



STOCK PREPARATION PRE-TRANSPORT – A GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICE

Why is it important to get the water and feed level right before transport?

Stock that are full of water and green feed do not travel as well as drained stock that have had access to dry feed (i.e. good quality dry hay/grower pellets). Stock full of green feed will empty out quicker during transport and can become stressed, weak and unsteady. Dung can stain wool and skins, reducing value and causing slipping, which may lead to downers and deaths. In cold weather, urine-stained sheep and lambs are more susceptible to cold stress, which can lead to deaths. By observing the following guidelines you can reduce these problems and lower the stress of the journey for your livestock. That means a healthier and more profitable animal at the other end.

Taking stock off feed

For slaughter stock, the feed curfew period should ideally be between 12 and 24 hours for cattle and 4 and 24 hours for sheep. However, depending on the destination and market, class and condition of stock, feed type and transport time, the feed curfew period may be as short as 4 hours.

For non-slaughter stock, generally the recovery period after transport will be faster with a shorter total time off feed and water, which includes the muster, feed and water curfew and transport times.

Taking stock off water before the journey...is it practical?

Yes it is. Transport industry research shows that around 95% of stock journeys in Australia are under 24 hours in duration*. This means that for mature livestock (see *table following*) most producers have more than enough time to take stock off water for several hours before transport, to ensure the stock are settled and will not become stressed during the journey. Talk with your customer and carrier about how long the transport will take and then work back from there.

Some customers, in particular processors and feedlots, may demand shorter or longer water curfew times and these should be followed provided animal welfare outcomes are optimised and there is compliance with the guidelines for total time off feed and water.

What about the rules for maximum times off water?

Water deprivation times are vital measures of animal welfare. Refer to the tables that follow for how long stock can be taken off water. In almost all cases, these times will still give you more than enough time to take your stock off water in your stockyard pre-transport, allowing them to empty effectively. ***

- Please note that the maximum water deprivation times must never be breached

Specific guidelines for sheep:

Mature sheep destined for slaughter should be taken off water at least 12 hours and no more than 24 hours prior to the journey. In winter, when urine stains can lead to severe wind chill in sheep in transit, the time off water should be longer than 12 hours, provided that overall times off water (see *table following*) are not breached.

Specific guidelines for cattle:

The key measure for cattle is that they should be off water for at least 4 hours and not more than 24 hours if they are going for processing.

In all cases, cattle should have access to dry feed and/or travel supplements . This should help the stock to arrive in good condition

Avoid green feed pre-transport!

Stock should never have access to green feed right up to the time of transport. Green feed is the leading cause of effluent spill from stock crates. It can lead to animals with badly stained hides, bruises and broken limbs from slipping in effluent. Take stock off green feed for at least 12 hours prior to the trip.

Special considerations for live export stock

Under the *Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Export of Livestock*, any livestock entering the livestock export supply chain are only allowed to be off feed and water for up to 12 hours prior to the journey. As most final journeys for livestock export ships are from nearby feedlots, in most cases this will still allow for the above recommendations for sheep and cattle to be complied with.

What about younger livestock?

Younger stock always have lower maximum allowable times off water than mature stock (see tables following). Exercise more caution when taking young stock off water. Avoid giving these stock green feed in the 12 hours leading up to the journey.

What about weak or drought stock?

Drought stock should always be treated with extra care in transport. Ideally they should be well fed and watered in the days leading up to the transport. If this is achieved, the same principles as above apply.

*Finding of ALTA member survey of over 200 stock transport companies (2007)

Maximum times off water

Consistent with draft legislation and current standards and guidelines for stock exports.

Species/Class	Max time off water	Extensions available?	Notes
Cattle (over 6 months)	48 hours	no extensions	Stock are assessed as travelling well and can complete the journey in good condition and driving conditions are favourable. Stock must then be spelled and provided with food, water and rest for min. 36 hrs prior to commencing another journey.
Young cattle (Under 6 months)	24 hours	No extensions	Stock are assessed as travelling well and can complete the journey in good condition and driving conditions are favourable. Stock must then be spelled and provided with food, water and rest for min. 12 hrs prior to commencing another journey.
Sheep (over 4 months) Goats (over 6 months)	48 hours	No extensions	Stock are assessed as travelling well and can complete the journey in good condition and driving conditions are favourable. Stock must then be spelled and provided with food, water and rest for min. 36 hrs prior to commencing another journey.
Lambs / Sheep (Under 4 months) Kids (under 6 months)	28 hours	No extensions	Stock are assessed as travelling well and can complete the journey in good condition and driving conditions are favourable. Stock must then be spelled and provided with food, water and rest for min. 12 hrs prior to commencing another journey.
Species/Class	Max time off water	Extensions available?	Notes
			Australian Standards for Exporting of Livestock (ASEL) only. Animals transported for live export, unlike abattoir, need an opportunity for full recovery from water deprivation prior to boat loading, so standards are higher.
Cattle (over 6 months)	36 hours	48 hours	Stock are assessed as travelling well and can complete the journey in good condition and driving conditions are favourable. Stock must then be spelled and provided with food and water for min. 36 hrs post- transport recovery.
Sheep (over 6 months)	32 hours	extension 38 hours	Extension only allowed if stock are travelling well and not showing signs of fatigue, thirst or distress; If adverse weather conditions not prevailing or predicted; Animals must be rested with feed and water for at least 12 hours post-transport.
Goats (over 12 months)	Max 32 hours	Extension up to 38 hours	Extension only allowed if stock are travelling well and not showing signs of fatigue, thirst or distress; If adverse weather conditions not prevailing or predicted; Animals must be rested with feed and water for at least 12 hours post-transport.
Lambs under 6 months and kids under 12 months	Max 20 hours	Extension up to 28 hours	Extension allowed if stock are travelling well and not showing signs of fatigue, thirst or distress; If adverse weather cond. not prevailing or predicted; Animals must be rested with feed and water for at least 12 hours post-transport.

Cattle

Mean liveweight (kg)	Minimum floor area (m ² /head)	Number of head per 12.5 m x 2.4m deck
100	0.31	97
150	0.42	71
200	0.53	56
250	0.77	38
300	0.86	34
350	0.98	30
400	1.05	28
450	1.13	26
500	1.23	24
550	1.34	22
600	1.47	20
650	1.63	18

Sheep

^a Based on average liveweight, wool of 25 mm length, and no horns

Mean liveweight (kg)	Minimum floor area (m ² /head) ^a	Number of head per 12.5 m x 2.4m deck
20	0.17	176
30	0.19	157
40	0.22	136
50	0.25	120
60	0.29	103

Goats

Mean liveweight (kg)	Minimum floor area (m ² /head)	Number of head per 12.5 m x 2.4m deck
20	0.15	200
30	0.17	176
40	0.22	136
50	0.25	120
60	0.28	107

Pigs

Average liveweights (kg)	Pen Length				Space Allowance (m ² /head)
	3m Min Number of Head	3m Max Number of Head	4m Min Number of Head	4m Max Number of Head	
50	30	33	40	44	0.22
75	21	25	31	34	0.29
100	19	21	25	28	0.35
125	15	19	21	23	0.42
150	13	15	18	20	0.48
175	12	13	16	18	0.55
200	11	13	14	16	0.61