

DRIVING PAIN

The State of Farmed-Animal Transport
in the U.S. and Across Our Borders



An injured "cull sow" (a mother pig) from a factory farm in an auction pen awaiting transport to a slaughterhouse. Many of the cull sows seen in the investigation had difficulty walking, having spent nearly their entire lives in confinement.

THE LONG-DISTANCE TRANSPORT OF U.S. FARMED ANIMALS

You have probably seen them on the road or highway — large trucks carrying a cargo of live farmed animals.

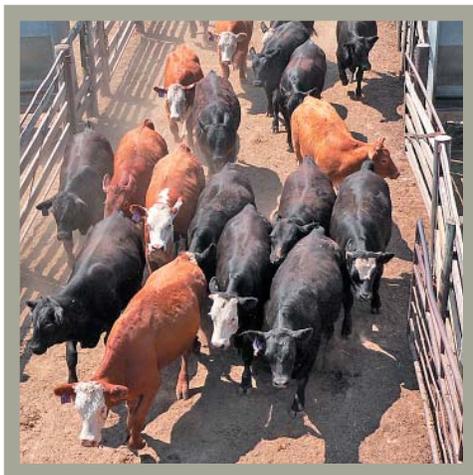
You may have caught a glimpse of the animals held inside — a nose poking through, an eye peering out.

You may even have wondered, just for a moment, about these animals — where are they coming from, where are they going, and what are they feeling?

But you likely never imagined that the animals were headed to a far-off state, traveling for hours or days on end without food, water, or rest. You probably didn't picture many of the animals becoming sick or injured or even dying on the way to their final destination.

Yet, that is the grim reality for millions of farmed animals raised as food each year in the United States.

Cruel transport practices and the misery they cause are driven by economics and fueled by a lack of government oversight. The meat industry appears to care about little more than increasing profits and providing cheap meat to consumers — but animals pay the price in pain and suffering.



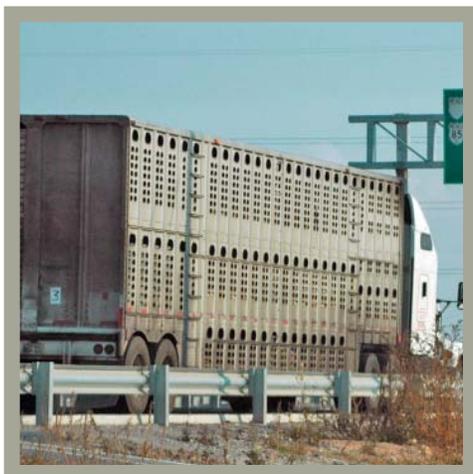
Cattle being driven through an auction yard. Many animals are brought from feedlots to auctions, before eventually being slaughtered.

INVESTIGATOR NOTES

"As two trucks pulled over by the side of the road, we filmed the pigs and spoke to the drivers.

"We found out that the pigs had come from Oklahoma the day before and that on the truck we were filming there were 177 pigs. Even apart from the stench, which lingered half a mile down the road from the truck, the conditions inside the trucks were abominable.

"Pigs were crammed together, tightly packed and panting, drooling heavily, some appearing unconscious. All looked highly stressed and very dehydrated. Agitated as well, some attempted to bite one another in struggles to get space in the crowded, hot truck, as we stood filming in the fierce Mexican midday heat. It was a terrible scene."



INVESTIGATION SHEDS LIGHT ON SUFFERING

In the summer and fall of 2005, the Animal Protection Institute (API) and Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) carried out a landmark investigation into the transport of live farmed animals throughout the United States — uncovering shocking conditions and long days and nights of grueling travel. The investigation documented the transport of live cows within the U.S. and the transport of pigs from the U.S. to Mexican slaughterhouses.

Investigators documented animals arriving at and proceeding through auction with broken legs, infected eyes, foaming mouths, and bleeding cuts and sores. Dead and downed animals were also seen at the auctions. In addition, investigators filmed the unloading of “cull sows” (mother pigs from factory farms) destined for slaughter. Many of these pigs had difficulty walking, having spent nearly their entire lives in confinement.

Protections for transported farmed animals are desperately needed, as revealed in undercover footage and eyewitness testimony gathered by the API/CIWF investigation.

The U.S. has on the books a law, known as the 28-Hour Law, requiring that livestock transported across state lines in “rail carriers, express carriers, or common carriers” be humanely unloaded into pens for food, water, and at least 5 hours of rest every 28 hours. However, this law is rarely, if ever, enforced.

Even if the 28-Hour Law were enforced, it would not be adequate to assure the well-being of transported animals. The 28-Hour Law falls far short of the 9-hour transport/12-hour rest period being proposed in Europe, and is seriously deficient when compared to the 8-hour transport limit being proposed as an international standard by API, CIWF, and others.

