**Welfare In Transport Reforms Workshop: Maximum Journey Times for Cattle and Sheep**

**Wednesday 11th May 2022 1PM – 2.30PM**

**Agenda**

1. **Welcome and introductions**
2. **Exceptions to the maximum journey time for cattle** **and sheep**

The Summary of Responses and Government Response to the joint UK and Welsh Government response to the consultation on *Improvements to Animal Welfare in Transport* (see Annex 1), proposed further discussions and engagement with stakeholders onmaximum journey times for cattle and sheep.[[1]](#footnote-2) [[2]](#footnote-3) We are aware that there are some overall journey times from Scottish Islands and the Channel Islands that may regularly exceed any agreed upon maximum journey time. However, we wish to explore what other factors may cause any agreed upon maximum journey time to be exceeded.

* + **Long distance transport of cattle and sheep: Current best practice**

We wish to better understand how the current practice of transporting cattle and sheep on long journeys, such as breeding animals for export, goes beyond the legal minimum standards; what industry considers ‘best practice’ for this type of transport; and whether stakeholders have any specific evidence to support the view that cattle and sheep welfare is more than adequately protected during long distance transport.

* + **Long stays at markets/collection centres: Current best practice**

We wish to better understand how the current practice of long stays at markets/collection centres, goes beyond the legal minimum standards; what does industry consider ‘best practice’ for this.

* + **Long stays at markets/collection centres: Going Forward**

Possible solution – Markets to keep tracing records of animals being sold i.e. records of unloading and loading times to be available on request if needed.

* + **Other criteria to consider for cattle and sheep (Annex 2)**

We wish to discuss whether there might be other additional criteria that might be used for long journeys of cattle and sheep, including those suggested in Annex 2.

1. **Maximum journey time for calves (up to 9 months)**

We wish to gather views and evidence on the proposedmaximum journey time of 9 hours for calves up to 9 months old.  Discussions to date recognise that there may be differences in welfare needs of these animals as they mature. Therefore we wish to explore the evidence of the impact of transport on the welfare of calves of 0-3 months, 3-6 months and 6-9 months of age, which should provide a more detailed information picture and identify the next steps in this important discussion.

1. **Next steps**

**Notes from meeting**

1. **Exceptions to the maximum journey time for cattle** **and sheep**

It was largely agreed that there needed to be a proper definition for journey time and what that comprised exactly. Time in market has been previously recognised as neutral but Defra appear to be pushing back on that with the requirement that it is only neutral if animals have access to food water, bedding and ability to express natural behaviours. Question asked if time in lairage was not going to be accepted as neutral then what was the rationale for this. Surely if animals had access to food water bedding then their welfare was being met. EC1/2005 legislation, which has been retained, does not recognise neutral time and defines journey as the entire transport operation.

RSPCA guidance provides the gold standard perhaps. These standards will be shared.

Industry said that no one wanted animals to remain in lairage but one of the issues was transport and getting them on the next part of the journey. Not enough drivers, transporters… Seems that Defra has the perception that animals are being retained excessively in markets – but where is the evidence – Market representatives clearly quite cross with this view. Also with the suggestion that they should be responsible for the journey logs.

It was also pointed out, again, that for an individual animal a journey time cannot be calculated as they arrive often in consignments then move to other batches for onward movements, Regulators have no way to monitor this. Who is responsible for the entire journey log? Ownership of the animals also changes.

The issue of abattoirs was also discussed and journey times could be much reduced if there were more local abattoirs – we don’t have a map of abattoirs. Abattoirs do not necessarily fit with the location of livestock. Question was asked how is government responding to this issue. Lots of issues with small abattoirs and FSA difficulties in getting OV’s to these smaller places and the costs associated with this was prohibitive for many.

In terms of the journey what exactly was the welfare issue – there are species difference and their welfare requirements. Welfare is impacted by more than duration such as unloading / loading practices and there is evidence that this is where most injuries occur. Journeys in other countries, for example Canada, may be 3 days with stops for feed / water but sheep do not leave the transport.

