May increase the percentage of shrink amounts of stress on cattle being shipped stressful times in a calf’s life. Greater driver experience, animal nutrition, health classes into separate trailer compartments, transit, weather conditions, comingling, including loading conditions, time in pastures. When cattle are being transported beginning to plan shipment of this year’s market dairy cows traveled 227 miles. This data provides insight on the long distances cattle travel which could have negative effects on milk yields, milk quality, and performance due to stress. The stress from shipping can have an impact on calves’ immunity and prolong the amount of time calves are off feed following shipping. With these disadvantageous effects related to stress, it is important that producers work to make the shipping process as stress free as possible.

There are several pre-shipping suggestions that have been made as a result of previous research. These include:

- Cattle should be fed and watered within five hours prior to being loaded if the trip length is over 12 hours;
- Cattle loaded for trips four to 12 hours should be fed within 24 hours prior to loading;
- Cattle should be in good health and fit for transport;
- Cattle should be handled as little as possible and as gently as possible prior to transport;
- Cattle should receive a minimum of five hours of rest following 48 hours of transport.

One resource available to producers is the Beef Quality Assurance Master Cattle Transporter Guide located on www.BQA.org. It can help producers improve shipping methods and reduce stress on cattle during the shipping period. This guide provides checklists that shippers can work through to help make shipping cattle safe for both personnel and cattle. It also contains loading density suggestions for popular trailer layouts used in the industry. Taking time to work through the checklists prior to transport can save costs and headaches after the cattle are loaded.

Another online resource available for producers is the National BQA channel located on YouTube. By searching the keyword “transportation,” several informative videos covering transportation can be found.

Finally, an important task that producers must work through when shipping cattle across state lines is the requirements for entry that each state animal health official prescribes. For a time, producers have had to search through state regulations to ensure they meet all the requirements to transport cattle across state lines; however a new feature offered at www.interstatelivestock.com allows producers to enter the state of origin cattle are coming from and the final destination the cattle are being shipped to and it will provide all cattle health requirements for transportation. This feature is not only for cattle heading to the feedlot or inspected harvest facility, but producers can also use it for sales, exhibition, and show and rodeo stock. With this new resource, producers can easily find all of the requirements to successfully transport cattle to all 50 states.

It is important not only to the producer, but also the industry as a whole, that cattle are humanely handled when transported. As mentioned, several resources are available for producers to research more information on transporting cattle safely and in a humane manner. Producers should review these tools and resources to ensure they are following the best management practices when transporting cattle.

This article was written deriving information from Schwartzkopf-Genswein K. J. Ahola, L. Edwards-Callaway, D. Hale, and J. Patterson. 2015. Symposium: Transportation issues impacting cattle well-being and considerations for the future.

UPCOMING WEBINAR

Join Dave Specht on Wednesday, Nov. 10, at 7 p.m. CDT for the Cattleman’s Webinar Series “Succession Planning for Next Generations Only” presented by NCBA’s Young Leaders Beef.

Dave will present the most important elements of succession planning from a business perspective and will introduce you to “The Family Farm System” addressing questions you should ask as you progress as an upcoming business and industry leader. For more information, please visit www.BeefUSA.org.