

Transporting and selling sheep and cattle with injured or broken horns

Current as of March 2023.

This factsheet assists a person responsible for sheep and cattle in meeting their animal welfare obligations when assessing whether animals have an injured or broken horn and evaluating whether they are fit for transport or to offer for sale at a saleyard.

What is a broken or injured horn?

A broken horn is defined in the Animal Welfare (Transport, Saleyards and Depots) (Cattle and Sheep) Regulations 2020 (Transport Regulations) as a horn or pedicle with an injury that is bleeding or discharging. Images 1 and 2 provide examples of injured or broken horns.

Injured or broken horns are often the result of fighting with other animals or by horns becoming trapped in farm infrastructure such as yards or fences.

How should sheep and cattle with injured or broken horns be managed?

Injured or broken horns can cause significant pain to the animal if the injury involves the sensitive corium tissues of the horn. They can result in significant bleeding, secondary bacterial infection or fly strike.

An animal with a broken or bleeding horn must be provided with wound care such as cleaning and application of fly repellent to the damaged horn area, and administration of pain relief to prevent further pain and distress for the animal. A veterinarian must be consulted on appropriate analgesia (pain relief), and wound care. Limited pain relief can be provided by over-the-counter products such as Tri-Solfen® prior to veterinary attention.



Image 1 and Image 2 – Examples of injured and broken horns (Source: Animals' Angels Australia)

Can sheep or cattle with injured or broken horns be transported or offered for sale at saleyards?

Under the Transport Regulations you must not supply for transport, load on a transport vehicle or offer for sale at saleyard sheep or cattle that have any of the following conditions:

- have an injured or broken horn
- are suffering from a condition, injury or disease that is likely to cause increased pain or distress to the animal during transport.

If the injured horn appears dry with no discharge or blood, then healing is occurring and pain will be less severe, and the animal will be fit to load. If in doubt, a veterinarian should be consulted to make this determination. Be aware that damage may occur to healing wounds that may render the animal unfit to be offered for sale.

Livestock must be fit for the journey

Under the Transport Regulations, it is an offence for all persons involved in the process to consign or load sheep or cattle for transport, that are unfit to undertake the journey, whether from the property of origin, saleyard or other place.

Sheep and cattle that have been assessed as not fit for transport cannot be sold at a saleyard. If an animal is considered borderline for its fitness to undertake the journey, consider whether the animal's condition will deteriorate during the journey and/or at the saleyard rendering them unfit for sale or further transportation. Animals will be assessed at a saleyard prior to sale and again prior to consigning and loading on the transport vehicle for the outward journey.

Exemption

An animal that is unfit to undertake a journey may be loaded and transported only under the following conditions:

- the consignor and/or transporter has advice from a veterinarian that the animal can undertake the intended journey
- the transporter ensures that the animal is loaded and transported in accordance with the veterinarian's advice
- the transporter ensures the animal is transported the shortest distance necessary either to another property or abattoir

A copy of the veterinary advice should accompany the animal to the final destination.

It is strongly recommended the advice is provided in writing. It is up to the consignor and/or the transporter to prove the veterinarian advised the animal could undertake the journey and was loaded and transported in accordance with the advice of the veterinarian.

Animals transported under veterinarian advice must not be consigned to a saleyard as they cannot be offered for sale or sold.

More information

- Animal Welfare (Transport, Saleyards and Depots) (Cattle and Sheep) Regulations 2020
- The following Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines: Land Transport of Livestock; Livestock at Saleyards and Depots
- Animal Welfare Factsheets
 - Are your livestock fit to load?
 - Are sheep and cattle fit to be sold at a saleyard?
 - Humane destruction of sheep and cattle
 - Animal Welfare Responsibilities – Consignors and Transporters
 - Animal Welfare Responsibilities – Saleyards
- [agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare)



For more information and to view the suite of animal welfare factsheets, scan the QR code, or visit: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare/resources-and-publications>.

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