

Minimize Stress, Prevent Injury In Handling, Transport

MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.)—You've paid attention and invested some well-spent time and effort in the bull calves marketed from your dairy farm, and in the process, adopted practices which will also benefit the health and performance of the heifer calves you keep for replacements.

Now it's time to focus on the conditions under which your bull calves are transported and marketed to minimize stress and prevent injury, which detracts from their market value.

First of all, make sure the calf is ready to be marketed. It should be able to walk without assistance before boarding the truck for sale. If the calf is already weak, it may not survive the trip. If it does survive, it will be worth very little. Poor condition and injury result in financial losses, and they create a negative public perception of the dairy and veal industries.

Evaluate transportation and

marketing by observing, asking questions, and giving instructions to caretakers handling your livestock. Do not tolerate abuse. Be there when the calf is picked up. Visit the facility where it's being sold. Are the calves handled and restrained with a minimum of stress to the animal? Are younger, smaller animals, such as calves, separated from older, larger animals? Are animals grouped and gated to limit the area of movement and the risk that they will injure themselves?

Is the truck or holding pen overcrowded? Are there obvious signs of agitation or aggression? Will the calves you've taken care of properly be commingled with calves in poor health that have not been well cared for? If the trip is long, will the driver stop and check on the animals, and how often?

Loading and unloading is stressful to livestock. A properly designed loading area and the use of proper techniques will

minimize the stress. According to animal behavior specialist and design engineer Temple Grandin, minimizing the number of changes in direction that the animal must take will help. Ramps should not exceed at 25 degree angle, and non-slip flooring should be provided so livestock have confident footing.

Cattle have poor depth perception, particularly in enclosed, narrow areas such as chutes and alleys. Remove some of the stress by avoiding sharp contrasts in lighting, and shadows that startle them, causing them to balk and bunch up. Uniform lighting, color, texture, and curved pathways are safer and have a calming effect that keeps the animals in the group moving more confidently. Curved designs also limit the potential for injury from protruding corners.

Calves should be walked or lifted properly, never thrown, pulled, dragged, or caught by the neck, tail, or legs. Moving calves from one area to another on the farm, in transit, or at the sale, can be frustrating at times, but patience pays. Use of force should be calm and firm.

Transportation should be comfortable and safe. Clean, dry, enclosed, well-ventilated, but draft-free conditions should be provided. Be prepared for the weather. Give them shade, and provide evaporative cooling in hot weather. In cold weather, provide shelter from the wind and insulative bedding material. If using wood shavings as a bedding base, cover with another material so that calves do not ingest the wood shavings.

Before sending the calf to market, make sure the calf has had good access to plenty of water to avoid dehydration during transportation and marketing. Penn State University researchers conducted a study recently on the impact of sports drinks in reducing transportation stress and shrinkage. The study demonstrated the benefits of what some producers have been doing for years to help get their young animals through the rigors of transportation and relocation. Adding electrolyte enhancing drinks such as Gatorade or AllSport to the water reduces the amount of weight loss and the effects of stress during transportation—particularly in extreme temperatures.

For more information about the veal quality assurance program and dairy calf management, contact (717) 985-9125 or write American Veal Association, 1500 Fulling Mill Rd., Middletown, PA 17057.

Conservancy's Annual Appeal Major Success

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)—When The Lancaster County Conservancy launched its 1999 Annual Appeal: Building Our Living Legacy, the organization's director of advancement, Barry L. Spangler, stated that The Conservancy was considerably raising the bar for itself by increasing its goal amount 40 percent to \$75,000.

When The Conservancy reached its goal within six weeks, Spangler's doubts were eliminated and he began to think that this year's appeal might indeed do very well. The Conservancy's appeal came to a close at year's end, and to everyone's amazement The Conservancy had received \$189,229.65.

The \$75,000 goal had been exceeded by an astonishing \$114,229.65. The most remarkable fact was that The Conservancy had to date received all but \$910 of commitments made.

The Conservancy's Executive Director, John W. Symonds, said, "The Conservancy began its annual appeal five years ago," and the private, nonprofit land preservation group, "has always set challenging goals for itself."

Spangler underscored Symonds by adding, "in 1997, our appeal goal was \$48,000 and we exceeded that goal by \$10,500."

Symonds commented that

1999 had been an exceptional year for The Conservancy.

"Our first membership drive increased our rolls by 40 percent; we now protect over 1,700 acres of some of Lancaster County's most beautiful natural open space land, and the results of the appeal have been gratifying to everyone involved."

Spangler announced that while the greatest growth in donations occurred amongst individual donors, The Conservancy had been able to increase contributions from all major constituencies.

The annual phonathon raised \$7,600. A garden party to honor the 1999 recipient of The Conservancy's Conservation Partnership Award, Mrs. Caroline Nunan, our first ever golf tournament, and our annual bird seed sale all won new friends for The Conservancy.

The organization has spent several years trying to forge partnerships with disparate groups.

"I believe there is large and diverse support for the organization's mission of preserving the dwindling amount of natural open space land remaining in Lancaster County," Spangler observed. "Our ongoing task is to increase public awareness of the organization and its mission."

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JD hoe buckets 36" \$450, 18" \$300; 12" \$350, 18" MF bucket \$75. JD outrigger pads \$50. 16.9x24, 8 ply tire st chains \$250. 1400x21, 12 ply, tires \$100. 9778 Cat shanks w/teeth \$500. Dumped insert \$350. 955-4parts, 717-244-4213.

909 Bobcat backhoe w/3 buckets, \$4,000. 60" clamshell bucket for skidloader \$1,000. 10hp DC motor \$500. Blair Co, 814-793-4199.

1997 LX885 NH skid-steer, 450 hrs, 4-1 bucket w/tilt-tac, foam filled tires & extra side wts, heated cab w/wipers & mirrors, \$22,500. 717-582-3953.

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