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## Livestock Hauler Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Numerous head of livestock and poultry are transported across Nebraska on a daily basis. Occasionally, circumstances arise that may require the livestock and poultry to be escorted and/or off-loaded. This could occur because of an accident that incapacitates the vehicle, or it could be the result of an out-of-service violation after an inspection.

While livestock and poultry have a limited amount of time they can spend on a vehicle without food or water under normal operating conditions, during times of inclement weather (severe heat, humidity, and cold), the window of time narrows substantially.

In such conditions, it becomes important for Nebraska State Patrol, the owner of the livestock or poultry, and the operator of the vehicle to work quickly to identify options available to avoid shrinkage, illness, or even death. If possible, the first option that should be considered is an escort to the livestock's or poultry's final destination.

If off-loading at the final destination is not possible due to the condition and/or proximity of the final destination multiple livestock and poultry producer

organizations, the University of Nebraska (NU) and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) have worked together to assemble a list of resources that may be consulted.

**It is understood that in the event of an accident or out-of-service situation livestock owner/carrier/hauler is responsible for coordinating proper transport to a final destination and financially responsible for this cost as well.**

**It is understood that Nebraska State Patrol will be involved in managing active emergency situations where safety is a concern. In the event of managing an active emergency situation, priority will be given to management of that situation prior to the handling of any livestock or poultry. Nebraska State Patrol may additionally provide traffic control as livestock or poultry are loaded, unloaded or moved at a location. However, Nebraska State Patrol will not be engaged in the loading, unloading or other movement of livestock or poultry where there is not an emergency situation.**

## Nebraska Livestock and Poultry Hauling Transportation Basics

### Beef Cattle

With a number of feedlots and harvesting plants located in or near Nebraska there is a steady flow of fed/fat cattle that travel to Nebraska and through our state year-round. Cow/Calf, seedstock, feeder calves, and backgrounding cattle travel year-round, but have two seasons of increased hauling potential; April and May, and September, October, and November.

### Dairy

Hauling of live dairy cattle is not a significant portion of Nebraska's transportation flows. However, they travel as cull cows to a harvesting facility at any time throughout the year. Dairy calves travel year-round as well to and from Nebraska for backgrounding purposes or to feed yards to be fed and finished.



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## Nebraska Livestock and Poultry Hauling Transportation Basics (continued)

### Swine

Transportation of swine to and from Nebraska has a fairly consistent year-round flow. There is an increase in October and November when many feeder pigs head to harvest facilities in Nebraska. Many piglets leave Nebraska at weaning to be fed and finished in other states and may return to Nebraska to be harvested. This means the size of swine being hauled to and from Nebraska can vary dramatically depending on the stage of production. This also impacts the number of tractor/trailer combinations needed for hauling purposes, with many more needed to transport from a finishing facility to harvest. It can be estimated that sow units

and nurseries will turn over piglets around 6 times per year. Wean to finish units or finishing units will turn over 2 to 3 times per year.

### Poultry

Transportation of poultry generally occurs in a tighter circle around some form of central processing facility. Knowing where a processing facility is located will usually dictate transportation patterns for any live poultry. Because the life span and growth stages of poultry are shorter the amount of hauling necessitated can seem quite frequent. However, it will be a consistent flow throughout the year in and around that processing site.

## Livestock Hauler SOP Quick Summary

- 1) **Assess the Livestock or Poultry**
  - a. (Out-of-Service) Complete Out-of-Service Checklist
  - b. (Accident) Refer to LERP, Dispatcher Decision Tree and Scene Assessment
  - c. Refer to Livestock or Poultry Handling and Transport Information Sheets
- 2) **Make Contact**
  - a. Contact the NDA Regional State Veterinarians.
    - a.i. Assess needs for additional resources and coordinate arrival at designated location
    - a.ii. Assess needs for local contacts and/or appropriate off-loading site and coordinate outreach
    - a.iii. **DO NOT CONTACT:** If final disposition results in livestock or poultry moving with minimal delay to final destination.
  - b. (Out-of-Service) Contact the carrier, dispatcher and/or owner of the livestock or poultry.
    - b.i. Review options available and come to a decision for how to handle the livestock and poultry.
      - b.i.1. Escort to a designated location
      - b.i.2. Appropriate Off-Loading
  - c. (Accident) Contact emergency response personnel and when appropriate the carrier, dispatcher and/or owner of the livestock or poultry.



# Livestock Hauler SOP with Explanations

## 1) Assess the Livestock or Poultry

- a. (Out-of-Service) Complete Out-of-Service Checklist
- b. (Accident) Refer to LERP, Dispatcher Decision Tree and Scene Assessment
- c. Refer to Livestock or Poultry Handling and Transport Information Sheets

(Accident) In the event of an accident reference the Livestock Emergency Response Plan (LERP). Initial steps on how to assess, respond and begin to contain the livestock or poultry are part of this plan. LERP also provides guidance on humane handling and euthanasia procedures. Contact NDA Regional State Veterinarians to assist in obtaining additional resources and personnel to respond to the incident. Injured livestock or poultry cannot proceed to processing and, in most situations, will require unique care and handling. In some instances, towing companies may also have access to useful resources to respond to a livestock or poultry tractor/trailer accident.