Conclusion – SVS has responded to the consultations both to Scottish Govt and Defra – this was last year.. seems that govts need to be clearer on what they are asking in terms of legislative changes. Yet another long debate with little clarity on what the way forward is… No discussion of other factors such as bad weather, traffic congestion, breakdowns…

**Annex 1**

**Maximum journey times for cattle and sheep: Proposals set out in government response to consultation**

The UK and Welsh Government response to the consultation, *Improvements to animal welfare in transport* [[3]](#footnote-4) stated that in the Governments’ view, animals should only be transported if it is necessary, and that the most welfare considerate route should be chosen. Journey durations should be minimised where possible to minimise the risk of welfare complications arising during journeys. As noted in the response, the Governments are committed to introducing maximum journey times for live animals, including:

* ***“***For cattle, sheep and all other animals, we proposed a maximum journey time of 21 hours. Many farmers were supportive of this proposal however they, along with those opposed, raised concerns about journeys from remote parts of the UK, and journeys that involve livestock markets, collection centres and multiple pickups and drop offs. The government understands that such facilities are an integral part of domestic livestock movements. It is a complex issue with many practicalities to consider, and we therefore intend to work with stakeholders to explore the issues of journey times and how these relate to markets and collection centres in more detail.”
* “A maximum journey time of 9 hours for calves up to the age of 9 months. Some animal welfare organisations and members of the public did not believe such journeys should be permitted at all. However, the government understands that domestic journeys of calves are often necessary and having considered the scientific evidence, we propose to introduce a 9-hour maximum journey time to ensure calf welfare is protected. We acknowledge that some industry respondents have concerns about the financial impacts of these measures; however, we believe this is a balanced approach. Responding to concerns about the effect these proposals would have on farmers in more remote areas of the UK, we propose a potential exemption for journeys if additional criteria are met. The exact criteria will be determined through the further work we will be doing with stakeholders.”

**Annex 2**

**Examples of other mitigations to consider**

The UK and Welsh Government consultation did not set out specific exemptions to journey time limits for cattle and sheep but proposed criteria for applying for permission to exceed proposed maximum journey times might include:

a) The transport conditions are of a significantly higher standard than the regulations stipulate e.g., as part of an assurance scheme, or general improvements such as revised stocking density or the use of a monitoring system that allows temperature control, and or,

b) The animals being transported are accompanied by a veterinarian.

c) FAWC recommended that guidance such as the EU “Animal Transport Guides” [[4]](#footnote-5) should be applied and promoted by Industry and government.[[5]](#footnote-6) The exemptions suggested are proposed options based on existing research and better, and best, practice within this guide. We wish to explore with you whether transporters of cattle and sheep who sign up to these better practice areas, for example as part of an assurance scheme, could use or develop a recording system able to demonstrate better practice and obtain an exemption for longer journeys.

We would welcome suggestions from stakeholders on appropriate additional criteria for possible exemptions for maximum journey times for the transport of cattle.

1. [Consultation on improvements to animal welfare in transport](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/transforming-farm-animal-health-and-welfare-team/improvements-to-animal-welfare-in-transport/supporting_documents/consultationonimprovementstoanimalwelfareintransport.pdf) (December 2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Improvements to animal welfare in transport Summary of responses and government response (August 2021)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1011728/animal-welfare-in-transport-consultation-response.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [Improvements to animal welfare in transport: summary of responses and government response](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1011728/animal-welfare-in-transport-consultation-response.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [EU Animal Transport Guides](http://www.animaltransportguides.eu/materials/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [FAWC: Opinion on the Welfare of Animals during Transport (defra.gov.uk)](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/transforming-farm-animal-health-and-welfare-team/improvements-to-animal-welfare-in-transport/supporting_documents/fawcopiniononthewelfareofanimalsduringtransport.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)