



BACKGROUNDER

The Coalition and the Goal

Handle with Care is a coalition representing leading national and international animal welfare organizations, led by the World Society for the Protection of Animals, who have joined forces to stop the long distance transport of live animals for slaughter around the world.

The internationally-recognized organizations that have come together for this campaign are the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Compassion in World Farming, RSPCA, RSPCA Australia, Dieren bescherming (Dutch SPCA), Dyrenes Beskyttelse (Danish SPCA), International League for the Protection of Horses, Humane Society International, Born Free USA united with the Animal Protection Institute, and Eurogroup for Animals. Here in Canada the campaign is supported by the Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals.

The coalition aims to stop the cruel and unnecessary long distance transportation of live animals for slaughter and to replace it with a meat-only trade from animals humanely slaughtered as close to the point of production as possible.

The Problem

Over 60 billion farm animals are reared for food on a worldwide basis. Most of these animals are transported for slaughter, often over long distances within and between countries on grueling journeys that can take days, weeks or even months. The animals suffer greatly on these journeys and face stress, exhaustion, injury disease and often death as they are transported in cramped quarters often without access to food, water and without the opportunity to rest.

Canadian Pigs Hauled to Hawaii

Investigators working on behalf of the Handle with Care coalition revealed the extreme conditions faced by pigs shipped along one of the worst transportation routes traveled by pigs in North America. Each year, 10,000-15,000 pigs travel from Lethbridge, Alberta to slaughter houses in Hawaii.

This journey by land and sea covers more than 6,000 km, and lasts an excruciating seven to nine days. During this time, hundreds of pigs may be subjected to extreme ranges in temperature, from the chilling winds of Alberta while on trucks, to the searing heat on the open decks of cargo ships at sea.

Pigs are particularly ill-suited to long distance transport. They get motion sickness and tend to become aggressive when forced into close confinement. Cramped into quarters so tight they can't move or shift around, the pigs often lie in their own urine, faeces and vomit. Hungry, thirsty and tired, many of the animals die from stress-related illnesses; diseases caught onboard or simply being crushed. The ones that survive often arrive injured, starved, dehydrated, and filled with fear, anxiety and pain.



Findings

If this entire journey took place within Canada, it would be found to be in violation of regulations under the *Health of Animals Act*. The regulations specifically prohibit the transportation of sick or injured animals, the overcrowding of animals that could lead to injury or undue suffering, and confining pigs in a motor vehicle for longer than 36 hours unless the animals are fed, watered and rested. In some instances, the pigs were transferred from trucks directly into shipping crates for sea transport without being unloaded for rest.

The challenge with this particular route is that while this law applies in Canada, it does not apply once the pigs have crossed in to the United States, which takes less than two hours to accomplish. Fewer than one-third of U.S. states have adopted laws that restrict the amount of time animals may be confined during transportation, and of those states many allow up to 36 hours or more, without food, water or rest.

The U.S. Federal 28-hour Law that was updated in 1994 requires that animals being transported across state lines be humanely unloaded into pens for food, water and at least five hours of rest every 28 hours. While this law does not apply when the pigs are transported between states by ship, WSPA investigators found that the pigs were never unloaded for food, water and rest while in transit from Alberta to California and were put directly into shipping containers. This could be a potential violation of the Federal 28-Hour Law.

Action

This is an easy problem to solve.

The Canadian government (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) is currently reviewing proposed regulations that would prevent the export of live animals if transportation conditions do not comply with Canada's regulatory requirements throughout the entire journey. Government could support and pass these regulations swiftly. From a logistical perspective, the technology to ship refrigerated meat has existed for 125 years and can be utilized in Canada.