



Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.

## Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving Livestock

*Adapted from Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Transportation.*

### Handling of Frightened and Injured Livestock

- Evaluate the livestock truck; try to identify the types of animals and numbers carried.
- Call for expert advice and assistance. See the enclosed Saskatchewan Industry Livestock Contact List to identify contacts in your area BEFORE an accident happens. Assistance should be sought from people with expertise in handling the type of livestock being carried on the vehicle involved. Local people with expertise might include private veterinarians or farmers.
- Make arrangements immediately for provision of resources for cutting truck/trailer bodies to free the animals, to remove animals freed from the wreckage whether alive or dead and for temporary housing and care of live and possibly injured animals.
- Make arrangements for trucking or to have surviving animals moved to a safe location. The idea is to confine the loose animals so that people in the area are protected from injury.
- A veterinarian should be in attendance to assess the injuries and status of the animals in relation to fitness for ongoing transport. **If animals are injured, veterinary advice should be sought immediately.** Animals in serious pain or with untreatable injuries should be euthanised (see FACS leaflet "Guidelines for Humane Euthanasia of Animals by Firearms").
- Crowd control must be a top priority to avoid injuries to both the animals and people.
- Avoid using bright or flashing lights, sirens or loudspeakers. All excited animals handle more easily and remain calmer in conditions of reduced lighting and soft noises.
- Always deal with loose, mobile animals first and conscious, badly injured animals second. Comatose animals are not aware of any pain and may be left for last.
- It is very important to remain calm and quiet. **DO NOT** approach an animal from directly in front, move slowly toward the animal from the rear, and slightly to one side. **DO NOT** shout, yell or wave arms wildly.
- Once you are in the animal's personal space (flight zone) it will move forward. Move back outside the flight zone to stop forward movement. If you enter the flight zone too deeply, or too quickly, the animal will try to run. This space may be 15 feet or more from the animal.
- All animals may kick, bite or attack if frightened or injured. **An animal that appears to be dead or mortally**

**wounded may indeed be capable of getting to its feet.** Bison, for example, can run at high speeds despite a fractured limb. **Always have an escape route for yourself.**

- Bulls of all breeds should be considered dangerous but dairy bulls (Jersey, Holstein, Guernsey, Ayrshire) are high-strung and can be very dangerous.
- Horses and pigs may bite if injured and can be muzzled with a halter or rope.
- **Bison are extremely resilient and extremely dangerous**, particularly when they perceive that they are trapped and particularly at night. Do not attempt to encourage them to come out of stock trailers or cattle liners as this usually makes them more determined to stay put.
- Elk or deer are very dangerous with their front feet and can strike very hard. Larger animals are more likely to rear up and fight; smaller deer are more likely to take flight.
- Wild boar will usually choose flight if an avenue of escape is available, but they may attack and bite if cornered.
- Ostrich can be aggressive, and can kick or strike with tremendous force in close quarters.

## **Cutting Emergency Openings in a Livestock Trailer**

While welfare of people and animals involved in an accident is paramount, a few simple precautions, **when practically possible**, in cutting an emergency opening in a livestock trailer can mean the difference between a repairable trailer and a total loss. The following information is from Wilson Trailer Company, Iowa, USA.

- Do not cut any parts which are not already damaged.
- If cutting a hole in the roof, avoid cutting into the header (top rail).
- If cutting a hole in the rear, avoid cutting extruded posts.
- Avoid cutting gates behind the rear pan.
- If cutting a hole through the deck (floor) note where the floor seams are and keep damage to one sheet and avoid cutting extrusions.
- Don't discard loose parts e.g. floor planks.



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*FACS represents the livestock industry in advancing responsible animal care and handling practices in agriculture.*

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