Guidelines for the Transport of Farmed Deer

Contents

- Introduction 2
- What the Law Says 3
- Transport Guidelines:
  - Before transportation 4
  - Loading and Unloading 5
  - During the journey 6
  - The vehicle 7
  - International transport 8
- Further Information 9
Introduction

1 These guidelines are intended to be followed carefully by all concerned with the carriage of farmed deer. Such persons should bear in mind they are dealing with living animals which may not be used to confined spaces and that special care must be taken at all times to protect their welfare.
What the Law says

2 These guidelines supplement the legal requirements which protect the welfare of animals, including deer, in transit. These are contained in the Transit of Animals (General) Order 1973 (SI 1973 No 1377) as amended by the Transit of Animals (Amendment) Order 1988 (SI 1988 No 815) which covers all animals carried by sea, air, road and rail, and places a duty on carriers and other persons in charge of animals during loading, unloading and carriage to ensure that animals are not subject to unnecessary suffering. The 1973 Order also prohibits the loading or carriage of unfit animals, or of animals likely to give birth. The welfare of deer transported by sea between ports in the British Isles and outside the British Isles is also covered by The Transit of Animals Order 1927 (SI 1927 No 289) as amended, and the Animals (Sea Transport) Order 1930 (SI 1930 No 923).
Transport Guidelines

Before transportation

3 Deer should be selected which are healthy and in good bodily condition.

4 Deer in velvet and female deer in the last month of pregnancy should not be transported, except in an emergency for veterinary treatment. Where such transport becomes necessary animals should be individually penned and carefully handled. Entire males over 24 months of age should not be transported during the rut unless special precautions are taken (see paragraph 17). No other species of animal should be carried in the same vehicle as deer.

5 The following classes of animals should not be transported to an abattoir:
   • deer of less than 5 months
   • deer in velvet
   • hinds in the last month of pregnancy
   • infirm, ill, injured or diseased animals
   • entire males of over 24 months during the rut.
Entire males for slaughter which are under 24 months of age should, when transported together, have grazed as a group beforehand and not have been exposed to females immediately before or during transport.

6 It is helpful if animals are accustomed to a confined space before transport. Those that are less tractable should be housed for up to a week.

7 Hard antlers should be removed preferably several days prior to transport. Where this is not possible deer should be individually penned. It should be noted that the Welfare of Livestock (Prohibited Operations) Regulations 1982 (SI 1982 No 1884) prohibits the removal of antlers in velvet.
Loading and Unloading

8 Where deer are housed it is essential to provide suitable facilities for loading and unloading and for their safe conduct through the building and to and from the housing pen.

9 Allow plenty of time for loading and unloading. Calm, confident, competent handling is required. Animals should be loaded and unloaded slowly and quietly one pen at a time, without the use of sticks or goads. It is important that the animals are accompanied on their journey by an experienced handler.

10 Animals should be segregated by species, age, sex and size as well as previous familiarisation. They should be allowed sufficient space to lie down, get up easily and turn around. The following are suggested minimum floor areas:

- Adult stags - 9 sq ft (approx 1 square metre)
- Adult hinds and yearling stags - 5 to 6 sq ft (approx 0.5 ~ 0.6 square metres)
- 3 month old calves to yearling hinds - 3 to 5 sq ft (approx 0.3 ~ 0.5 square metres)

11 Sufficient space between the floor and the roof should be provided to enable each animal to stand in its natural position. Minimum recommended heights are:

- 1.53m for deer of 75 - 100 kg
- 1.22m for deer of 45 - 74 kg
- 1.00 m for deer weighing less than 45 kg

12 Pen divisions should preferably be solid and should be of sufficient height to prevent animals from jumping over.

13 It is recommended that no more than 20 fallow or sika deer, 10 yearling red deer, or 20 calves should be carried in one pen.

14 Fractious animals should be removed or individually penned.

15 Very young calves at foot should be penned separately from their dams.

16 Deer over 100 kg in weight should not be carried in two-tier vehicles unless the deer have sufficient headroom to stand in a normal position.

17 Where in exceptional circumstances sedated animals, including stags in rut, have to be transported, they should be individually penned. A responsible person should travel in or with the transporter to attend such animals, which should be examined at hourly intervals.

18 Deer should be unloaded quietly and without haste so that they may become familiar with their new surroundings. Deer should not be unloaded in the close proximity of an open wire fence because of the risk that they may run into it. Handling may be easier if animals are released in subdued light. It is advisable to rest animals for at least 24 hours after transportation and prior to further handling or transportation.
During the Journey

19 Deer settle and travel better if supplied with a liberal amount of suitable bedding.

20 Regular, careful and quiet inspection of the animals is essential and an adequate source of artificial light should be available for this purpose. Inspection is recommended shortly after completion of loading and thereafter at suitable intervals and whenever transit or environmental conditions change significantly.

21 On long journeys the animals should be offered water and food. Deer quickly become dehydrated and need to be offered water frequently. The provision of food with a high moisture content such as fresh green vegetables, roots or freshly cut grass, may be helpful. If animals are suffering from heat stress they may benefit from spraying with water. Heated animals should be given time to cool before being released.
The Vehicle

22 Although the Transit of Animals (Road and Rail) Order 1975 (SI 1975 No. 1024) does not cover deer, carriers of deer should ensure that the vehicle used is one which in general complies with its requirements for construction and maintenance, e.g., the interior of the vehicle is free from projections and other hazards, the floor and ramps are designed to protect animals against slipping, and the ramp is provided with suitable side railings.

23 The transport vehicle must be capable of providing adequate and suitable ventilation at all times. Such vehicles should be suitably constructed to prevent animals from extending their heads outside the vehicle. Significant draughts should be prevented, particularly in cold weather.
24 If deer need to be crated e.g. for international transport the crates should be suitably designed and constructed and labelled with full details including species and management. (See paragraph 27).
Further Information

25 All those involved should also be aware of the Codes of Practice and Notes for Guidance detailed below. These contain some useful information which, although aimed at farm livestock, are also relevant to deer. All are available free of charge from Agriculture Departments.

• Code of Practice for the transport by air of cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and horses.
• Code of Practice on the care of farm animals and horses, during their transport on roll-on/roll-off ferries.
• Two Tier Carriage of Farm Livestock in vehicle containers on roll-on/roll-off vessels. Notes for Guidance for Traders, Vehicle Constructors and Hauliers.

26 In addition, advice on the capture, handling and transport of deer, including advice on travelling crates, may be found in:

• The capture and handling of deer, published by the Nature Conservancy Council.

All aspects of deer farming are covered by:

• Guidelines for British Deer Farmers, published by the British Deer Farmers Association.
• Farming Deer leaflet P678, obtainable from ADAS advisors at your local MAFF office.
• Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Farmed Deer, from the MAFF Publications, Lion House, Willowburn Estate, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 2PF.
• The Management and Diseases of Deer, ed, T.L Alexander, published by The Veterinary Deer Society and available from Dr D Buxton, Moredun Research Institute, 408 Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh EH17 7JH.

27 Where deer are to be transported by air they should be carried in accordance with:

• International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animal Regulations

28 The legislation mentioned in these guidelines can be obtained from Her Majesty's Stationery Office or through a bookseller.

If you would like any further information or advice relating to this code please contact DEFRA's Animal Welfare Division on 020 7904 6512.

DEFRA (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Further copies of this publication are available from: Defra Publications, Admail 6000, London, SW1A 2XX, Tel: 0845 955 600.

(C) Crown Copyright 1989, BL5922
Reproduced for ADLib under Licence 2004.