestock was also found to be beneficial to the shelf life and quality of meat.

The image of an industry furthermore reflects on its products and affects consumer demand. Unquestionably, therefore, the benefits of high standards of livestock welfare include profitability.

It is the Committee=s objective to take the necessary actions to ensure the humane handling of slaughter stock from production to slaughter.

The aim with this code: **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF LIVESTOCK**, is to set norms for the acceptable treatment of livestock.

The code was approved by the various organisations representing people affected by the code. The Code was legally edited by the National Department of Agriculture's Sub-directorate: Legal Services.

Freek Tomlinson (Chairman)

February 2000

The moral conscience and financial interests of the Livestock and Meat Industry can best be served by promoting the wellbeing of its animals. The wellbeing of the animals in our care shall be considered at all times. Cruel or inhumane handling of livestock shall be avoided during all the stages of production, transport, marketing and slaughter. The welfare of livestock can only be achieved if, at all levels within the industry, they are handled with patience and tolerance and with an understanding of their instinctual and natural behaviour and basic needs. Every reasonable effort should be made to protect the animals from physical injury, undue stress or suffering, harmful elements or deprivation of essential needs. The financial and moral benefits to the Meat Industry will be further enhanced if the handling of livestock is accompanied by an awareness that they are living, sentient beings.

1. PENNING OF ANIMALS.

1.1 Cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, shall be penned separately.

1.2 Animals shall not be penned in overcrowded conditions. More animals shall not be housed in a pen than the permissible number of the particular species for which the particular pen was designed. Penning space provided shall be enough to permit all animals to lie down at the same time and shall not be less than:

1.2.1 For adult cattle: 1,74 sq.m of floor area for each individual.

1.2.2 For bacon and small porker pigs, sheep and goats: 0,56 sq.m of floor area.

1.2.3 For large pigs and young calves: 0,74 sq.m of floor area.

1.3 Fractious animals shall not be penned with other animals.

1.4 Young, weaned juvenile animals, shall not be penned with adult animals, except in the case of mother and offspring. If harassed by other animals, mothers with their young should be penned separately.

1.5 Provisions shall be made in pens for:

1.5.1 facilities such as racks, mangers or other suitable feed containers, which are easy to clean, which will allow the feeding of an animal off the floor and which can be serviced without disturbing the animals;

1.5.2 water troughs with an adequate supply of suitable fresh water at all times;

1.5.3 sufficient facilities for the adequate cleaning of pens;

1.5.4 facilities for the safe and humane keeping and handling of animals; and

1.5.5 facilities for separate keeping of mothers with their offspring born in transit or in holding pens

1.6 The pen shall at all times be maintained in a good state of repair: Sharp points such as wire ends, broken boards, jagged ends or protruding hinges or bolts, which could cause injury to animals, shall be removed or otherwise suitably covered.

1.7 The floor of the entire pen, including the off-loading banks, races, and passages, shall be so constructed as to provide adequate non-slip surfaces that can be efficiently and suitably cleaned and kept dry and in a condition fit for the holding of livestock.

2. HANDLING

2.1 At all times livestock must be handled with patience and tolerance with due allowance for their natural behaviour, e.g.:

* Livestock respond easier to being driven when the drover stands behind the animal but within its field of vision.

* Herd animals respond easier to being driven when in a group rather than singly.

* Livestock don't like being driven in the dark.

2.2 Animals may not be dragged by their legs.

2.3 Pigs may not be lifted or carried by their head, ears or tail.

2.4 Young piglets should be carried if they will not move freely with ease.

2.5 Young calves should be carried if they cannot walk with ease. They may be carried by lifting them around the chest and hindquarters. Alternatively they must be guided with one hand on the hindquarters and the other near shoulder/neck, and walked in the required direction at a suitable pace.

2.6 Should unweaned calves be transported unaccompanied by their mothers, they shall be rested for a few hours and then fed with milk or appropriate milk substitute

2.7 Only sticks with canvas or belting flaps may be used when driving livestock. It is preferable to strike the ground behind the animal than to hit the animal itself.

2.8 Electric prodders, sticks or goads should never be used on young calves or pigs.

2.9 Electric prodders shall not be applied to the face, anal or genital areas of livestock and not only should they not be used excessively or indiscriminately but only as a last resort.

