



Organizer Tim O'Byrne says this course is about giving truckers the tools they need to handle livestock safely

Teaching *the* trucker

Finally, a course that certifies transporters on the safe handling of livestock

At the same time the World Society for the Protection of Animals was raising concerns about the cruelty of hauling pigs from Alberta to Hawaii, 20 trainers and managers with trucking firms crowded into a classroom in Lethbridge to learn how they can safely deliver livestock.

It is the second session of the Certified Livestock Transporter (CLT) course for cattle truckers, and the room is packed. This curriculum, designed by Alberta Farm Animal Care, in conjunction with the trucking industry and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, is geared to the trainers, the people who instruct and certify their company drivers, shippers and receivers in moving livestock safely.

They'll learn proper loading/unloading techniques, assessing whether an animal is fit for the journey as well as current provincial, federal and American regulations that apply to livestock truckers. Professionalism and client relations are also covered along with risk factors, accident prevention, emergency procedures and calculating loading densities.

Livestock handling specialist Tim O'Byrne organizes the course. "Transporters are a central service provider for the livestock industry and it's not fair for us to expect them to do their job with our valuable commodity and not have the tools to do that job right. This course is about providing those tools."

O'Byrne says they'll continue to

offer the course as long as trucking firms show an interest. Based on comments from Rob Kurze and Travis Oberg, that could be for some time. Both work for B&D Walter Trucking Ltd. in Lethbridge. Kurze is a safety advisor who conducts training sessions for company drivers while Oberg is the designated trainer who accompanies new drivers on training runs to farms or feedlots.

"I have 21 of our drivers trained in this CLT course so far," says Kurze, and he has already scheduled some inexperienced driver trainees to take the course.

Based on his experience Oberg admits some drivers never accept the need for quiet, quick, safe, efficient handling, and he doesn't waste time trying to train the ones who are unwilling or unable to learn how to do it right. As for those who do "get it," he says "getting our guys the chance for experience in the feedlot in the pens and alleyways working on the proper way to move those cattle and what to expect; that's critical."

Due diligence

Part of the time was spent looking at future livestock transport regulations under the federal Health of Animals Act being prepared by CFIA, after several years of painstaking consultations.

Cattle, unlike crates of oranges, come in different sizes, weights and classes which is why the new rules

won't contain hard numbers for loading densities, transit times, rest breaks and so on.

Instead, Martin Appelt, a humane transportation specialist with CFIA, says there will be guidelines for humane transportation. Truckers must understand however, that these guidelines will represent the bare-bone minimum standard that is required.

"We have no interest in making the day miserable for someone who does the job right," says Appelt. "The vast majority of commercial carriers are doing a good job, no question. The guys we're after are the small percentage that have to make a profit by breaking the rules and doing whatever it takes."

Under the old regs anyone who loads and ships an animal unfit to be transported shoulders the liability. That really means the truckers and this, says O'Byrne, places undue burden on the transportation sector of the business. It also leads to ugly business dealings at times.

"In Canada, for eight to 10 years now, we've been telling truckers if they get into a situation, and you know the deal, 38 cows are on board and the rancher says 'hang on, I've got one more for you, well the best thing you can do as a trucker is slide that gate closed and get the heck out of there,'" O'Byrne says. "Too often that last cow is a real prize. She should never be loaded or hauled anywhere."

If the trucker refuses it often starts an argument and costs him future business.

Under the new regs anyone who causes an animal unfit for the journey

to be transported, transports it, unloads or causes it to be unloaded is responsible under the law.

“So whoever says that critter has to go, that’s the guy the liability falls back to. So you tell your drivers if they’re put in this sort of position by a customer to record on the manifest that you load this animal under protest. Identify it by tag number or however you can. Log the time and initial it,” says O’Byrne. “Then load that animal in a way that reduces the chances of a problem during the trip. That means in the back, not the front.”

Penalties would range from warnings to monetary fines to convictions for animal abuse complete with fines and jail time. Loads can be detained, confiscated or sold at auction with the proceeds going to the general treasury.

Appelt agrees. Drivers should show due diligence in trying their best not to load an animal they deem unfit. But if they must, and they do everything they can to make it work for that animal, then they will be covered if something bad happens. Under the current draft of the new rules, Appelt says CFIA




Rob Kurze and Travis Oberg certified 21 of their company drivers

inspectors would be obliged to take the due diligence into account and turn their attention where it belongs, to the farm or feedlot.

“What we hope is as this mindset spreads, that eventually other trucking firms say no they aren’t going to haul that type of animal either. They realize they don’t need that sort of client and we don’t need that sort of producer in this business,” says O’Byrne. “This is a whole different business than it was 25

years ago and stockmen and truckers must come to understand that. There is no room at all to transport animals unfit for the trip, no excuses.”

For more information about the CLT course log onto <http://livestocktransport.ca/> or call 403-932-8050. Funding for the CLT training program comes from the Alberta Livestock Industry Development Fund, Alberta Agriculture, AFAC and Ag. Canada. 

— Larry Thomas

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CONTEST WINNERS!

From all of the entries we received, we’ve drawn the names of five winners in our **“So, You Think You Know Bovine Respiratory Disease?”** contest.

Winners watched the **Staying Ahead of Bovine Respiratory Disease** DVD distributed in the October issue of *Canadian Cattlemen* and correctly answered our contest questions.

Albert Luchka
Boyle, AB

Danny Kozak
Ituna, SK

Al Burechailo
Domremy, SK

Don Ofstie
Fort St. James, BC

Faye Couch
Perth, ON

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