

Information provided by Beef Quality Assurance
Illustration by Sarah M. Johnston.

Care & Handling GUIDELINES

Strictly adhere to safe load levels with regard to animal weight and space allocation.

No gap which would allow injury to an animal should exist between the ramp, its sides and the vehicle.

Cattle that are unable to withstand the rigors of transportation should not be shipped.

When the vehicle is not full, safely partition cattle into smaller areas to provide stability for the cattle and the vehicle.

Vehicle doors and internal gates should be sufficiently wide to permit cattle to pass through easily without bruising or injury.

Producers hauling cattle in farm and ranch trailers must ensure that adequate space is provided so that cattle have sufficient room to stand with little risk of being forced down because of overcrowding.

Cattle should be loaded, unloaded and removed through facilities with patience and as quietly as possible to reduce stress and injury.

Transportation GUIDELINES

Knowingly inflicting physical injury or unnecessary pain on cattle when loading, unloading or transporting animals is not acceptable.

Cattle sorting and holding pens should allow handling without undue stress, be located near the loading/unloading facility and be suitable for herd size.

All vehicles used to transport cattle should provide for the safety of personnel and cattle during loading, transporting and unloading.

Provide properly designed and maintained loading facilities for easy and safe animal movement. Ramps and chutes should be strong and solid, provide nonslip footing and have sides high enough to keep cattle from falling or jumping off. A ramp angle of 25 degrees or less will improve cattle movement.

TABLE 1 Maximum recommended number of cattle to load by trailer dimensions

Trailer size, ft.		Average cattle weight under, lb														
Length	Width	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	Max. ¹	
14	6	16	13	11	9	8	7	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	6,500	
16	6	18	15	12	11	9	8	7	7	6	6	5	5	5	7,400	
18	6	21	17	14	12	10	9	8	8	7	6	6	6	5	8,400	
20	6	23	18	15	13	12	10	9	8	8	7	7	6	6	9,300	
22	6	25	20	17	15	13	11	10	9	8	8	7	7	6	10,200	
24	6	28	22	18	16	14	12	11	10	9	9	8	7	7	11,100	
26	6	30	24	20	17	15	13	12	11	10	9	9	8	8	12,000	
28	6	32	26	22	18	16	14	13	12	11	10	9	9	8	13,000	
30	6	35	28	23	20	17	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	9	13,900	
32	6	37	30	25	21	18	16	15	13	12	11	11	10	9	14,800	
34	6	39	31	26	22	20	17	16	14	13	12	11	10	10	15,700	
20	7	27	22	18	15	13	12	11	10	9	8	8	7	7	10,800	
22	7	30	24	20	17	15	13	12	11	10	9	8	8	7	11,900	
24	7	32	26	22	18	16	14	13	12	11	10	9	9	8	13,000	
26	7	35	28	23	20	18	16	14	13	12	11	10	9	9	14,000	
28	7	38	30	25	22	19	17	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	15,100	
30	7	40	32	27	23	20	18	16	15	13	12	12	11	10	16,200	
32	7	43	34	29	25	22	19	17	16	14	13	12	11	11	17,300	
34	7	46	37	31	26	23	20	18	17	15	14	13	12	11	18,400	

¹The maximum weight of cattle for each trailer size; do not exceed the gross vehicle weight rating for the truck and trailer; reduce trailer stocking density by 5 percent for cattle with horns; reduce the number of head loaded during hot conditions.

Adapted from: NCBA, 2007. Stock Trailer Transportation of Cattle. Dee Griffin, West Texas A&M University

