



THINK INSIDE THE TRUCK

You ship your market integrity with every load of cattle

People who golf quickly learn the term “mulligan.” It’s a chance to take a shot over with no penalty because you flubbed it badly.

There are no mulligans in cattle shipping. No chance to do it over if you make a poor decision.

Every load of cattle that goes out the chute carries with it your personal and industry market integrity. It might as well have your name on the side, “I (your name here) made the decisions on what was loaded, how they were treated and what you’ll get as my customer.”

Today’s cattle producers have the tools and knowledge to handle this. But in the rush of a busy work time it’s a good idea to make sure everyone on the processing and loading team knows what is expected. Remember especially new people who may not be familiar with things.

A CHECKLIST

A simple rule is if you don’t want to walk them down the main street of Vancouver or Toronto, or if you don’t want to eat them yourself, don’t send them. Here’s a reminder of the big issues.

Physically fit. Check animals for any signs of physical issues that would make animals unable to handle travel. Things like cancer eye, or an inability to walk properly. If they can’t handle the trip to the end point and the waits, don’t send them.

Drug withdrawal. Simple. Make sure withdrawal times are met and check before sorting. Feed records may be separate from animal health so check them all so there are no surprises down the road.

Broken needles. Check records and identify any animal with suspect broken needles. Simplest solution is to slaughter for your own use. If you do ship them, make sure the next owner or the processing plant is informed and that this contact information is recorded.

Support your buyer. If you ship recently vaccinated heifers or backgrounded calves to the next feedlot, let the new manager know about the treatments. Something may happen to require an emergency slaughter. Note the date you did that for your own protection.

Keep current records. Make sure the withdrawal check with date is on record. Set an example of due diligence for your family and staff and your customer.



Trucking cattle can have high visibility with the public, and may be the only livestock they get to see.

Trucking sense. Use accepted transport standards like checking for possible slippery floors and proper animal densities.

THE GOLDEN RULE

Remember the Golden Rule of shipping. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

You would find it an inconvenience or an annoyance to receive cattle with incomplete or incorrect records. So make sure you support buyers with the information to make good decisions.

THE VBP STANDARD

Shipping is just one Standard Operating Procedure under the Verified Beef Production (VBP) program. Producers who are interested in continually improving their production standards are welcome to take a VBP workshop or review online.

VBP outlines industry-sanctioned practices for food safety. Provincial contacts for VBP across Canada are available at www.verifiedbeef.org.

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