2.10 Livestock should never be struck in the face.

2.11 The loading, off-loading and herding of sheep must preferably be facilitated by appropriate use of trained AJudas≡ goats

2.12 If animals have to be restrained by hobbling, only the area above the Aknee≡ is to be used.

2.13 Lactating animals shall be milked when necessary to prevent discomfort

2.14 Injured, disabled and blind animals shall be priority slaughtered. If necessary and to prevent further pain or distress emergency slaughter may be required.

3. MOVEMENT ON THE HOOF.

3.1 Animals driven on the hoof shall at all times be under proper and competent supervision.

3.2 Animals on the hoof shall be driven in a calm manner at a gait that is relaxed, natural to that animal, and not faster than the pace of the slowest animal.

3.3 Animals shall not be driven for periods in excess of 10 hours without being given rest of at least one hour and provided with sufficient suitable fresh water that will be available to all the animals.

3.4 No animal on the hoof shall be moved in excess of the following distances:

3.4.1 During a journey of not more than one day=s duration in the case of:

- a) Sheep and goats: 20 Kilometres (25 km is excessive) and;
- b) Cattle: 30 Kilometres

3.4.2 During a journey of more than one day=s duration:

- a) Sheep and goats: 20 Kilometres during the first day and 15 kilometres during each subsequent day; and
- b) Cattle: 25 Kilometres during the first day and 20 kilometres during each subsequent day.

3.5 Animals shall be watered and fed immediately on reaching their night camp or final destination, with sufficient food of a quality and of a type compatible with the species.

3.6 Ideally animals should not be moved in the dark.

3.7 No sick, injured, disabled or heavily gravid animals shall be moved on the hoof.

3.8 Contingency plans must be in place to move by vehicle any animal that becomes exhausted, lame or otherwise unable to keep up with the herd.

3.9 Contingency plans must be in place to emergency-slaughter any animal in such a condition that failing to humanely slaughter it would constitute cruelty: e.g. a broken leg or exhaustion.

4. VEHICLES USED IN THE TRANSPORT OF LIVESTOCK.

4.1 Vehicles and all trailers used in the transport of hooved livestock shall be suitable for the transport of livestock and in a roadworthy condition.

4.2 All such vehicles and trailers shall have: -

4.2.1 a suitable non-slip floor which should not impede the cleaning of the floor of the vehicle. Hinged or removable battens or steel grids are permissible;

4.2.2 adequate ventilation and light whilst in motion as well as when stationary: no vehicle shall be totally enclosed;

4.2.3 adequate protection from exhaust gasses - exposure to exhaust fumes could interfere with animals= respiration or cause distress;

4.2.4 adequate protection from direct sun in the case of pigs transported longer than an hour;

4.2.5 no projections from the floor, sides or roof unless they are adequately protected so as to prevent injury to animals transported therein;

4.2.6 adequate provision for inspection at floor level of all the animals being transported;

4.2.7 sidewalls high enough to prevent animals from escaping or falling out of the vehicle: The sides and partitions, when used in a vehicle to separate animals carried therein, shall be of a height not lower than the shoulder joint of the largest animal being transported. In the case of cattle other than calves, the minimum height shall be 1800 mm. The minimum height shall be 750 mm in the case of any smaller animals.

4.2.8 in multi-tier vehicles, heights between decks shall be adequate, and in case of sheep and pigs not less than 1000mm, to enable the largest animals to stand naturally, freely and fully erect and to allow adequate space for the free flow of air above the animals;

4.2.9 floors that are solid and impervious;

4.2.10 floors that provide adequate and proper drainage;

4.2.11 loading/offloading openings at the rear of the vehicle that are the full width of the vehicle or, if at the sides, a width not less than 2400mm;

4.2.12 gates shall be of a design and construction strong enough and suitable for the conveyance of the intended consignment; and

4.2.13 gates must open and close freely and, as well as partitions, must be able to be well secured.

4.3 Materials used in the construction of partitions, side-rails, sidewalls, gates and ramps shall be sturdy and suitably robust and not be liable to breakage, splintering or present any surfaces liable to cause injury or bruising to the animals.

4.4 Suitable bedding material of sufficient density and thickness to prevent slipping and sliding is permissible. (Coarse sawdust and wood shavings absorbs urine and wet droppings and give a good footing.≡)

4.5 The density of animals packed into any given space shall be such as to ensure the safety and comfort of the animals during transport. The recommended floor space per animal is as follows:

4.5.1 1,4 sq.m per each adult cattle; or

4.5.2 0,3 sq.m per small calf; or

4.5.3 0,4 sq.m per sheep and goat; or

4.5.4 0,3 sq.m per porker; or

4.5.5 0,4 sq.m per baconer; or

4.5.6 0,8 sq.m per adult other pig.

