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SAFELY TRANSPORTING MEDIUM AND LARGE ANIMALS

Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older.



Photograph Courtesy of the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Many 4-H projects involve medium and large animals, such as goats, sheep, swine, cattle, and horses. As part of 4-H projects, these animals are often transported to competitions. Accordingly, careful preparation is needed to assure the safe movement of medium and large animals. This Clover Safe provides information about how to safely transport medium and large animals.

Precautions for Safely Transporting Medium and Large Animals

- Prior to transportation, inspect trailers for holes, cracks, splinters, or sharp edges that could injure an animal. Assure trailer damage or defects are repaired before transporting animals.
- The transportation trailer must provide adequate ventilation for the animals it will transport.
- Thoroughly clean and if appropriate, disinfect transportation trailers before loading animals. Spread clean bedding after cleaning the trailer.
- Never transport new born, diseased, injured, or fatigued animals.
- Loading ramps should be at a 20° angle from the horizontal. Ramps should be slatted and have side-protection gates to prevent animal injuries due to slipping, tripping, or falling.
- It is a recommended safety practice to remove halters or other equipment before loading animals into a transportation trailer.
- Avoid spooking animals by being calm and moving in a deliberate fashion when loading animals into a transportation trailer.
- Take your time when moving animals into a transportation trailer. Do not hit, push, or pull animals to get them moving into a transportation trailer.
- If goats or sheep are lifted into a trailer, they should be grabbed around the body while supporting the chest and belly.
- Use partitions to separate different types and sizes of animals inside the transportation trailer.
- Always provide animals with adequate space to stand naturally and sufficient space for all animals in the transportation trailer to lie down at the same time.
- If an animal is tethered during transport, the rope should be long enough to permit the animal to eat, drink, and lie down. However, the rope should not be so long the animal becomes at risk for entanglement injuries or strangulation.
- Never lead large animals, such as cattle or horses, into a transportation trailer unless there is an escape door or exit.
- On long transporting trips, periodically check the welfare of animals.
- The driver of the towing vehicle should take care to slowly and smoothly accelerate and decelerate (brake) when driving. Moreover, towing vehicles should be driven through corners at speeds that allow animals to maintain their balance in the transportation trailer.
- If you are injured when transporting animals, notify your project leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.