

What cattle farmers think about fitness for transport

A questionnaire survey

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CPH Cattle November 15th 2021

KØBENHAVNS UNIVERSITET





Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Research in Veterinary Science

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/rvsc



Lameness scoring and assessment of fitness for transport in dairy cows: Agreement among and between farmers, veterinarians and livestock drivers



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Moderate agreement at best

(Dahl-Pedersen 2021, submitted to Frontiers in Veterinary Science) N=119.	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Do you find it difficult to understand the rules regarding cattle fitness for transport?	9%	30%	20%	37%	4%
Do you think you lack knowledge regarding assessment of cattle fitness for transport?	3%	11%	20%	52%	14%
How often are you in doubt about an animal's fitness for transport?	1%	2%	29%	60%	8%
Have you ever shipped an unfit animal?	0%	2%	13%	53%	33%
Do you feel able to assess whether the clinical condition of a slightly ill or injured animal may worsen during transport?	27%	41%	20%	12%	0%

If in doubt, leave it out?

Almost half would wait for the next shipping opportunity

- in a sick pen (14%)

- in its usual barn section (32%)

One out of four would ask for the livestock driver's opinion

One out of five would ask the for veterinarian's opinion

Only one percent would try to ship it anyway

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Livestock drivers' knowledge about dairy cow fitness for transport – A Danish questionnaire survey



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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Animal transport

Animal welfare

ABSTRACT

Dairy cows are transported by road to slaughter after their productive life. Cull cows are vulnerable to transport stress, and can only be transported when fit for the intended journey. However, the decision, as to whether a cow is fit is rather subjective and relies on the farmer and the livestock driver. Using a questionnaire survey, we

30% of the livestock drivers were "sometimes" eller "often" in doubt about fitness for transport
5% were in doubt "very often"

Most difficult to assess?

Lameness – 87%



Conclusions

More than half at least sometimes

- found it difficult to understand rules

One third at least sometimes

- lacked knowledge
- in doubt about fitness for transport
- unable to assess worsening during transport

More than 80% never or seldom

- have shipped an unfit animal

Conclusions cont.

Farmers, livestock drivers and veterinarians
- must all be included in development of future training programs and learning materials

Lameness seems to be a good place to start