(Disease) In the event of a disease outbreak NDA will likely have initiated procedures and coordinated a plan of action with Nebraska State Patrol. However, if you have concerns about disease contact the NDA Regional State Veterinarian as soon as possible. It is very likely that Local Emergency Management in the county where you are located may also be involved.

(Out-of-Service) Placing a tractor/trailer or driver out of service is an unfortunate situation, but important for safety. Once the tractor/trailer or driver has been put out of service it remains critical for Nebraska State Patrol to focus on and make a priority the health and welfare of the livestock or poultry on the tractor/trailer.

## 2) Make Contact

- a. Contact the NDA Regional State Veterinarians.
  - a.i. Assess needs for additional resources and coordinate arrival at designated location
  - a.ii. Assess needs for local contacts and/or appropriate off-loading site and coordinate outreach
  - a.iii. DO NOT CONTACT: If final disposition results in livestock or poultry moving with minimal delay to final destination.
- b. (Out-of-Service) Contact the carrier, dispatcher and/or owner of the livestock or poultry.
  - b.i. Review options available and come to a decision for how to handle the livestock and poultry.
    - b.i.1. Escort to a designated location
    - b.i.2. Appropriate Off-Loading
- c. (Accident) Contact emergency response personnel and when appropriate the carrier, dispatcher and/or owner of the livestock or poultry.



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## Escorting to a Designated Location

Escorting a tractor/trailer or driver that has been put out of service to a designated location is the preferred option. While first preference should always be the final destination for the livestock or poultry this is not always possible.

In some circumstances Nebraska State Patrol may be able to escort a tractor/trailer or driver to a designated location up to 30 minutes from where it is put out of service. **Carriers, dispatchers, haulers and owners should be aware that preferred locations for escort beyond this 30 minute time frame are unlikely to be viable options. It is**

**understood that from any designated location the livestock owner, carrier, or hauler is responsible for coordinating proper transport to a final destination and financially responsible for this cost as well.**

**Nebraska State Patrol will not be engaged in the loading, unloading or other movement of livestock or poultry where there is not an emergency situation. So long as the scene is secure and stable, upon completion of any escort and the protocols mentioned herein Nebraska State Patrol will not remain on site.**

## Appropriate Off-Loading

While first preference for off-loading should always be the final destination for the livestock or poultry this is not always possible.

Transferring livestock or poultry to a different tractor/trailer or driver is considered appropriate off-loading. When this occurs working with the NDA Regional State Veterinarians to obtain the necessary resources and local contacts will be important.

The primary rule when trying to identify a location for off-loading of livestock or poultry is to contact the owner, manager, or point of contact for the location prior to moving the livestock or poultry there. Secondary considerations include: staffing, loading/unloading equipment, water, feed and fencing.

A potential location to consider when off-loading livestock or poultry from an out-of-service vehicle is the nearest livestock auction market. Auction markets should be contacted on a case-by-case basis to inquire if an auction market is willing to receive the animals. If animals require feed and water, plans

should be discussed with the owner or manager of the auction market. Anticipated length of stay should also be discussed. A list of auction markets, contact information and other relevant information is included with these materials.

NDA may also have additional local sites that may be appropriate. It is recommended to discuss these options with them especially in areas where the nearest auction market is not the most feasible option. For example, a landfill may be a secure location to off-load.

We do NOT recommend off-loading at feed yards or county fairgrounds. This significantly increases bio-security concerns and may in some instances create unintended consequences.

**It is understood that from any appropriate off-loading site the livestock owner/carrier/hauler is responsible for coordinating proper transport to a final destination and financially responsible for this cost as well.**

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## Appropriate Off-Loading (continued)

**Nebraska State Patrol will not be engaged in the loading, unloading or other movement of livestock or poultry where there is not an emergency situation. So long as the scene is secure and stable, upon completion of any escort and the protocols mentioned herein Nebraska State Patrol will not remain on site.**

(Special Situation: Sealed Tractor/Trailer) In the event the tractor/trailer is “sealed,” (generally Canadian or Mexican cattle traveling directly to slaughter) only the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has the authority to “unseal”

the vehicle. Contact NDA and they will coordinate outreach to USDA to accommodate this need.

Many livestock and poultry today are part of a labeling program, i.e. natural, organic, hormone free, antibiotic free, etc. Off-loading these animals, treatment or feeding may compromise their enrollment in this labeling program. Animal health and welfare should never be compromised; however, it may be appropriate to inquire of the livestock or poultry owner if these animals have any special accommodations that the off-loading site, NDA and local contacts should be aware of.