HARROWING HIGHWAYS

Despite the considerable stress that transport causes, farmed animals are typically moved several times during their lives, often over large distances. It is standard practice for animals, once weaned, to be moved from “growing areas” to “finishing areas” for further fattening, and then be moved again to the slaughter plant.

Pigs often endure journeys of thousands of miles in their brief lives. They are frequently shipped from farrowing operations in North Carolina to nursery or grower/finisher facilities in Iowa,



A bull with an injured eye at an auction yard. This injury likely occurred during the transport process.

FAST FACTS: The Trouble with Transport

According to data from the United States Food Safety and Inspection Service, approximately .26 percent of transported pigs die each year as a result of transport — this translates to 260,000 pigs per year.

It has been estimated that .08 percent (approximately 82,000) of pigs per year taken to market in the U.S. arrive as “fatigued” — out of breath and unable to get off the truck on their own.

In the U.S., it has been estimated that 1 percent (approximately 120,000) of feedlot cattle die as a consequence of transport stress.

According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, the average mortality rate is 12.6 deaths for every 1,000 cattle entering feedlots.

Citations available from API upon request



A dead cow in an auction yard. Cattle can become stressed, injured, or even die during the transport process.

where they are fed to market weights, then moved again to California for slaughter. This unfortunate trend appears to be escalating; the number of pigs crossing state lines increased from 5 million in the early 1990s to 26.9 million in 2001.

The toll transport takes on animals is great. Pigs are particularly sensitive to transport stress; many pigs arrive injured or dead at the slaughterhouse. Each year, approximately 260,000 pigs die during the transit process. It has also been estimated that annually, about 82,000 pigs taken to market in the U.S. arrive “fatigued” — out of breath and unable to get off the truck on their own.

The situation is similar for cattle. For example, in the fall, soon after weaning, beef calves from California to Colorado are transported to the Plains states to graze on cool-season pastures and then on to summer pastures or feedlots. In some cases, calves are sent directly to the feedlot. For about four months at the feedlot, cattle are fed high-energy rations of grain, silage, hay, and/or protein supplements — including the rendered by-products of other animals such as pigs and chickens — before being transported to auctions or directly to the slaughterhouse.

Cattle can become stressed, injured, and exposed to disease during transport and movement through auctions. In the U.S., it is estimated that one percent of feedlot cattle die as a consequence of transport stress. One study estimates that for every 1,000 cattle entering feedlots, 12 die.

Nearly all farmed animals are transported to slaughter at some point in their lives; as numerous studies have shown, this is the form of transport accompanied by the most welfare problems. It is tragic to realize that the last journey a farmed animal takes is usually the worst ride of his or her life.

International Standards

The OIE is an intergovernmental organization with 164 member countries. The OIE is recognized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the international animal health organization. This means that if it sets global animal welfare standards, these will be recognized by the WTO.

The OIE has developed general guidelines for the care and handling of animals during transport and slaughter. While the guidelines fall short of providing specific transport limits and required rest intervals, they do offer a solid framework that member countries can use to develop enforceable regulations to ensure compliance with these international standards.

The United States is a member of the OIE, and needs to take action to implement laws and regulations that adequately meet global standards.

INVESTIGATOR NOTES

“I filmed pigs being unloaded at the auction. The handler unloading the pigs said that they were ‘cull sows’ coming out of ‘confinement’ (gestation and farrowing crates). Information gathered from other stockyard workers suggests that the pigs may have come from factory farms in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

“The pigs showed signs of stress and some injuries, including scratched and bloody skin, possibly as a result of fighting with other pigs on the truck. Several of the ‘cull sows’ had circular open sores on their shoulders. Many appeared to have difficulty walking; the handler explained that this was because the sows had ‘not been doing much walking’ on account of spending their lives in confinement. I wondered how many of them had spent months or even years crated without physical contact with another pig.”

BEYOND BORDERS

During this investigation, API and CIWF were shocked to uncover the common practice of shipping live pigs long distances on crowded trucks without food, water, or rest to be killed in Mexican slaughterhouses — far beyond the reach of the U.S. Humane Slaughter Act and the 28-Hour Law.

Pigs traveling from the U.S. to Mexico were transported in overcrowded trucks through hours and hours of baking desert heat without access to water for cooling or drinking.

At one Mexican slaughterhouse, investigators were informed that most of the more than 400 pigs slaughtered there each day came from the U.S. Conversations between investigators and pig dealers in the U.S. reveal that low labor costs and the lack of government oversight are considered the primary (if not the only) benefits of sending live pigs to Mexico for slaughter.

