

# Transport of calves

# Transport of young calves

**Calves** – especially around weaning – are **very vulnerable** to diseases (such as respiratory and gastro-intestinal diseases). Transport can easily stress them. In addition, young calves are hard to handle as a group - herding instinct is not yet developed. **Good handling** practices prevent undesirable consequences and will benefit other aspect of the animal production (e.g. better body weight gain or less diseases).





- Calves with unhealed navel: all transport prohibited
- Calves under 10 days: transport allowed for max. 100 km, under specific circumstances
- Calves under 14 days: long journeys prohibited
- Even better! Transport weaned calves after 8 weeks
- If a calf stays lying at stops, contact a veterinarian
- Provide **appropriate bedding** (e.g. straw) which guarantees comfort appropriate to the number of animals, the journey time, the weather and the absorption of urine and faeces
- Use side protection on the deck, in order to avoid the calves' legs getting trapped between the deck and side walls
- When calves are handled in a group, limit the group size to 10 – 15 calves
- If a ramp is used, the slope should be reduced as much as possible (max. angle of 20°, 36%)
- Load calves with individual help to guide them on the ramp
- In case of long journeys; call the farm or the control post to arrange immediate watering and feeding at arrival, and proper climate conditions for calves (e.g. pre-warming of building)
- It is not allowed to muzzle calves!





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## Feeding and watering



**Unweaned calves** 

The provision of liquid feed to calves in transit is considered to be impractical with most truck design. Therefore **calves might need to be unloaded** to be given liquid feed during the stops.



#### Weaned calves

Provide feeder calves a grain-based concentrate feed at rest stops. However, only if calves are accustomed to eating the diet. Sudden changes can cause them to become sick.

#### Good liquid feeding: 2 L / 12 hours

- Feed calves individually and give resting period of at least 1 hour, before re-starting the journey
- Make sure that the drinking system is clean, well-maintained and functioning
- Make sure calves are **familiar with the drinking system** to supply milk, milk replacer or electrolyte solutions of the right temperature (e.g. use rubber teats)
- If calves don't know how to use the drinker, maintain a little drip at the drinker to **initiate drinking behaviour** or use your finger to guide them.
- Monitor the calves closely to ensure the adequate intake. If a calf fails to drink from the drinking system, offer milk/water manually

### Temperature

Optimum temperature: 5°C to 25°C. Maintain a stable temperature, as calves are sensitive to temperature changes

- Provide more floor space
- Additional fans for ventilation
- When necessary, **sprinkle water**
- During delays, water the calves manually
- Do not transport when over 30 °C



- Pre-warm vehicles prior to loading
- Provide additional bedding
  - When necessary, apply additional heating



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