4.6 In the case of the transport of pigs, the vehicle shall have:

4.6.1 a free flow of air at a level that will ensure adequate ventilation without subjecting them to wind-chill;

4.6.2 a roof-covering providing effective shade shall be provided when pigs are exposed to direct sunlight; and

4.6.3 an adequate supply of water for use in an emergency: e.g. spraying to reduce heat exhaustion.

4.7 Where the loading area of a fully loaded vehicle exceeds 4 meters in length, suitable partitions shall be provided so that no single loading area exceeds 3 meters in length.

4.8 The owner shall maintain all vehicles used in the transport of animals in a clean and hygienic condition. The vehicle shall be thoroughly washed down or otherwise cleaned as soon as practicable after the animals have been off-loaded.

5. WATERING AND FEEDING OF LIVESTOCK PRIOR TO LOADING.

5.1 Cattle, sheep and goats shall be provided with sufficient and suitable food and fresh water up to commencement of the journey.

6. LOADING AND OFF-LOADING PROCEDURE

6.1 Pigs from separate pens should not be mixed if this can be avoided. The time between removal from their pens and loading onto the vehicle should be kept to a minimum and the vehicle must depart as soon as it is loaded.

6.2 Loading and off loading of livestock into or out of a vehicle shall be accomplished as quietly and calmly as possible, with patience and tolerance and without undue harassment, terrifying of the animals, bruising, injury, suffering or undue stress.

6.3 No animals shall be loaded or off-loaded by lifting by head, fleece, skin, ears, tails, horns or legs.

- 6.4** No animals shall be loaded or off-loaded otherwise than:
- * by means of a ramp with a non-slip surface, sturdy enough to support the weight of the species of livestock being handled, with side panels or bars adequate to prevent animals escaping or falling off the ramp and of an incline not steeper than 30 degrees for sheep and goats, 25 degrees for cattle and 20 degrees for pigs; or
 - * at a loading bank equal to the height of the floor of the vehicle or, at off loading, not more than 310mm below the level of the off-loading vehicle and with an incline not exceeding 30 degrees.
- 6.5** Where a truck is equipped with an onboard removable loading ramp it should have a nonslip surface and be of a sufficient length when lowered that the inclination is no steeper than the inclines prescribed in 6.3. The distance from the ground to the heel of the ramp shall not exceed 120 mm.
- 6.6** The vehicle shall be lined up flush with the loading/ off-loading ramps or banks.
- 6.7** Ramps shall be correctly adjusted to the exact height of the vehicle's floor.
- 6.8** Journeys should commence as soon as possible after the livestock have been loaded and the animals promptly off loaded on arrival at destinations.
- 6.9** Mixing of species: Unless adequate provision has been made for effective separation, different or antagonistic species of animals such as pigs and cattle, sheep and pigs, cattle and sheep, calves and other species should not be loaded and transported in the same vehicle.
- 6.10** Mixing of animals of different ages or sizes: Animals of different ages, sizes and sexes shall not be loaded and transported in the same vehicle unless adequate provision has been made for the effective separation of such animals.
- 6.11** The mixing of adult horned cattle with polled cattle shall not be allowed and they must also be penned separately.
- 6.12** No animal which is diseased, emaciated, injured, disabled, exhausted or otherwise unfit or cows with udders distended with milk, or animals blind in one or both eyes should be loaded onto a vehicle and transported unless with the purpose to minimise its suffering, and then with the least discomfort. Where a journey has already commenced if, by reason of such unfitness, the animal is likely to be subjected to avoidable suffering or distress during transport, the consignor, carrier or other person in charge of the animal shall ensure that it is not carried further for a period longer than is necessary to transport it to the nearest available place at which it can receive attention, such as a veterinary hospital, clinic, or an animal welfare centre.
- 6.13** Where the owner of an animal or his agent, or the consignor, carrier or other person in charge thereof, has reason to believe that the animal is likely to give birth in the course of a proposed journey, the animal may not be loaded onto a vehicle or transported except with the written authority of a veterinary practitioner, and in accordance with the terms and conditions (if any) subject to which authority is given.
- 6.14** Animals that are blind shall be identifiable by being clearly marked by having a wide circle painted around the blind eye and, in addition, a circle not less than 120 mm painted onto both rumps of the animal. The colour of the paint shall be in strong contrast to that of the animal. Animals blind in one or both eyes shall not be herded together with other animals but shall be handled separately and guided to their intended destination with due care and consideration for their being unable to respond or react as would normally sighted animals. Where blind animals are off-loaded in an abattoir, such animals shall be the first of their species to be slaughtered.
- 6.15** The loading, off-loading and herding of sheep will be facilitated by appropriate use of trained AJudas[≡] goats
- 6.16** A Bill of Loading shall accompany every consignment of animals transported. It shall conform to the schedule prescribed in Appendix 1.
- 6.17** The following procedures must be avoided:

- 6.17.1** Yelling, kicking, tail twisting, beating, whipping, dragging by head, fleece, ears, tails, horns or legs, hitting in the face or elsewhere with bars, rods or sticks without flaps or indiscriminate prodding;
- 6.17.2** the excessive or indiscriminate use of any instrument, prodder or object used for driving the animal;
- 6.17.3** use of excessive force or attempts to drive livestock into or out of vehicles in such a manner as to cause panic or terror;
- 6.17.4** excessive use of an electric prodder to an obstinate animal;
- 6.17.5** applying an electric prodder to the face, anal or genital areas of livestock;
- 6.17.6** carrying any objects or accessories in the load-area of the vehicle which could cause an animal to trip, fall or be bruised or injured;
- 6.17.7** using ramps or platforms that do not provide secure footing;
- 6.17.8** marking (identification-stamping) of livestock while still on the truck will be done calmly with nonharmful materials;
- 6.17.9** loading too many animals into the apportioned space causing overcrowding;
- 6.17.10** loading too few animals into the apportioned space causing danger of falling;
- 6.17.11** loading livestock longitudinally in the vehicle instead of transversely;
- 6.17.12** transporting sheep in the chest recumbent position;
- 6.17.13** transporting unfit or heavily gravid animals except in an emergency and to the animal's benefit;
- 6.17.14** loading cows with udders distended with milk; or
- 6.17.15** transporting animals blind in one or both eyes not identified with circles painted around the blind eye and on both rumps in a strongly contrasting colour.

7. DISTANCE, DURATION, FEEDING AND WATERING DURING A JOURNEY

- 7.1** Any animal transported shall be moved with a minimum of stress.
- 7.2** It must be ensured that adequate time is provided for the loading and off-loading of the animals within the scheduled time so as to allow for calm and orderly handling;
- 7.3** Animals should be consigned so as to arrive at the destinations during the hours when the process of receiving, off-loading and lairaging could be done under supervision. (All abattoirs shall display the relevant hours applicable prominently.)
- 7.4** If unweaned animals are transported they shall be conveyed together with their mothers each in separate compartments.
- 7.5** If unweaned calves should be transported without their mothers they should be provided with milk at regular intervals.
- 7.6** Weaned calves should not be transported for periods in excess of twelve hours.
- 7.7** When transporting pigs over a distance of more than 50 km, a sufficient supply of water should be carried for emergency use, e.g. spraying the pigs to reduce heat exhaustion.
- 7.8** Animals shall be promptly off-loaded on arrival at the destination.

8. DRIVERS= RESPONSIBILITIES DURING TRANSPORT OF LIVESTOCK

Drivers shall:

- 8.1** drive in strict compliance with the requirements of the Road Traffic Ordinance;
- 8.2** be in a possession of a valid driver=s license appropriate to the class of vehicle driven;
- 8.3** be in possession of the appropriate documentation (vide Annexure 2) as well as telephone numbers to be phoned in case of emergencies or assistance being required;
- 8.4** be in possession of a written and approved route plan of the most suitable and shortest route to the destination, a contingency alternate route as well as a contingency plan for emergencies and the telephone numbers of the consignor, the consignee, the transporters and 24-hour emergency contact numbers;
- 8.5** have knowledge of the natural behaviour of the animals he is transporting: e.g visual fields, flight patterns as well as of the appropriate use of flap-sticks, boards, electric prodders as well as having knowledge of disallowed handling methods; and
- 8.6** be responsible for ensuring that the load-space of the vehicle is free of any objects or equipment such as wire, webbing, spades, spare wheels, drums, tools, etc. which may cause injury to the animals being transported therein;
- 8.7** be responsible for ensuring that there are no rough edges, projecting plates or boards or sharp ends, bent bars etc., which may cause injury to the animals;
- 8.8** be responsible for the correct aligning of the vehicle to the loading/off- loading platforms so as to ensure that there is no space through which an animal can fall or be trapped;
- 8.9** at all times be alert and in a fit state to be in responsible charge of a vehicle conveying animals;
- 8.10** not handle a vehicle in such a manner as to cause the animals conveyed therein to slip, fall or be injured. The vehicle shall not be driven in disregard of the safety or well being of the animals;
- 8.11** not stop for more than 30 minutes while transporting livestock;
- 8.12** park loaded vehicles conveying livestock only on level ground, preferably in shade in a quiet area away from inquisitive onlookers;
- 8.13** ensure that, barring unforeseen eventualities, he is able to deliver the consignment of livestock to its destination within the scheduled time of acceptance;
- 8.14** be aware that the faster the vehicle travels, the greater the wind-chill factor:

Wind-chill factor at various speeds and ambient temperatures

Speed	Ambient air temperature (EC)								
	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15
8	25	19	14	9	4	-2	-7	-12	-17
16	23	17	11	3	-2	-7	-13	-18	-24
24	21	15	8	2	-5	-11	-17	-24	-30
32	20	13	7	0	-7	-13	-20	-26	-33
40	19	12	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-35
48	18	11	4	-3	-10	-17	-24	-31	-38
56	17	10	3	-4	-12	-19	-26	-33	-40
64	16	9	2	-5	-13	-20	-28	-35	-42
72	16	8	1	-6	-14	-21	-29	-36	-44
80	15	8	0	-8	-15	-23	-30	-38	-45

* These parameters are applicable to dry animals only. The wind-chill factor is exacerbated

when animals are wet. The danger of pneumonia and death is greatly increased where the animals are transported insufficiently protected in wet conditions.

8.15 be required to visually observe the animals he is transporting as frequently as circumstances may permit, but not less than every two hundred kilometres to ensure that no animal is in obvious distress. Where any distress is observed, immediate measures to relieve such distress must be taken by the driver;

8.16 be competent to assess such distress and be competent to take the necessary measures to alleviate or resolve the situation (being in possession of a functional cellphone is desirable);

8.17 in the case of an animal giving birth during transport, immediately take the necessary measures to ensure the protection of the mother and offspring from being trampled or otherwise injured or harassed by other animals;

8.18 in the case of an animal that becomes unfit or severely injured in the course of a journey, ensure that it is not carried for a period longer than is necessary to transport it to the nearest available place at which it can receive attention, such as a veterinary hospital or clinic or an abattoir, or auction pens, or to a Police Station for emergency humane destruction;

8.19 in the event of any breakdown of the transport vehicle, accident or injury to any animal in transit, the carrier shall contact assistance en route, i.e the South African Police, the traffic authorities and breakdown service without delay and report the relevant details to the official in charge.

8.20 Notwithstanding the foregoing, it shall not be unlawful in the case of an emergency for a vehicle to be used as an ambulance and for an unfit animal to be carried therein with all practical speed direct to a place for veterinary treatment, or to the nearest available place at which it can be humanely killed.

9. RESTRAINING OF LIVESTOCK DURING TRANSPORT

9.1 No person shall transport any animal which is likely to become panic-stricken or which may try to escape or may be liable to injure any other animal, other than in an escape-proof container. Such containers shall be so constructed as to prevent contamination, to be free from hurtful projections and which shall have adequate ventilation and shade and protection from wind chill, wet or damp and exhaust gasses, so as not to cause such animal undue suffering or distress and which will allow the animal to stand freely and naturally erect with sufficient space above its head to permit free flow of air.

9.2 Where the transport of any animal may cause injury to itself or any other animal, it shall be restrained in such a manner as to prevent such injury.

9.3 Such restraining shall be effected without causing that animal physical injury, or deprivation of such essential needs as adequate ventilation and protection from adverse climatic conditions, noxious fumes and provided that the measures taken will not amount to cruelty to the animal.

9.4 Sheep shall not be transported in compartments requiring their being constrained in the chest recumbent position.

9.5 No animals shall be kept in restraint for more than 4 hours in any 24-hour period.

9.6 A sack containing an animal must be so secured to the vehicle that it will prevent sliding or movement during transport.

9.7 No wire or bailing twine shall be used for tying the animal's legs or feet.

9.8 To avoid strangulation or neck-break, a slipknot may not be used where animals are secured to the vehicle by horns or neck. The rope must be attached to the vehicle at the level of the animal's knees, so that in the event of the animal falling, the possibility of serious injury or death is reduced. The rope should be long enough to allow the animal to lie comfortably in a natural position with head upright.