Investigators also discovered that pigs transported from the U.S. may be slaughtered in Mexico, processed into pork products, and then shipped back to the United States for consumption. As the manager of one Mexican pork processing plant put it, the “raw product” (live pigs) is imported from the U.S., slaughtered and processed in Mexico (presumably because of lower labor costs), and then re-exported back north across the border.



Pigs on a Mexican transport truck. While these pigs likely came from Mexican farms, some may have originated in the U.S. No matter their origin, the disregard for their comfort and well-being is apparent.

Pigs on a Mexican transport truck parked on the side of the road in the hot desert sun with no water for drinking or cooling.





Mexican pigs destined for slaughter peering out of an open-sided, triple-decker transport truck.

INVESTIGATOR NOTES

“We asked to be shown the live pig storage area, where a slaughterhouse worker confirmed that the animals were mostly from the U.S. and that the facility kills in excess of 400 pigs every day. The pens containing the pigs were full, crammed with pigs in dreadful states. Blood ran down many of the pigs’ legs. There were lame, hobbling pigs and even one with guts hanging out of the rectum. All of the animals looked exhausted — but still painfully alert to the cries of their companions — as they were systematically beaten in turn up the ramp to the slaughter room, screaming as they went.”

“With increasing duration of journey, the welfare of animals generally gets worse because they become more fatigued, incur a steadily increasing energy deficit ... become more susceptible to existing infections, and may become diseased because they encounter new pathogens.”

— European Commission’s
Scientific Committee on Animal
Health and Animal Welfare



(Above and right) U.S. pigs on a transport truck loaded in Oklahoma and destined for a slaughterhouse south of Mexico City. The pigs were exhausted and hot and had no access to water for cooling or drinking. Their total journey would last more than 30 hours.



STOP THE DRIVING PAIN

This investigation has revealed the shameful state of long-distance transport of farmed animals across the United States and over its borders. The pain and suffering these animals endure must stop.

THE GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE ACTION

As a result of our investigation, we are calling upon the U.S. government to:

- Effectively regulate the transport of farmed animals;
- Set a maximum journey time of eight hours; and
- Adopt internationally-recognized standards such as those put forth by the OIE, a body with 164 member countries recognized by the World Trade Organization as the leading authority on animal health.

CONSUMERS CAN TAKE A STAND

Consumers can use their economic power to help stop farmed animal suffering by:

- Encouraging retailers to buy only from local producers and/or those that adhere to an eight-hour maximum transport time limit;
- Supporting legislation aimed at regulating farmed animal transport;
- Urging government officials to limit journey times and adopt OIE standards; and
- Reducing or eliminating consumption of animal products.

RETAILERS CAN TAKE A STAND

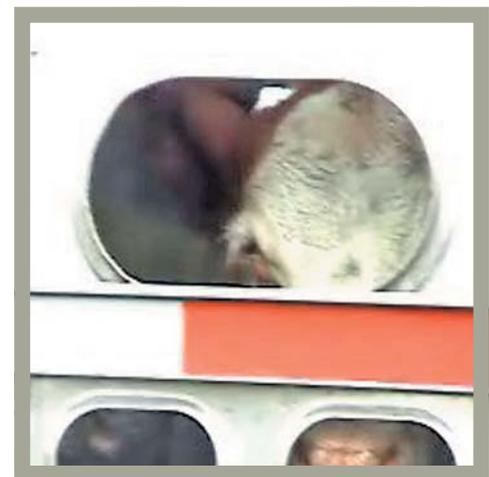
Retailers can also make a difference for animals by:

- Adopting a policy to purchase only from producers who adhere to an eight-hour maximum transport limit.

Together, we can stop the driving pain.



An animal handler shoving a pig down a ramp during unloading from a transport truck. The pig would be reloaded later and transported to a slaughterhouse.



A cow peering out of a transport truck on the way to a slaughterhouse.





**ANIMAL
PROTECTION
INSTITUTE**



About the Animal Protection Institute

The Animal Protection Institute is a national, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to ending animal abuse through use of tools such as legislation, litigation, and public education. Our primary areas of concern are animals used in entertainment, exotic “pets,” compassionate consumerism, animals used in research and product testing, wildlife, companion animals, and farmed animals. We also operate the API Primate Sanctuary in Texas.

About Compassion in World Farming

Compassion in World Farming Trust is a charity working internationally to advance the welfare of farm animals. We produce a range of science-based educational resources covering farm animal welfare and associated environmental, social, and ethical issues. Most of these are available to download from our website, www.ciwf.org. The trustees are grateful to several grant-making Charitable Trusts and members of the public who have made this work possible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CAMPAIGN, VISIT WWW.API4ANIMALS.ORG

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