



## LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT TRAINING TAKES OFF

... right across the country

No doubt — the livestock industry is changing and livestock transporters have no intention of getting left behind. As of November, 2008, more than 230 people had completed training and received certification under Alberta Farm Animal Care's (AFAC) Certified Livestock Transport (CLT) program.

Certification is proof that drivers know how to handle animals, says Mikki Shatosky, CLT project co-ordinator. It's voluntary training that adds to their list of credentials. Many commercial transport companies now have qualified in-house instructors to train and certify their employees. So far, there is one independent instructor in each of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario to deliver CLT wherever it is requested.

"The demand is really kicking in now," Shatosky adds. "When it started, we thought it would be just for Alberta, but the demand is coming from across Canada." It stands to reason that demand follows livestock wherever they are transported, and millions cross the highways and byways of Canada's provinces and the United States every year.

In fact, this year's livestock transportation conference, set for January 29 in Calgary, reflects the North American and global reality of the livestock transportation industry. It will take a big-view look at global initiatives, training, audit systems, science and regulations. The aim is to address the well being of animals, raise the profile of the livestock transportation sector in the value chain, provide education and explore cross-border collaboration. It's for truckers, producers, processors, trans-



port and food companies, enforcement and government personnel.

The CTL course itself is geared toward tuckers, producers and people who work in shipping and receiving departments of facilities that handle live animals. Basic topics include livestock transport regulations in Canada and the U.S., animal behaviour, livestock handling and care during loading, transit and unloading, driving with live cargo (weather, road conditions, logistics), risk factors (emergency situations, border closures), and the impact of transportation on meat quality. Shatosky says the manual is a living document that will change over time as new regulations and standards are introduced and research leads to innovations in transportation and animal care.

Though AFAC spearheaded the course, the content was developed

by an industry advisory group under the experienced hand of livestock and transportation consultant Tim O'Byrne. After 19 months in the making, it was launched with a pilot train-the-trainer course in May of 2007 and a second early in 2008.

### Quality beef on board

Brian Heitman, trucking manager and in-house CLT trainer for Cor Van Raay Farms, was among those who took the first training course. What caught his attention was the certification tied to the CLT program. "There are other courses out there," he says, "but with this one there is a record to trace back to know if drivers have participated in the program, and whether they are certified for beef, pork, or poultry." The company's eight drivers who have taken the course now have

proof that they are operating up to the highest standards.

Cor Van Raay Farms has always had very high standards for humane handling of cattle and has now adopted CLT as standard operating procedure for shipping and receiving cattle into and out of its facilities. It was implemented for the Verified Beef Production program in 2007 and will become mandatory for all production as of June 1, 2009. By then, all transporters delivering cattle to and from the lot must be certified.

A sister company, Butte Grain Merchants with three feedlots and 21 trucks at Picture Butte, has adopted the same policy. Both companies are feeding some pens for Canada Gold Beef. The requirement that "commercial livestock truckers hauling Canada Gold Beef must be certified under the CLT training program" was written right into the animal care section of the handbook when the value chain was founded last spring. CLT is viewed as a vital link in this production program for which age and source verification, traceability and other protocols are used to establish product attributes.

Tess Pitchko of Canada Gold Beef isn't worried about finding certified transporters. She says there are already quite a number on the list and more coming onboard all the time. The staff is prepared to ensure program participants have access to approved truckers.

Likewise, Heitman says it hasn't been a problem to find trucks with certified drivers to meet their requirements so far. It may be a bit more challenging come June. However, there has been a lot of participation from the trucking industry to move this forward. Two CLT courses with full attendance ran in November and another was filling up for December.

### The time is right

Ken McDonald from Indian Head, Sask. was one of the independent trainers at the inaugural train-the-trainer course. He attended at the request of the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan and has been delivering courses in Saskatchewan and Alberta ever since.

McDonald is particularly proud to be involved with the CLT course because the program was put together by the livestock and trucking industries and is being delivered by industry. "I can't believe the response. There's been good demand from the commercial trucking sector and great indus-

try support from the National Cattle Feeders Association, auction markets and media in promoting CLT. They're doing what they can do to prevent bad situations from happening and ratchet up the level of professionalism and standardization for the whole group."


McDonald says the opportunity to become a trainer was a perfect fit for him. He had just shut down his feedlot after 25 years in business and is now running 250 spring-calving cows. His past experience with livestock also includes a PMU operation and a flock of 800 ewes. Additionally, he has his Class 1A licence and experience hauling livestock.

Though most of the participants to date have been commercial livestock haulers he has had brand inspectors, Canadian Food Inspection Agency personnel and a Hartford Insurance representative attend courses. He also encourages producers who haul their own livestock to take the training. Even those who don't will find it a valuable learning experience.

He'll set up courses wherever it's convenient for the participants. For instance, in November, he and Shatosky traveled to the Peace country to run a trainer training course. As a result CLT is being incorporated into some of the courses offered at Fairview College.

The basic course for experienced livestock transporters is a day long and a second day of practical training is offered for drivers with no previous experience hauling livestock. The mix of new and experienced drivers makes for lots of good discussion – particularly when it come to handling difficult situations.

The most common difficult situations are with shippers and receivers who aren't aware of current regulations for the transport of unfit animals, communicating with authorities such as the highway traffic board, brand inspectors and RCMP, response in emergency situations, and time-pressure issues. CLT covers protocols for handling these types of situations.

An Information Exchange Network has been set up to assist truckers with concerns, provide advice in specific situations and to notify them of regulatory updates, security issues and professional development workshops. For more information about the program and updates on livestock transportation visit [www.livestocktransportation.ca](http://www.livestocktransportation.ca) or call 403-932-8050. 

— Debbie Furber

### Fit for the trip

AFAC chairman Doug Sawyer is a cow-calf producer at Pine Lake. He says providing the best in livestock care and handling at all stages is not only producers' responsibility, it's an integral part of delivering high-quality products.

He adds that AFAC has made the CLT "unfit livestock booklet" available to auction markets and producers as well as truckers. This way, everyone will be on the same page when it comes to making the call as to whether an animal is fit for the trip.

Under the Health of Animals Regulations for transporting livestock, it is the responsibility of both the transporter and the person having animals transported to ensure all animals can handle the stress of transportation. An animal that becomes compromised during the trip must be properly cared for or euthanised.

If you take special steps to prevent additional injury or undue suffering you can transport some unfit animals directly to the nearest abattoir. On the advice of a veterinarian, you can transport the animal to a veterinary clinic for diagnosis or treatment. Special provisions may include emergency veterinary care before transporting, providing extra bedding, loading the animal last and unloading it first, separating it from other animals, or transporting it with a buddy to help it remain calm.

#### UNFIT FOR TRANSPORTATION

- animals unable to stand without assistance or to be moved without being dragged or carried
- a fracture that significantly hampers mobility
- dehydration
- shock or impending death
- a suspected or confirmed nervous system disorder
- fever
- uterine prolapse
- a hernia that impedes movement, is painful or obviously infected

#### ANIMALS THAT CAN BE TRANSPORTED WITH SPECIAL PROVISIONS

- rectal or vaginal prolapse
- frostbite
- bloat ( if not already down)
- laboured breathing
- penis injury
- blindness in both eyes
- an amputated or missing limb
- a recent operation such as dehorning or castration that has not healed
- a recent birth (within 48 hours)
- an open wound with bleeding or exposed bone