



# HAULING GUIDELINES

## Nebraska offers new livestock hauling guidelines.

by Troy Smith, field editor

Other states may want to take a close look at a Nebraska program designed to help livestock transporters be better prepared for hauling live cargo, but also to help law officers deal with enforcement issues involving vehicles carrying animals. It's an example of proactive cooperation among livestock industry, academia and government agencies. The collaboration resulted in livestock hauling guidelines, which Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts called important to the safety of all motor vehicle operators and passengers, but especially livestock haulers and the animals they transport.

Mike Drinnin, Clarks, Neb., cattle feeder and newly elected president of the Nebraska Cattlemen, said adoption of the new guidelines is an effort to be proactive in the promotion of safe livestock transportation and the prevention of dangerous situations in the event that a livestock truck is involved in a traffic accident or put out of service as a result of law-enforcement action.

Asked what it was that prompted the effort, Drinnin cites a shared recognition of the need for preparedness. He notes how cattle are transported to, from and

within his state on a year-round basis, with significant seasonal increases in the volume of cattle movement.

While most cattle transportation is associated with moving cattle through the beef production chain — from cow-calf to stocker operation to feedyard and finally to harvest — cattle producers in many states may relocate cattle during the course of managing their individual operations. Situations vary, but might include routine relocation between summer and winter quarters or drought-induced shipment of

animals to new and distant range.

The point is producers often put wheels under cattle — probably more than ever before — and every trip comes with risk of vehicle breakdown, traffic accident or rule infraction.

**“They are not hauling widgets. They transport live animals, knowing there is a potential for injury, stress and BQA impacts.”**



— Rob Eirich

### Thinking ahead

“By being better prepared, both haulers and the State Patrol will be able to respond in an effective manner and lessen the impact of any delay on the welfare of livestock under our care,” offers Drinnin.

In addition to the Nebraska Cattlemen, Nebraska Farm Bureau and Nebraska's pork, poultry and dairy associations, collaborators included the University of Nebraska, Nebraska Department of Agriculture and Nebraska State Patrol. Drinnin praises the willing participation of State Patrol personnel and their plan for incorporating livestock hauling information into the agency's law enforcement training program.

A University of Nebraska Extension educator and the state's director of Beef Quality Assurance (BQA), Rob





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stopped and put out of service by law officers should not be the first time such matters are considered, Eirich says livestock haulers, as well as livestock owners, should have implemented a transportation checklist prior to the truck’s departure from the cattle point of origin.

“If there is an incident, and especially if there is an accident, that kind of checklist information could be invaluable,” adds Eirich. “In the event of an emergency situation, clear, fast and smooth communication is important.”

Useful to all parties involved are recommendations for standard operating procedure. It starts with assessment of the livestock involved. The total amount of time livestock can spend on a transport vehicle, without water and feed, is limited. During times of severe heat, humidity or cold, the window narrows.

The hauler and law-enforcement personnel at the scene must identify options that best protect the animals’ well-being. If possible the first option to be considered is law enforcement escort to the livestock’s final destination.

If continuing to a final destination is not possible, the truck may be escorted to a suitable facility for off-loading of animals. Producer organizations, the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture have worked together to compile a list of available resources. Local auction-market facilities often are the most logical locations for off-loading.

Management of the designated

facility should be contacted to coordinate arrival of animals and attention to feed and water needs.

The livestock hauling guidelines also incorporate animal handling and transport information. Included is a list of materials that may be needed if a transport vehicle is incapacitated and cattle must be off-loaded at the site, such as portable stock panels and equipment necessary to move nonambulatory animals.

Also included are basic animal-handling tips tailored to various livestock species — beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine or poultry — along with names and contact information for regional representatives of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture’s State Veterinarian office.

According to Captain Gerry Krolkowski, commander of the Nebraska State Patrol’s carrier enforcement division, rules regulating the commercial trucking industry are meant to bolster public safety; but enforcement actions that put trucks out of service may pose consequences to a living, breathing cargo and its owner.

“Any time we can work with the public and especially with industry to find solutions to potential problems, it is an advantage for us,” states Krolkowski.

“Recognizing that livestock must be treated differently than other kinds of loads, the guidelines help us assess each situation and decide on a reasonable course of action. That might be escorting the truck to the nearest facility where cattle can be cared for. In any case, the goal is to minimize stress to the animals and minimize costs to the owner.”

For more information about livestock hauling guidance, go to <http://bit.ly/ABB-haul> or search for guideline information at [www.wesupportag.org](http://www.wesupportag.org).

Editor’s note: Troy Smith is a cattleman and freelance writer from Sargent, Neb.

officers do their job and also address the health and

welfare of the cattle,” explains Eirich, noting that multiple factors may have to be considered when normal transportation is interrupted and delayed.

For example, if a truck is taken out of service, will the cattle have to be off-loaded? What type or class of

cattle is involved — feeder cattle, bred females, finished market animals, etc. — and how long have they been on the truck? Did they come from Canada or Mexico in a sealed trailer that may be opened only by the proper authorities? Are the cattle destined for a specialty program such as “certified organic” beef? Are there potential biosecurity concerns? Where is the nearest appropriate facility for off-loading cattle and providing feed and water?

Since the time a loaded truck is

Eirich says the nature of their cargo puts greater responsibility on the shoulders of livestock haulers. Delays in transportation may put animals at risk.

“They’re not hauling widgets. They transport live animals, knowing there is potential for injury, stress and BQA impacts,” explains Eirich. “Livestock people understand that, but law-enforcement personnel and first responders may not.”

Consider a potential situation where a cattle truck is pulled over for a weight issue or some other problem that might put the driver or the vehicle “out of service” for a significant length of time. Public safety is the priority for law officers, but the welfare of the truckload of cattle is important, too.

“The goal was to develop guidelines to help law enforcement



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