



# BQA Today

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## Proper stock trailer transportation of cattle is critical

Hauling cattle is an integral part of most operations. Whether cattle are hauled to the local livestock market or to a different pasture, ensuring that proper transportation practices are used can prevent injury to your cattle. Reducing cattle stress and injury can also lead to more profitable operations.

The National BQA program, which is funded by The Beef Checkoff, recently released a new brochure, *Stock Trailer Transportation of Cattle*, aimed at producers to assist them with hauling cattle to market. The brochure contains a lot of helpful information from routine trailer maintenance to loading and unloading cattle to weather considerations for transporting cattle. They also have created a bumper sticker for your trailer with the recommended number of head to load based on trailer size and weight of cattle.

The following are cattle loading/unloading tips to help ensure your cattle arrive at their destination in a safe and healthy manner:

- When loading and unloading cattle onto the trailer move them slowly and quietly.
- Use low stress handling techniques when moving, loading and unloading cattle.
- Avoid using electric prods and aggressive use of canes, whips and sorting sticks. This will minimize stress, help prevent the animals from getting excited and lessen the amount of shrink.
- Sort cattle into groups based on size and sex. Load different groups into separate compartments.
- Load heavier cattle towards the front of the trailer.

- Allow cattle to establish a flow onto the trailer as this will reduce stress.

The following is a checklist for hauling cattle to be sold:


1. Are cattle physically able to be loaded and unloaded?
2. Can cattle walk normally, bearing weight on all four legs?
3. Are any cattle suffering from advanced stages of health disorders such as cancer eye, open wounds, mastitis, emaciation, malnutrition, exhaustion or deformity?
4. Can each animal keep up with the rest of the group?
5. If cattle have been treated has the withdrawal time passed?
6. Are cattle completely blind?

BQA programs require that animals be handled in a manner that will result in a high quality product for consumers. Transporting cattle from farm to farm or to the market must not jeopardize the quality of product produced.

There is also an economic incentive to properly transport cattle. Cattle that are injured will sell for less, so taking steps to prevent injury in transit can result in higher selling prices. Similarly cattle that are injured or bruised will have a greater degree of trim loss. This is particularly true

for market cows and bulls which usually do not have enough fat thickness to help provide some degree of protection from bruising. Cattle suffering from weather related stress will be more susceptible to disease. Taking care to follow these recommended transportation practices can result in higher quality beef, less trim loss, fewer injuries and a more profitable operation.

To order a free *Stock Trailer Transportation of Cattle* brochure and bumper sticker please call 515-296-2305 or email [Brian@iabeef.org](mailto:Brian@iabeef.org).




**STOCK TRAILER TRANSPORTATION OF CATTLE**  
Transporting Cattle the BQA Way

Trailer size	400	600	800	1000	1200	1400	1600	Total Wt.**
16 ft x 6 ft	18	12	9	7	6	5	5	< 7400
18 ft x 6 ft	21	14	10	8	7	6	5	< 8400
20 ft x 6 ft	23	15	12	9	8	7	6	< 9500
24 ft x 6 ft	28	18	14	11	9	8	7	< 11100
20 ft x 7 ft	27	18	13	11	9	8	7	< 10800
24 ft x 7 ft	32	22	16	13	11	9	8	< 13000
32 ft x 7 ft	43	29	22	17	14	12	11	< 17300

\*\*The chart represents the maximum number of animals based on the weight of different breeds, when loading and unloading. Load reduced the number of animals based on the weight of the animals.

\*\*The maximum weight of cattle for each trailer size with these conditions. Do not exceed the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) and axle load.



**A SAFE, WHOLESOME AND HEALTHY BEEF SUPPLY**