

## ANIMAL WELFARE AT NATIONAL BEEF

USPB producers constantly update their practices and procedures on sound animal husbandry for producing beef that qualifies for National Beef's high-quality products.

Recent enhancements and compliance in the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program for producers and livestock haulers is an example where great strides and improvements have been made in recent years. National Beef customers continually increase their expectations involving both pre-and post-harvest procedures.

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) provides a watchful eye to ensure correct animal welfare procedures are in place at processing plants. Once a load of finished cattle enters the premises at a National Beef processing plant, onsite personnel must

strictly adhere to guidelines, regulations and directives established by FSIS.

National Beef intends to meet and exceed any and all rules and regulations regarding animal handling and welfare. National Beef has mentioned recent USDA guidelines on the Humane Handling and Slaughter of Livestock, as an example.

A recent guideline, known as the "28-Hour Rule" requires transporters of live animals to stop and provide them with food, water and rest prior to exceeding 28 hours in transport. A unique aspect of this directive is it allows USDA FSIS to assess the condition of live animals and:

1. If animals arrive at a plant and appear to be exhausted or dehydrated, USDA will ask National Beef and/or the truck driver as to the length of time the animals have been in transit.
2. USDA may request that the driver provide documentation to prove that the "28-Hour Rule" has been adhered to.
3. Drivers are asked to be honest and respectful with USDA FSIS regarding such investigations.

Compliance is necessary with any line of questioning conducted by onsite USDA personnel. Failure to cooperate could potentially lead to a plant shutdown for being out of compliance with USDA regulations.

USPB realizes that no load of cattle has ever traveled 28 hours directly from the feedlot to the plant. However, the physical signs of live animals as described in the "28-Hour Rule" could also apply to cattle that have traveled for much shorter periods of time.

Thank you in advance for cooperating should any member of your business or transportation team receive such questions regarding the condition of your delivered cattle. Please contact the USPB office or your National Beef representative with further questions. ♦

